



Executive Board of UN-Women – 1 st Regular Session 2015

**Briefing on transforming gender relations: the work of UN-Women with men and boys and the “HeForShe”-campaign**

Venue: CR 1 of the CB

Date & Time: February 9, 12 p.m. – 1 p.m.

**UN-WOMEN’S WORK WITH MEN AND BOYS**

The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, which was an outcome of the Fourth World Conference on Women (1995), emphasized the principle of shared power and responsibility among women and men at home and in the workplace. Other landmark documents such as the outcomes of the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development and the 48<sup>th</sup> session of the Commission on the Status of Women (2004) encouraged men and boys to fully participate in actions to achieve gender equality.

Twenty years after Beijing, we know that while the women’s movement must continue to lead the revolution for gender equality, engaging men in challenging the structures, beliefs, practices and institutions that sustain their own privileges and inequitable norms, has become an urgency.

UN-Women’s efforts in engaging men and boys are anchored in the belief that achieving gender equality is about transforming unequal power relations among men and women. This involves challenging notions of masculinity and traditional perceptions of manhood and male privilege. It requires men to question power dynamics and to take responsibility for changing those dynamics. Masculinities can change over time, across and within settings and are not a unique rigid pattern of social behaviours. This transformation frees both genders to make choices in life. Providing, care giving, community roles, responsibility, leadership, become shared endeavours towards a common idea of citizenship that ultimately benefits all.

In this context, UN-Women is engaging men and boys at all levels: normative, policy, advocacy and programmatic.

**UN-Women’s normative, advocacy and policy work on men and boys for gender equality:**

*“Gender equality can only be achieved if men and boys take full responsibility, working side by side with women and girls, to redress the dynamics that hinder progress”.* With these words,

UN-Women Executive Director Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka inaugurated the Opening Plenary of the 2nd MenEngage Global Symposium on Men and Boys for Gender Justice. The Global Symposium, one of the key Beijing+20 global events, was organised by the MenEngage global alliance, a network of multiple civil society organisations across the world working on engaging men and boys for gender equality. MenEngage is a key partner for UN-Women in its work to advance men's engagement on gender equality. The Global Symposium was attended by 1,200 participants from more than 100 countries, and UN-Women took a leading role in several events and plenaries, centre-staging its normative and policy framework for engaging men and boys.

UN-Women participated in the Global Symposium to engage with stakeholders, including experts, civil society members and men leaders on the issue of transformation of gender relations and the need for men to interrogate male privilege which sustains gender inequalities. To frame the discussion, we supported the development of the MenEngage discussion paper "Men, Masculinities and Changing Power", an overview of the work done in this area to date, and a substantive and critical dialogue about the way forward leading up to Beijing +20 and the outcomes of the post 2015 development agenda.

#### Key Recommendations from the Global Symposium:

1. Take work with men and boys from the programme and project level into policies and institutions.
2. Promote gender equitable socialization. Reaching out to boys during their critically important formative stage, will contribute to realising a new generation of men with more positive behaviours toward women, children, men and trans-people.
3. Engage boys and men in the prevention of gender-based violence
4. Engage men as fathers and caregivers and in taking equal responsibility for unpaid care work
5. Engage men as supportive partners, clients and positive agents of change in sexual and reproductive health and rights

UN-Women's advocacy work on men and boys is led by the HeForShe campaign, launched during the 69th session of the United Nations General Assembly in September 2014. The campaign aims to mobilize men and boys globally to stand up and take action for the achievement of gender equality. The HeForShe launch was watched over 11 million times, sparking 1.2 billion social media conversations. To date, men from almost every country in the world have signed up to do their part for gender equality.

HeForShe mobilizes individual men and boys online and offline through the "sign up" approach that encourages increasing engagement, from initial awareness to advocacy to action, with actions being recorded and shared through the website. HeForShe also works closely with Member States, UN-bodies, corporations, and non-governmental organizations to achieve the

objectives of the campaign, targeting the actions, partnerships, and leadership that can achieve the greatest possible change momentum.

Recently, at the World Economic Forum in Davos, the UN-Women Executive Director, accompanied by the UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon and UN-Women Goodwill Ambassador Emma Watson, unveiled the HeForShe IMPACT 10X10X10 pilot initiative. This one-year pilot effort aims to engage governments, corporations and universities as instruments of change positioned within some of the communities that most need to address deficiencies in women's empowerment and gender equality and that have the greatest capacity to make and influence those changes. Each sector will identify approaches for addressing gender inequality, and pilot test the effectiveness of these interventions for scalability.

The HeForShe campaign will be implemented with a special focus on UN-Women's country offices globally in support of UN-Women's Strategic Plan, with the complicity of Governments, civil society and private sector.

