



News Release

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UNIFEM AND WOMEN'S FUNDING NETWORK CALL FOR INVESTMENT IN WOMEN TO END GLOBAL POVERTY

Partnership to focus international attention on women during
Stand Up Campaign on World Poverty Day

UNIFEM, the women's fund at the United Nations, and the **Women's Funding Network**, a global network of 124 women's funds, have called for greater investment in equal opportunities for women as a key to combating global poverty. The UNIFEM-Women's Funding Network collaboration is in response to increasing evidence that women hold critical — yet often untapped — potential in helping to improve the economic prospects of communities and societies as a whole. The partnership will centre on a public awareness campaign on October 17, World Poverty Day.

For women, poverty means not only lack of income but lack of control over that income, as well as lack of autonomy, dignity, and leisure. Among the factors that place women at risk of poverty are their unequal access to resources and capabilities, such as education, skills, land and property, the discrimination they face in the labour market and their lack of political voice. In all countries, women do most of the unpaid household and care work — yet this work is not counted as contributing to national economies.

“When women are afforded equality of opportunity that is their basic right, the results for the economic advancement of society as a whole are striking,” stated Joanne Sandler, acting UNIFEM Executive Director. “The Economist estimates that over the past decade women's work worldwide has done even more to fuel the global economy than has the stunning growth of China. We know what is possible when women are recognized as agents of change. To realize this vision we must remove obstacles, such as discriminatory ownership and inheritance laws to help women embark on asset building.”

“Women are indeed the missing piece of the poverty puzzle,” commented Christine Grumm, President and CEO of the Women's Funding Network. “Our Network's experience in the area of economic empowerment has convinced us that policy supporting women's economic empowerment — from education to job training to child care to financial literacy to micro-finance and beyond — holds the potential for vast change, and fast change. Our cooperative outreach

with UNIFEM will call on policy makers to recognize the untapped potential of women in eradicating extreme poverty.”

To draw international attention to the need for greater investment in women’s equal opportunities in order to fight poverty, UNIFEM and the Women’s Funding Network will join tens of millions of people around the world in the Stand Up Campaign against poverty on 17 October. Organized by the United Nations Millennium Campaign for the first time in 2006, the campaign set a Guinness Book record with close to 24 million people standing up to demand action in to end poverty. To channel the call to overcome women’s poverty into the campaign, UNIFEM and the Women’s Funding Network have set up a dedicated website (www.womenfightpoverty.org).

***UNIFEM** is the women's fund at the United Nations. It provides financial and technical assistance to innovative programmes and strategies to foster women's empowerment and gender equality. Placing the advancement of women's human rights at the centre of all of its efforts, UNIFEM focuses its activities on four strategic areas: reducing feminized poverty; ending violence against women; reversing the spread of HIV/AIDS among women and girls; and achieving gender equality in democratic governance in times of peace as well as war.*

*The **Women’s Funding Network** is a global network of 124 foundations for women and girls. By championing investment in women’s leadership and organizations, the Women’s Funding Network and its members are building opportunity, creating equality and transforming communities worldwide. Economic equity is a primary issue for women’s funds: their shared work is showing that women-led solutions are critical to dismantling poverty.*