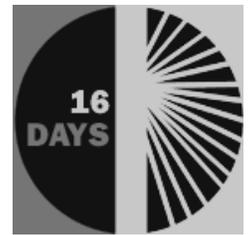


# 16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM AGAINST GENDER VIOLENCE

November 25 - December 10, 2009



## 2009 THEME ANNOUNCEMENT

Each year since 1991, tens of thousands of activists from every region of the world have taken part in the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence Campaign. The campaign's central messages – women's rights are human rights and violence against women constitutes a violation of human rights – have been a rallying call of the women's movement. Recognizing that violence against women affects people from every country, race, class, culture, and religion, the 16 Days Campaign provides an opportunity for activists to work together in solidarity and draw upon this period of heightened international attention to gain support for their local efforts.

In celebration of the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (UDHR) during last year's 16 Days Campaign, millions of people pledged their support for ending violence against women (VAW) and upholding human rights. Building upon this momentum, the Center for Women's Global Leadership (CWGL) dedicates the 2009 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence Campaign to honoring groups and individuals who have **committed** to bringing VAW to the forefront of global attention, to encouraging everyone in their various capacities to **take action** to end VAW, and to **demanding accountability** for all of the promises made to eliminate VAW. Therefore, the 2009 theme is:

### **COMMIT ▪ ACT ▪ DEMAND: We CAN End Violence Against Women!**

#### **COMMIT: WE ARE ALL RESPONSIBLE**

In 1991 when 23 women from around the world met together at the first Women's Global Leadership Institute at the Center for Women's Global Leadership and envisioned the 16 Days Campaign, it was unlikely that any of them could have foreseen the incredible success of the campaign as a mobilizing tool. Because of their efforts and the commitment of so many other activists over the past 19 years, well over 2,000 organizations in 156 countries have organized around the 16 Days Campaign, and the issue of gender-based violence has received a significant amount of international attention. In planning for the campaign, CWGL asks you not only to honor and celebrate the achievements made to ending VAW, but also to encourage broad-based community participation by emphasizing that *everyone* has a role to play. We all have a responsibility to end gender-based violence *together* as women, girls, men, boys, and individuals of all generations, religions, occupations, sexual orientations, abilities, political persuasions, and socio-economic backgrounds.

#### **ACT: WE CAN ALL MAKE A DIFFERENCE**

2009 will mark the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the United Nations' formal recognition of November 25<sup>th</sup> as International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women. There are many other landmark dates and documents that are the direct result of ACTION that women's rights activists and defenders have taken. The anti-violence against women movement provides one of the best illustrations of how local activism can translate into global action. During the 2009 16 Days Campaign, CWGL encourages individuals, organizations, governments, etc. to take action on the commitments they have made to ending VAW. Each commitment – be it a personal pledge to speak out, a local or national law, an international convention or resolution, the *Beijing Platform for Action* – should be seen as a promise that has been made to women. NOW is the time to act on these promises. Every action, no matter how big or small, can make a difference!

#### **DEMAND: WE ARE ALL ACCOUNTABLE**

At the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995, women's organizations from around the world met with government representatives and collaboratively produced the *Beijing Platform for Action* – one of the most forward-thinking government negotiated documents on women's rights to date. This ground-breaking document set forth a list of actions, which, if implemented, would significantly reduce incidences of violence against women. 2010 marks the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Beijing Conference on Women. Therefore, we must all demand implementation of the *Beijing Platform for Action*, as well as other key documents, and demand state accountability for ending impunity, allocating adequate resources, and implementing good laws and national action plans to address VAW. We also call on the UN to take bolder action on the UN Secretary-General's "UNiTE to End VAW" Campaign *Framework for Action*. We are all accountable for playing our part in reducing violence at the individual and community levels, as well as at the nation-state and global levels.

The **16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence** is an international campaign originating from the first Women's Global Leadership Institute sponsored by the Center for Women's Global Leadership (CWGL) at Rutgers University in 1991. Participants chose the dates November 25, International Day Against Violence Against Women, and December 10, International Human Rights Day, in order to symbolically link violence against women and human rights and to emphasize that such violence is a human rights violation.

## COMMIT ■ ACT ■ DEMAND: WE CAN END VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

◆ **Check out the website!**

If you would like more information about the international 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence Campaign, please visit the official website <http://www.cwgl.rutgers.edu/16days/home.html>. Pictures from the 2008 16 Days Campaign can be viewed on Flickr at <http://www.flickr.com/photos/18578511@N04/>.

◆ **Help us brainstorm about new strategies!**

Since this year's campaign will focus on the power of women's organizing and activism, we are asking for creative suggestions for actions that campaign participants can take. What exciting activities has your group sponsored? What unique and effective strategies have you tried? Do you have ideas about how to make the global 16 Days Campaign more dynamic? Write to us with your thoughts! E-mail: [16days@cwgl.rutgers.edu](mailto:16days@cwgl.rutgers.edu)

◆ **The 2009 Take Action Kit: More details about the Campaign**

The 2009 Take Action Kit, which will have more information about each of the theme points and suggestions to help with your planning, should be available online and in print in September. To request a kit, please contact CWGL:

Keely Swan, 16 Days Campaign Coordinator, Center for Women's Global Leadership, 160 Ryders Lane, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ 08901-8555 USA; Phone (1-732) 932-8782; Fax: (1-732) 932-1180; E-mail: [16days@cwgl.rutgers.edu](mailto:16days@cwgl.rutgers.edu); Or to access the kit online, go to: <http://www.cwgl.rutgers.edu/16days/home.html>

◆ **Join the 16 Days movement!**

Create or join a community, campus, national or international activity for the 16 Days. Request a Take Action Kit, join the 16 Days listserv, and use past 16 Days International Calendars of Activities (available online) to spark ideas for your activities or to find information about groups in your area. As November approaches, remember to submit your plans to CWGL for posting to the 2009 International Calendar of Activities to become part of the global 16 Days movement.

◆ **Join the 16 Days e-mail discussion!**

Join the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence e-mail listserv discussion, which gives activists a space to share work against violence, build partnerships with others worldwide, and develop strategies and themes for the annual 16 Days Campaign. To join the discussion, visit: [https://email.rutgers.edu/mailman/listinfo/16days\\_discussion](https://email.rutgers.edu/mailman/listinfo/16days_discussion).

◆ **Submit your materials! Help us build a 16 Days Archive!**

CWGL requests that participants in the 16 Days Campaign send descriptions of your current or past 16 Days events to the contact information below for posting in the International Calendar of Activities. CWGL would also be pleased to receive other materials, including posters, fliers, photographs, t-shirts, video footage, poems, songs, statements, and reports for the campaign archives. If you have photographs, documents, or other examples of your work that you can send in an electronic version, please do so and we will post it on the website. Because the 16 Days Campaign is global, the documentation of the campaign depends on you sending us information about your activities!