Ladies and gentlemen,

One year ago, I launched a campaign calling on people and governments to unite to end violence against women and girls. Only by working together as men and women can we create more equal and peaceful societies.

In too many countries, women are still not seen as equals in the eye of the law or the minds of men and boys.

No country and no culture has fully escaped this prejudice.

Violence against women is the most obvious and hateful expression. But it is not the only one. Inequality exists in the home, in schools, in the workplace and in the halls of power.

But it does not need to be that way.

In Rwanda, women make up more than half of the parliament.

Across the developing world, more and more girls are enrolling in school.

In Liberia, women are queuing to join the police, inspired by India’s female peacekeepers.

At the United Nations, we too need to set an example. I have directed my senior managers to seek out and appoint more women.

Around the world we need to make a greater effort. And men and boys must play their part.

Men must teach each other that real men do not violate or oppress women – and that a woman’s place is not just in the home or the field, but in schools and offices and boardrooms.
Governments must tell other governments that institutionalized discrimination has no place in our modern world.

Only by being prepared to stand up for fundamental rights can we expect to achieve lasting change.

In that spirit, I thank you all for your participation in this symposium and wish you every success.
1 August 2008
Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

Dear Honorable Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon:

I am writing to invite you to be a keynote speaker at the first *Global Symposium on Engaging Men and Boys in Gender Equality, which will be held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 29 March to 3 April 2009*. This international event is being organized by several UN agencies – including UNFPA, UNIFEM, the World Health Organization and UNDP – along with a network of international and national non-governmental organizations. The Brazilian government, via its Ministry of Health and Special Secretariat for Women’s Policy, is also an official organizer of the event. The Honorable Minister for Women’s Policy Nilcea Freire will be an opening speaker at the event and the Honorable Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva has also been invited to speak at the event. Ministers and senior government officials from several countries have also confirmed their participation at the event.

*The Global Symposium emerges out of the growing consensus within the United Nations of the need to engage men and boys in achieving gender equality as set forth in the Millennium Development Goals and other UN accords.* The event takes as its starting point various UN declarations on the need to engage men, including the Program of Action of the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development and the Agreed Conclusions of the 48th Session of Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), specifically those conclusions focusing on engaging men.

Furthermore, knowing of the role of the Secretary-General’s office in its global campaign on ending violence against women, and of your declarations on the need to include men in such efforts, we believe it would be a strategic global statement on the behalf of the United Nations for you to speak at the event. We are working closely with UN Resident Coordinator’s office in Brazil and with the UNFPA representatives in Brazil to insure that the Global Symposium is made visible within the UN system and the national and international press.

We are attaching a brief description of the event and a draft agenda for your consideration. If we can provide any further information, please let us know. We thank you for your consideration and look forward to hearing from your office on this matter.

Sincerely,

Gary Barker, PhD
Executive Director
Instituto Promundo (Symposium Host and Chair)
on Behalf of the Symposium Steering Committee

cc: Maria-Jose Alcala, UNIFEM
Aminata Touré, UNFPA
Alanna Armitage, UNFPA-Brazil
Minister Nilcea Freire
fyi. we've been copied, not asked for our opinion. note arab league as well

--- Forwarded by Richard Amdur/NY/UNO on 13/02/2009 11:28 AM ----

Yeocheol Yoon/NY/UNO
13/02/2009 10:44 AM

To Remeshan Chandroth/NY/UNO@UNHQ
cc Patience Stephens/NY/UNO@UNHQ, Rachel Mayanja/NY/UNO@UNHQ, "Richard Amdur" <amdur@un.org>
Subject Re: Fw: SG Campaign/Global Symposium on Men

SG will be traveling to Qatar for the LAS summit and will not be able to attend.
But with your recommendation, we could tape a video message?

Remeshan Chandroth/NY/UNO
13/02/2009 오전 09:36

To Yeocheol Yoon/NY/UNO@UNHQ
cc Rachel Mayanja/NY/UNO@UNHQ, Patience Stephens/NY/UNO@UNHQ
Subject Fw: SG Campaign/Global Symposium on Men

Dear Mr. Yoon,

Please see the attached message from UNIFEM. We would be grateful to know whether the Secretary-General would be able to attend the event or send a video message.

Regards,

Rachel Mayanja

----- Forwarded by Remeshan Chandroth/NY/UNO on 13/02/2009 09:34 AM -----
Dear Rachel,

As discussed at the recent SG Campaign working group meeting, I confirmed with the organizers of the Global Symposium on Men and Gender Equality (March 29, Rio de Janeiro) that they have not received a response on the possibility of the SG’s participation in the opening ceremony. The letter is attached for reference, in case OSAGI is able to follow up with his office and secure a response (if I recall correctly, the Symposium is on the list of SG Campaign-related events this year).

They are also open to video-conference arrangements if he would not be available in person.

Best regards,

María José Alcalá  
Senior Advisor  
Ending Violence against Women  
UNIFEM

[attachment "SymposiumSGinvitation.doc" deleted by Yeocheol Yoon/NY/UNO]