

## *SIXTH ANNUAL CAMPAIGN*

### *16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence 1996*

#### *Bringing Women's Human Rights Home: Realizing Our Visions*

The recognition of violence against women as a human rights violation, and the implementation of legal and policy measures to further enforce this recognition, have been pivotal goals of the international movement for women's human rights. Since the **World Conference on Human Rights** in Vienna (1993), women have used the **International Conference on Population and Development** in Cairo (1994), the **World Summit for Social Development** in Copenhagen (1995), and the **IV World Conference on Women** in Beijing (1995), as arenas to gain visibility for abuses of women's human rights. The *16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence* campaign in 1996 -- from November 25 to December 10\* -- will provide women with the opportunity to join together in demanding accountability from governments to implement the commitments made at these UN World conferences and to ensure that they are carried forward in national and international legislation, policies and programs.

Efforts around the world to advance women's human rights have secured many concrete gains including: the acknowledgement in the **Vienna Declaration** that violence against women is a violation of human rights, whether perpetrated by public or private actors (June 1993); the adoption of a **UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women** (December 1993); the appointment of a Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women by the Commission on Human Rights (March 1994); the adoption of the **InterAmerican Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence Against Women** (April 1994); the appointment of a Focal Point on Women's Human Rights at the UN Centre for Human Rights, who is to initiate the task of integrating gender perspectives into the UN human rights machinery; and, the recognition in the **Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action** of the obligation of governments to pursue and punish perpetrators of rape and sexual violence against women and girls in situations of armed conflict as war crimes (September 1995).

#### **SOME SUGGESTIONS FOR ACTION:**

- > Organize educational activities around the UN Decade for Human Rights Education, started in 1995, to provide members of the local community with a clearer understanding of women's human rights.
- > Use the confidential "Violence Against Women Form", distributed by the Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women, to document violations of women's human rights. This form can be obtained from Radhika Coomaraswamy, Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women, UN Centre for Human Rights, United Nations, CH-1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland, Fax: 41-22-917-0212.
- > Use the **Platform for Action** to mobilize communities to take action against governments who have not implemented their commitments from the UN World Conferences. For example, the Center will publish a US organizing guide entitled, **From Words to Action: Bringing Women's Human Rights Home**, which will suggest strategies for organizing to end gender-based violence, adapted from the Platform for Action (available in Fall, 1996 through the Center for Women's Global Leadership).

> Launch a domestic campaign to pressure governments to ratify and/or remove reservations to the U.N. **Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women** (CEDAW). Show your support of the Optional Protocol to the Convention which would include both 1) a procedure authorizing the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women to receive complaints by individuals, groups and organizations alleging violations of the Convention, and 2) a procedure authorizing it to initiate inquiries into serious or systematic violations of the Convention. For more information please contact: Women in the Law Project, International Human Rights Law Group, 1601 Connecticut Avenue NW, Suite 700, Washington D.C., United States 20009, Tel: 1-202-232-8500, Fax: 1-202-232-3761, E-mail: lawgroup@igc.apc.org.

> Use the **Vienna Tribunal: Women's Rights are Human Rights** video and discussion guide to initiate discussions around the UN World Conferences and governments' recognition of women's human rights.

> 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.

Join the sixth annual *1996 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. We will be happy to include all submissions in a 1996 International Calendar of Campaign Activities. 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. We will also send you the names and fax numbers of other people organizing *16 Days* activities so that participants in the campaign can exchange letters of solidarity and support and where possible work together in the future.

**Send a brief description with dates of your planned activities for the *16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence* by October 1, 1996 to Linda Posluszny, Center for Women's Global Leadership, 27 Clifton Avenue, Douglass College, New Brunswick, NJ 08903, USA, fax: (1-908)932-1180, e-mail: cwgl@igc.apc.org.**

**\*November 25 - December 10**

***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 our first Women's Global Leadership Institute (June 1991). November 25 is International Day Against Violence Against Women, declared by the first Feminist Encuentro for Latin America and the Caribbean in 1981 (Bogota, Colombia).***

***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 (December 1) and the anniversary of the Montreal Massacre, when a man gunned down 14 women engineering students for being "feminists" (December 6).***

**\*\*INTERNATIONAL ACTIONS TO END VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN\*\***

