



Office of the Resident Coordinator
in the State of Kuwait

مكتب المنسق المقيم
في دولة الكويت

22 March 2009

Welcoming Remarks by Mrs. Valerie Cliff, United Nations Resident Coordinator in Kuwait on the Occasion of International Women's Day

Assalam o Aleikum

Your Excellency Sheikha Latifa al Sabah,

Mrs. Fatma Hussain,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

International Women's Day is a global day celebrating the economic, political and social achievements of women. It is also a time for us to review and reflect upon the status of countries achievements towards the Millennium Development Goal of Promoting Gender Equality and Empowering Women.

In 2008, United Nations Secretary General Ban ki-Moon launched a campaign calling on people and governments throughout the world to Unite to end violence against women and girls. The campaign runs through 2015, the target date for achieving the Millennium Development Goals. The link with the Goals is clear. We must stop the violence that ruins lives, destroys health, perpetuates poverty and prevents us from achieving women's equality and empowerment.

Violence against women stands in direct contradiction to the promise of the United Nations Charter to "promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom." The consequences go beyond the visible and immediate. The impact on women and girls, their families, their communities and their societies in terms of shattered lives and livelihoods is beyond calculation.



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Changing mindsets and the habits of generations is not easy. It must involve all of us – individuals, organizations and governments. We must work together to state loud and clear, at the highest level, that violence against women will not be tolerated, in any form, in any context, in any circumstance.

We need economic and social policies in Kuwait and throughout the world that support women's empowerment. We need programmes and budgets in Kuwait and throughout the world that promote non-violence. And we need laws in Kuwait and throughout the world that say violence is a crime and offenders will be punished.

In closing, I would like to thank Her Excellency Sheikha Latifa al Sabah, Chairwoman of the Union of Women's Societies for hosting and organizing tonight's event, and it is my honour to be a part of it. Shukren Jezelen.