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*Future perspectives on the promotion of gender equality:
Through the eyes of young women and men*

by
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Ms. Chairperson, Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

"If my voice shakes, it is because I am excited. If my voice trembles, it is because

I am proud, proud to stand before you." Although these words hold true for what I am feeling at this moment, they were the words used by a very wise professor back in 1991 through which he addressed over 2 000 young people protesters at the University of

Rape is a weapon of war. It is a crime against humanity. Are we in a war, a gender-based war, then? Why are we not on streets? Why are we cordially exchanging

It is critical that we remember that gender inequality is not an issue of concern for developing countries only. For example, as many as two to four million women are battered each year in the United States; at least 170,000 of these require hospitalization or doctors' attention. In this country, approximately one third of all murdered victims are killed by their intimate partners. The North is not that much more advanced when it

Young people from developing countries are widely under-represented within the United Nations system and do not receive the same opportunity through internships to learn about the UN and receive skills building future leaders. Thus, UNFPA has established a *Special Youth Programme* through which interns up to the age of 20 from developing countries are recruited and provided an opportunity to join UNFPA Headquarters in New York for a paid internship for up to 6 months, upon which they return to their home countries and continue working for additional three months with UNFPA's Country Offices. The objective of this program is to give youth the opportunity to be engaged in the design of policy development and programming, as well as to provide them with an insight into the daily operations of a UN organization. As the internship goes along, the young interns are expected to gain skills regarding how to address population, sexual and reproductive health, gender and HIV/AIDS issues, especially in the context of achieving the Millennium Development Goals as relevant to young people. Once more, the number of men and women is strictly observed, and in the selection process both a young woman and man are short-listed from each region, before a decision is made.

We, the young people, ask to be a part of the process, which shapes our lives. Young men must be at the head of the gender equality promotion efforts in order for them to take in. Today, it is clear that if real and lasting challenges are to be assured, men and boys must be involved and must take responsibility for promoting sexual and reproductive health, eliminating gender-based violence, and ensuring HIV/AIDS prevention and care. Our roles in the families, particularly as fathers and caregivers are crucial for any kind of gender-related advancement. Thus, UNFPA is partnering with EngenderHealth in South Africa and Instituto Promundo from Brazil to (1) outline lessons learned in programming for boys and men and (2) identify gaps, such as what programmers should know to effectively engage boys and men in supporting gender equality and equity. Some areas that require special attention are (a) how to engage boys and men in becoming active voices in condemning violence against women, (b) how to work effectively with boys and men in adopting positive attitudes towards use of

condoms for HIV prevention, and (c) how to work with boys and men in sharing household and parenting responsibilities.

UNFPA is also partnering with the Margaret Sanger Center International to

14 million women and girls between ages 15 and 19, both married and unmarried, give birth each year. Still, pregnancy is a leading cause of death for young women in this age

... .. Evaluation being the major

within its functioning, and which in turn promotes gender equality and equity through its programming.

The power of media in promoting gender equality and equity is un-debatable. Thus, UNFPA partnered with MTV's *Staying Alive Campaign*, which concentrates on prevention of HIV/AIDS globally, in order to assure gender sensitive programming on