



Sonke Gender Justice Network

HIV/AIDS, Gender Equality, Human Rights

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Press Release – South African men join the UN in the global campaign to combat violence against women

25 November 2009

UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon today launched the Network of Men Leaders to Combat Violence against Women and has included two South African men in this important group: Nobel Peace Prize laureate Archbishop Desmond Tutu and Sonke Gender Justice Network co-director Dean Peacock.

The network currently consists of 19 male leaders including current and former politicians, activists, religious leaders and community figures from around the globe.

Under the banner of the “UNiTE to End Violence against Women” campaign that Mr Ban launched last year, the members of the Network will work to support women and civil society organisations across the world to end gender-based violence, raise public awareness and promote adequate laws and implementation of laws protecting women.

“It is a great honour to have been invited to stand side-by-side with such inspirational leaders as Archbishop Tutu,” says Dean, who views this as an important opportunity for spreading the word amongst men worldwide that their support and hard work is desperately needed to end all forms of gender-based violence.

“Especially here in South Africa, where levels of violence against women are extremely high, and where we know that violence exacerbates the spread of HIV, we need men to understand the essential role that they can play. A growing body of research is showing that working with men and boys can change attitudes and behaviours and we need to urgently scale up this work in South Africa, across the continent and throughout the rest of the world.”

In addition to his membership of the new Network, Dean currently serves on the UNAIDS Global Task Force on Women, Girls, Gender Equality and HIV and the UNDP Expert Group developing the Gender Guidance for National AIDS Responses.

His writing has been published in many books and peer reviewed journals including The Lancet, The Journal of AIDS, the American Journal of Public Health, the International Journal of Men's Health and the

Journal of Men and Masculinities and he is a co-founder and co-chair of the MenEngage Global Alliance. Together with Sonke Co-Director Bafana Khumalo, he was selected by Men's Health Magazine as 2007 "Best Man" in the Public Service Category.

Other members of the Network include

- Juan Carlos Areán, Programme Director of the Family Violence Prevention Fund;
- Gary Barker, International Centre for Research on Women;
- Ted Bunch, Co-founder of the National Association of Men and Women Committed to Ending Violence against Women;
- Paulo Coelho, Brazilian novelist and UN Messenger of Peace;
- Franco Fattini , Italian Foreign Minister;
- Cesar Gaviria Trujillo , former Colombian President and Secretary General of the Organization of American States;
- Ricardo Lagos , former Chilean president;
- Andrew Levack, Engender Health;
- Todd Minerson, Executive Director of the White Ribbon Campaign;
- Emmanuel Ochora of Gulu Youth for Action in Uganda;
- José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero , Spanish Prime Minister; and
- Knut Storberget, Norwegian Justice and Police Minister.

Information on the network will be updated regularly at
<http://www.un.org/en/women/endviolence/network.shtml>

Sonke Gender Justice Network

The Sonke Gender Justice Network engages men and boys around issues of gender, gender-based violence and HIV. We also work across Africa strengthening government, civil society and citizen capacity to support men and boys to take action to promote gender equality, prevent domestic and sexual violence and reduce the spread and impact of HIV and AIDS.

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