

16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence 1995

(November 25 - December 10)

ACTION***CALL TO ACTION***CALL TO ACTION***CALL TO ACTION***CALL TO ACTION

Vienna, Cairo, Copenhagen and Beijing: Bringing Women's Human Rights Home

16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM AGAINST GENDER VIOLENCE 1995 (November 25 - December 10), is a time to take actions aimed at **Bringing Women's Human Rights Home** and realizing the gains contained in the Beijing Platform and other international agreements. Some suggestions follow:

- * Use circulars, posters, speakouts, electronic mail, interviews, editorials, articles and so on, to publicize the gains made in getting violence against women addressed in international forums and how to use them;*
- * Hold a press conference informing the media and public about agreements your government has made in Beijing and other international venues regarding violence against women;*
- * Meet with governmental representatives to:*

Ask for a "National Plan of Action" to implement the Beijing Platform--especially as it relates to violence against women--and how governments and non-governmental groups can work on this;

Discuss your government's reports to UN treaty bodies which oversee the compliance with the human rights treaties it has ratified, and how they intend to include gender in its reports;

Request that your government invite the Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women on a field visit to your country as a sign of its commitment to eradicate violence, and that your government move to extend the Special Rapporteur's mandate for another term;

** Launch a domestic campaign to ratify and/or remove reservations to the Women's Human Rights Convention.*

** Organize events or demonstrations to involve community members in preventing violence against women.*

The *Fourth World Conference on Women* in Beijing (September, 1995) is the third major UN conference since the *World Conference on Human Rights* in Vienna (1993). It follows the *International Conference on Population and Development* (Cairo, 1994), and the *World Summit on Social Development* (Copenhagen, 1995). Women have used these important global forums and their preparatory meetings to gain visibility for abuses of women's human rights and secure renewed governmental and UN commitments to further the human rights of women.

16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM AGAINST GENDER VIOLENCE 1995 is a critical opportunity to promote broad-based community participation, and organize activities that will "bring Beijing home," and ensure that the Platform for Action is used locally as a tool for seeking real advances for women and accountability for our human rights. The Beijing conference can be a point of departure for a broader campaign towards 2000 that seeks the implementation of commitments our governments have made to women's human rights--not only in Beijing--but in Vienna, Cairo, Copenhagen, the regional preparatory meetings for Beijing, as well as in the Forward Looking Strategies (Nairobi, 1985) and other human rights agreements.

The mobilization to end violence against women in every region, including through the **16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM AGAINST GENDER VIOLENCE**, has been a major driving force in the global movement for women's human rights. There are now several UN and regional human rights instruments that specifically target violence against women such as the *UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women*, the *Inter-American Convention on the Elimination, Punishment and Eradication of Violence Against Women*, and the *UN Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women, its Causes and Consequences*. In addition, all of the inter-governmental agreements to emerge from recent UN conferences address violence against women as an obstacle to human rights and development.

Violence against women highlights women's marginalized status in both public and private life--in political, social, economic, and cultural arenas, as well as within familial and religious norms. Violence against women is used by private and public actors to deny the right to health, well-being, and bodily integrity. It is also used to deny women's freedom of expression, freedom of association, and participation in a broad range of activities including employment, property ownership and political organizing. Women's socio-economic status frequently is affected adversely by violence in their lives. When women are denied reproductive and sexual health, they are often subjected to physical, sexual and/or psychological violence. When women attempt to exercise their human rights and stop the violence directed against them, they are hindered or prevented from doing so by inadequate or discriminatory laws and practices and a concomitant lack of resources.

As a result there is growing recognition--reflected in the Vienna Declaration--that the eradication of violence against women requires that all human rights instruments be applied to women's lives, including: the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*; the *International Covenants on Political and Civil, and Economic, Social and Cultural Rights*; the *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women*; and the *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination*.

Please join the Fifth Annual **16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM AGAINST GENDER VIOLENCE** to strengthen the movement for women's human rights, and to draw upon international support for your local work, by organizing activities or dedicating already scheduled events to the campaign. **16 Days** activities can include demonstrations, vigils, workshops, panels, media events, street theatre or the production of t-shirts, buttons or posters.

Send a brief description with dates of your planned activities for the 16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM AGAINST GENDER VIOLENCE by October 31, 1995 to **Mallika Dutt, Center for Women's Global Leadership, 27 Clifton Avenue, Douglass College, New Brunswick, NJ 08903, USA. Phone: (1-908)932-8782; Fax: (1-908) 932-1180; E-mail: cwgl@igc.apc.org.** We will be happy to include your activities in a 1995 International Calendar of Campaign Events. We will then send you the calendar which can be utilized to highlight your efforts as part of a broader movement for women's human rights. Upon request, we can send you names and fax numbers of other people organizing **16 Days** events so that participants in the campaign can exchange letters of solidarity and support and where possible, work together in the future.

~~The 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence~~ is part of the Global Campaign for Women's Human Rights. The initial 16 Days campaign in 1991 was coordinated by the Center for Women's Global Leadership with participants of the first Women's Global Leadership Institute on Women, Violence, and Human Rights (June 1991). Nov. 25 is International Day Against Violence Against Women, declared by the first Feminist Encuentro for Latin America and the Caribbean in 1981 (Bogota, Columbia). The day commemorates the Mirabel sisters who were brutally murdered by the Trujillo dictatorship in the Dominican Republic in 1960. December 10 celebrates the anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, proclaimed in 1948. The period also includes World AIDS Day (Dec. 1) and the anniversary of the Montreal Massacre when a man gunned down 14 women engineering students for being "feminists" (Dec.6). 1995 is also the first year of the UN Decade for Human Rights Education.

This announcement includes many suggestions gratefully received from participants in previous 16 Days campaigns.