

16  
DAYS

16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM AGAINST VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN  
November 25th to December 10th, 2005

## CAMPAIGN PRESENTATION

For the past 24 years, Latin American and Caribbean women's organizations, along with individuals and allied groups, have worked arduously each November 25<sup>th</sup> to December 10<sup>th</sup> on a campaign against violence against women. During this time many advances have been made, especially in the legal sphere. Nevertheless, the statistics gathered annually in countries throughout the region are alarming, and have revealed that the magnitude of this public issue is far from over and that a comprehensive and cross-cutting battle on part of the society, including governments, the private sector and civil society, is an important part of the solution.

After documenting a wide range of violent acts against women, from domestic assault, to rape and sexual torture, as well as violence perpetrated by the State, including torture, and the sexual abuse of female political prisoners in various Latin American and Caribbean countries, November 25<sup>th</sup> was declared as the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women during the first<sup>1</sup> Feminist Meeting of Latin America and the Caribbean (Bogotá, July 18-21, 1981).

In 1999, the United Nations officially recognized November 25<sup>th</sup> as the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, and as a result, the 16 Days of Activism Campaign was extended to the rest of the world.

### Why November 25th?

On November 25<sup>th</sup>, 1960 an emblematic incident of state-executed violence against women took place. Three sisters, Patricia, Minerva and María Teresa Mirabal were violently assassinated that day by agents of Trujillo's dictatorship of the Dominican Republic.

The Mirabal sisters were political activists and visible symbols of the resistance to Trujillo's dictatorial regime. They were imprisoned, together with their husbands, on various occasions due to their revolutionary activities in the defense of justice and democracy in their country. On November 25<sup>th</sup> they were assassinated while on route to visit their imprisoned husbands. The three sisters were found at the bottom of a cliff, strangled and with broken bones. Not only this Caribbean country, but also the rest of the countries in the region, were shocked and scandalized by the news of the assassinations. The brutal assassination of the Mirabal sisters was one of the events that gave impetus to the movement against the dictatorship. Trujillo was assassinated the following year, on May 30<sup>th</sup>, 1961 and his regime collapsed shortly thereafter.<sup>2</sup>

### Why 16 days?

The 16 Days of Activism start globally on November 25<sup>th</sup>, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, and end on December 10<sup>th</sup>, International Human Rights Day, between which are various other important days that highlight women's rights:

FOR THE HEALTH OF WOMEN, FOR THE HEALTH OF THE WORLD: NO MORE VIOLENCE!

## Days of Activism:

<i>November 25th:</i>	International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women
<i>December 1st:</i>	World AIDS Day <sup>3</sup>
<i>December 6th:</i>	Anniversary of the Montreal Massacre <sup>4</sup>
<i>December 10th:</i>	International Human Rights Day <sup>5</sup>

Thousands of activists from all over the world participate every year in the 16 Days Campaign, with different initiatives including conferences, demonstrations, declarations, news reports, and artistic events.

This year, different organizations and women's networks, governments, parliamentarians, and the media, among others, are working together in Latin America and the Caribbean to better impact the issue selected for the campaign focus on this occasion: Violence against Women and HIV/AIDS.

## Partner organizations:

It is important that inter-agency collaboration of the United Nations be highlighted: United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Pan-American Health Organization (PAHO), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW), as well as the participation of the Inter-American Parliamentarian Group on Population and Development (IAPG), the Inter-American Commission on Women (IACW), the Inter-American Alliance for the Prevention of Gender-based Violence from a health perspective (INTERCAMBIOS), and Isis International.

Since 1991, the campaign has been coordinated by the Centre for Women's Global Leadership (CWGL)

## Other Key Campaign Dates

**January 2006:** Examination and assessment of the five years since the UN General Assembly's Special Session on HIV/AIDS.

**August 2006:** XVI International Conference on HIV/AIDS (Toronto, Canada).

1. Since 1981, the Feminist Meeting of Latin American and the Caribbean takes place every 2 or 3 years, where feminists and women's groups of the region exchange experiences and reflect on the state of the women's movement.
2. For further information, consult the book *En el tiempo de las mariposas*, by Julia Alvarez (1992), as well as *The Mirabal Sisters*, Connections magazine No 39 (1992).
3. Since 1988, World AIDS Day has marked the beginning of the United Nations' (UNAIDS) annual campaign to seek public support and prevent the spread of HIV worldwide.
4. On December 6th, 1989, Marc Lepine shot 14 women at the University of Montreal's Faculty of Engineering. Lepine believed that he had not been accepted in the Faculty due to the number of female students.
5. On December 10th the adoption of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights is celebrated.