



UNIFEM Headquarters  
304 East 45th Street, 15th Floor  
New York, NY 10017, USA

Tel: +1 212-906-6400  
Fax: +1 212-906-6705  
Website: [www.unifem.org](http://www.unifem.org)

## **Supporting Efforts to End Violence against Women**

*Remarks by UNIFEM Goodwill Ambassador Nicole Kidman  
on the Occasion of the 10th Anniversary Commemoration of the  
UNIFEM-Managed UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women  
16 February 2007, ECOSOC Chamber, UN Headquarters*

Shashi, thank you.

Madame Deputy Secretary-General,  
Honourable Minister,  
Excellencies,  
Distinguished Guests,  
and Noeleen,

I send a special greeting to you and UNIFEM.

Good afternoon. I so regret that I am unable to be with you in the historic ECOSOC Chamber today. ...

For more than a year now, as UNIFEM's Goodwill Ambassador, I've been working closely with this remarkable organization, and its passionate leader, Executive director Noeleen Heyzer. I've learned so much.

Noeleen and I recently travelled together to Kosovo. There, I met and listened to many, many women who generously shared their experiences, even though retelling their stories brought new tears to their eyes. In fact, they brought tears to ours as well.

One woman told how she had been repeatedly raped and abused by soldiers. The results of her injuries left lasting physical and psychological scars, and left her pregnant. She loves her child, but in her community, this youngster brands her forever as an outcast. But this brave woman did not remain silent. Together with other women's rights advocates, she took her testimony — how rape was used as a weapon of war, how it shattered women's lives and communities — to the International Criminal Court. Her quiet voice brought forth a very powerful message.

Another woman I met at a Kosovo shelter escaped from an abusive relationship. At 18, without skills and isolated from her family because of having a child without being married, this young woman stood virtually alone and unprotected. You might expect her to be overwhelmed. But during our conversation she told me about being safe, about benefiting from support and gaining skills through the shelter's programmes. She now looks forward to making a future for her and her son.

I am working with UNIFEM so I can amplify the voices of the women I met in Kosovo, and publicize the stories of the women we do not know personally, but who experience sexual violence on a scale and intensity that is almost unimaginable. What moved me so much about the women I've met, is not that they have been victims. Far from it. What is so impressive is how they are speaking out, helping one another, and organizing to achieve political and social change.

For the past 10 years, UNIFEM and the UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women have been a key ally and supporter of this movement for change and gender equality. The more I've learned about the people and organizations this Trust Fund supports, the more I've wanted to get involved. My recent UNIFEM trip to Kosovo just stiffened my resolve.

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I'm glad I've been able to help, even in a small way. The shelter I visited in Kosovo will benefit, along with the larger Trust Fund. And we've seen what a difference the resources make.

We've come together today to pay tribute to the champions around the world whose actions are literally changing the world. We all have a role to play.

As UNIFEM's Goodwill Ambassador, I am urging people everywhere to get involved, to get informed, and to support the Trust Fund. Of course, media messages are important to this cause. So, today we are introducing a Public Service Announcement that has been produced pro bono by the London office of Leo Burnett advertising. Because they care, they've been working alongside UNIFEM to create this message on taking action to end violence. ...

Before the PSA rolls and I have to sign off, I want to express my deep appreciation to everyone for coming today, and for making this commemoration of the 10th anniversary of the Trust Fund so moving and memorable. And I want to leave you with one final thought: We all know in our heads and our hearts that every woman is entitled to a life free of violence. Let's make that a reality. Let's end violence against women ... let's end it now.