Further, UN-Women is collaborating in several other events and initiatives that are being organized in preparation for the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action:

The Barbershop Conference - Changing the Discourse Among Men on Gender Equality (UN Headquarters, 14-15 January 2015) organized by the Permanent Missions to the UN of Suriname and Iceland aimed at changing the way men think and talk about gender equality. The Conference applied innovative methods to raise awareness of this issue and tried to put it firmly on the political agenda of the United Nations and its Member States. It was anchored in the Beijing+20 campaign "Empowering Women, Empowering Humanity: Picture it!" and was aligned with the HeForShe campaign.

For the International Conference on Masculinities (New York, 6-8 March 2015), the Centre for the Study of Men and Masculinities at Stony Brook University has partnered with the American Men's Studies Association, and the MenEngage Alliance. The mission of this conference is to discuss cutting-edge interdisciplinary research on boys, men, masculinities and gender and to build opportunities for dialogue, critique and inspiration across three days of presentations, panels, workshops, and trainings, in which UN-Women staff will be participating, along with our civil society partners.

At the upcoming 59<sup>th</sup> Commission on the Status of Women (New York, 9-20 March 2015), the formal session of the CSW will include a conversation on **The responsibility of men and boys in achieving gender equality**. This conversation will present how far the global agenda has advanced since Beijing 1995, in terms of working with men as partners, advocates, and stakeholders in achieving gender equality and women's empowerment. It will provide examples of what policies and programs have been implemented to include men in a shared vision of gender equality and to transform prevalent notions of masculinities and power. It will discuss the results and the remaining challenges, and address key policy and strategy recommendations for moving forward.

## **UN-Women's programmatic work on men and boys for gender equality:**

UN-Women has a number of programmes that address issues of masculinities and the role of men and boys. These programmes aim to move the agenda from changing individual masculinities to challenging the structures and institutions that sustain patriarchy and gender inequalities.

In the Arab States, a new regional programme: “Women for women and men for women” is the first of its kind to address the new challenges and opportunities for gender equality raised by the Arab uprisings by focusing on engaging with men and boys, tackling issues related to masculinities and how men and women view their roles and rights, and enhancing the capacities of new and emerging civil society movements. While the programme adopts a regional perspective, it will focus on four targeted countries: Morocco, Libya, Egypt and Palestine. This will include a comprehensive survey on male perceptions and masculinities – the first in the Arab region, as well as develop community-based solutions to promote gender equality based on innovative approaches and South-South exchanges.

In Albania, UN-Women, UNDP and UNFPA have jointly supported the Ministry of Social Welfare in engaging men and boys as partners with Women and Girls to tackle violence against women. Following a broad consultation with some 300 men and women, it became the main theme for Albania's 16 days of activism against violence. Boys and girls, Muslim and Catholic leaders, university professors, police officers, magistrates and mayors all stated their commitment to play an active role, in large part due to the passionate engagement by the Minister of Social Welfare and Youth.

Within the context of Safe Cities program, UN-Women in Egypt developed a public service announcement on sexual harassment called “Put Yourself in her Shoes”. The announcement reached more than 140,000 views in YouTube, and articles were published locally and internationally.

In Rwanda, men work to change attitudes and confront gender-based violence. Nearly 3,000 local leaders have already been educated and engaged to fight gender-based violence by a men's resource centre that is promoting the concept of “positive masculinity”.

In Fiji, communities mobilize ground-up to end violence against women and girls. Street workers and the homeless are raising awareness and halting violence against women in public spaces, while more than 700 students and teachers are educating to transform attitudes in 63 schools across Fiji.

An innovative programme is increasing men's participation in domestic activities in Mozambique, promoting gender equality and addressing violence against women and girls. At least 1,600 men have taken part in the course, complemented by a series of awareness-raising activities.

In Dominica, a violence-prevention programme helps boys to overcome gender stereotypes. A Community Intervention Programme piloted on Dominica and Antigua & Barbuda is breaking through traditional stereotypes around gender while teaching boys about self-restraint and how to nurture healthy relationships.

In Turkey a 'fatherhood programme' is mobilizing awareness on prevention of violence against women and girls by promoting gender sensitivity and equity among fathers.

Palestinian hip hop group DAM raises awareness of 'honour killings' through a powerful music video supported and funded by UN-Women. This state-of-the-art production by a male hip hop group has been raising awareness and mobilizing Arab youth against violence around the world.

UN-Women, along with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO), and other partners piloted a scenario-based training programme for UN peacekeepers in 6 countries (Bangladesh, Brazil, India, Nepal, Rwanda, and South Africa) and in two multi-country regions (for Argentina/Uruguay and Bosnia Herzegovina/ Serbia/ The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia/ Albania/ Montenegro). The programme aims to provide peacekeeping unit commanders with an understanding of sexual violence in conflict as well as the dilemmas military and civilian decision-makers face in the field, and highlights best practices aimed at preventing or responding to sexual violence, including the roles of various UN missions play in addressing human rights violations. At the end of courses, participants reported having a greater understanding of their mandate to protect civilians, the rules of engagement and ways of enhancing the protection of women.