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**Media Inquiries**  
Gvantsa Asatiani, Communications Specialist  
+995 599 517371; gvantsa.asatiani@unwomen.org

# PRESS RELEASE

## United Nations Resident Coordinator Hosts: High Level Meeting on the Elimination of Violence against Women and Girls

**Tbilisi, Georgia – December 2, 2011; 11:00 a.m. Hotel Holiday Inn (1, 26 May Square), Conference hall** – UN Resident Coordinator together with the UN Country team hosts a high level meeting in the Framework of the 16 Days of Activism against Gender Based Violence Dedicated to the Promotion of the UN Secretary General's UNiTE to End Violence Against Women Campaign in Georgia to bring together representatives of national machineries / groups working on combating violence against women and girls, enhancement of gender equality and women's rights.

The goal of the meeting is to increase awareness of the UN's strategic partners about the UN Secretary General's UNiTE to End Violence against Women Campaign (<http://endviolence.un.org/>) by using the goals of the Campaign to highlight achievements and more importantly underline challenges in addressing and punishment of all forms of violence against women and girls.

The UN has introduced the UNiTE Campaign in Georgia in 2009 at the opening of the 16 Days Campaign in 2009 at the Parliament of Georgia. The Declaration of Commitment was introduced and signed by the politicians, as well as other supporters of the campaign from the government and civil society. UN partners with the Georgian Rugby Union to promote zero tolerance towards the practice of violence against women and domestic violence targeted at men and boys. The Minister of Sports and Youth Affairs of Georgia has signed the UNiTE affirmation against VAW together with the President of Rugby Union and representatives of eight national junior rugby teams competing in the frameworks of International Rugby Board's Junior World Rugby Trophy Georgia in May 2011.

"During these last years the Government of Georgia has made significant steps forward for establishing mechanisms for the protection of victims/survivors of domestic violence. Increasingly, we see that the Government is placing an important emphasis on mothers who are victims of violence, providing support for both the mother and the child; as well as an emphasis on protecting girls from violence. We will continue our joint efforts to strengthen existing mechanisms in line with the priority areas of work identified by the Secretary General's campaign UNiTE to End Violence against Women." Quote from the speech of H.E. Mr. Jamie McGoldrick, the UN Resident Coordinator in Georgia.

"This opportunity will help advocate for and mobilize greater political will towards Georgia's ratification of the Council of Europe Convention of Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence. This is the first legally binding instrument for member states, creating a comprehensive legal framework to prevent violence, to protect victims and to end with the impunity of perpetrators. The Government of Georgia has made important steps forward for establishing mechanisms for the victims/survivors of domestic violence. There are still many gaps to be addressed and we will be working in this direction together with the UN country team in Georgia" Quote from the speech of Ms. Rusudan Kervalishvili, the Vice-Speaker of the Parliament of Georgia and Chairwoman of the Gender Equality Council of the Parliament of Georgia.

The high level meeting is hosted and chaired by the UN Resident Coordinator H.E Mr. Jamie McGoldrick. In the meeting there will take part Ms. Rusudan Kervalishvili, Vice-Speaker of the Parliament of Georgia, Chairwoman of the Gender

Equality Council of the Parliament of Georgia; Mr. Giorgi Vashadze, Deputy Minister of Justice of Georgia, on behalf of the Interagency Coordination Council for Carrying out Measures against Trafficking in Persons and Ms. Lali Papiashvili, Chairwoman of the Inter-Agency Council Implementing Measures to Eliminate Domestic Violence in Georgia, Justice of the Constitutional Court of Georgia. And representatives of diplomatic corps: H.E. Mr. John R. Bass, the US Ambassador to Georgia. Mr. Gerard Fischer, EUMM Deputy Head of Mission; H.E. Ms. Diana Janse, Ambassador of Sweden to Georgia; H.E. Ms. Judith Gough, British Ambassador to Georgia.

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#### About UN Secretary-General's Campaign "UNiTE to END VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN"

<http://www.un.org/en/women/endviolence/>

United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's **UNiTE to End Violence against Women** campaign aims to prevent and eliminate violence against women and girls in all parts of the world. UNiTE brings together a host of UN agencies and offices to galvanize action across the UN system to prevent and punish violence against women and girls. Through UNiTE, the UN is joining forces with individuals, civil society and governments to put an end to violence against women and girls in all its forms.

Launched in 2008, UNiTE is a multi-year effort calling on governments, civil society, women's organizations, young people, the private sector, the media and the entire UN system to join forces in addressing the global pandemic of violence against women and girls.

#### About 16 Days of Activism against Gender Violence Campaign

<http://16dayscwgj.rutgers.edu/>

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 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 violation of human rights.** This 16-day period also highlights other significant dates including November 29, International Women Human Rights Defenders Day, December 1, World AIDS Day, and December 6, which marks the Anniversary of the Montreal Massacre. The theme of the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence for 2011 is: **From Peace in the Home to Peace in the World: Let's Challenge Militarism and End Violence Against Women!**

#### About the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence

<http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/EN/Treaties/HTML/DomesticViolence.htm>

On 7 April 2011, the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe adopted the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Convention CETS No. 210), a landmark Convention, which is the first legally binding instrument in the world creating a comprehensive legal framework to prevent violence, to protect victims and to end with the impunity of perpetrators. It defines and criminalizes various forms of violence against women (including forced marriage, female genital mutilation, stalking, physical and psychological violence and sexual violence). It also foresees the establishment of an international group of independent experts to monitor its implementation at national level. The Convention was opened for signature in Istanbul on 11 May 2011 and was signed by 13 countries.

#### Facts and Figures About Violence Against Women and Girls in Georgia

<http://www.genderbasedviolence.ge/en/content/show/12/research.html>

According to the UNFPA's National Research on Domestic Violence Against Women (UNFPA / CSS / ACT (Tbilisi, 2010)), 6.9% of women acknowledged experiencing physical violence, of whom 2.6% experienced moderate and 4.3% severe physical violence. 3.9% of women reported having experienced sexual violence, and 2.3% of women claimed to have experienced both sexual and physical violence. Among women who were, or had been, married, one in every eleven had faced physical violence and 34.7% had been severely injured several times. 2.7% of women who had born children admitted experiencing physical violence during their pregnancy. The survey also found that experiences of physical violence were not linked significantly to respondents' place of residence, education level, marital status or income.

According to the survey, 14.3% of women reported having experience of emotional violence (threats, insults, humiliation). With regard to economic violence, 4.7% of those interviewed admitted that their husbands/male partners had taken their earnings against their will. Unfortunately, the survey also found out that 34.1% of women think that husbands have the right to beat their wives in certain cases. Another important finding of the survey was women's perception of the family as a sacred place. Thus, the view that whatever happens in the family should stay in the family is still strong with 78.3% of women convinced that family problems should only be discussed within the family. The findings of this survey signal an acute need on the one hand for intensive awareness raising work, and on the other for further improvement of support mechanisms and services for the victims/survivors of DV.

A comprehensive study on the issue of violence against children was conducted in 2007. One particularly worrying finding was that just over one-fifth of caretakers reported they had repeatedly hit a child in their care. Nearly one in ten children reported some form of sexual abuse occurring in the home. In 2012, a new study will be conducted to explore attitudes, behaviors, and practices around family violence, with a focus on children.

