

Engaging men and boys in efforts to end gender based violence in conflict and post-conflict settings

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Introduction:
I would like to start by thanking the Vienna Institute for International Dialogue and Cooperation for the invitation to speak at this seminar on men, masculinities, and violence in conflict and post-conflict settings. It is a tremendous honour to be able to share this panel with such distinguished speakers in a city with such a long history of debate and reflection. I feel fortunate to be speaking in a venue named after Albert Schweitzer. I knew of Albert Schweitzer’s work as a determined and compassionate medical doctor working in Gabon; until I did some research last night I did not know that he was also an outspoken critic of colonialism. Our work to end men’s violence against each other, and against women, also has to address other forms of oppression, including racism and the legacy of colonialism so it feels appropriate that we are meeting here at Albert Schweitzer Haus.

I would also like to acknowledge colleagues who have assisted me in formulating the thoughts I’m going to share here. Sisonke Msimang, Director of the Open Society Initiative for Southern Africa, Gary Barker, founding director of Instituto Promundo, and Michael Kaufman, founder of the Global White Ribbon Campaign all provided me with invaluable comments and guidance. Vanessa Farr, a pioneering activist and scholar on gender and conflict, wrote sections of this paper in her gorgeous prose and shaped the ideas in it in very significant ways. I’m deeply grateful to them for their insights, generosity and support.

Tonight’s topic of sexual violence in conflict settings is a difficult one to talk about so I want to start with a cautious note of hope. Presenting here in peaceful Vienna allows me to feel optimistic about the possibility that Africa might one day look back on its wars of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries as a distant memory in the same way that I imagine Europeans now do of the terrible wars that scarred this continent up to, and in the 20th century.

Like many of you here tonight, I grew up in a family where both of my grandfathers fought in wars in Europe. My paternal grandfather joined the British Navy as a teenager and was lucky to survive some of the fiercest naval battles of the First World War. My maternal grandfather, on the other hand, had the bad fortune to be nineteen years old in 1939. He saw six years of war—as an infantryman in Libya and as an air force navigator in the skies over Europe. I remember well how the effects of those six years haunted him and shaped his drinking, his volatile temper and his early death. I’m sure neither of them ever imagined—and certainly not in the 1930s and 1940s—the possibilities of a quiet Europe characterised by long stretches of peace.

Of course, the new Europe at peace with itself did not come into being without a high level of organisation to critique war, militarisation and their economic and political underpinnings. The gendered dynamics of war also did not go unremarked: it’s important that much of this work was done by women, for example, the founders of the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom, who met in The Hague in 1915 to decry what was then still being called the Great War. Yet it is still all too common to overlook the tremendous efforts of women activists, including feminist scholars, to connect gendered oppression with male domination and work out an oppositional stance from that analysis. In the increasingly conservative global climate, it’s not very often remembered that the political will and new international institutions that were set up to support

Europe’s commitment to peace were the result of careful political collaborations; and it certainly did not happen without great personal sacrifice and enormous financial resources, including previously unimagined foreign aid.

To resolve sexual violence in conflict we’re going to need similar deep wells of imagination and courage, alliance-building, political will and intellectual support. We’re also going to need serious, measurable and universally-agreed on systems of accountability, something we currently lack. Moreover, we’re going to need our international institutions to maintain their commitment to providing 0.7% of GDP in foreign aid rather than cutting back as they’re currently doing. This funding is not the luxury it may seem to be.

I want to remind everyone here that there is a continuum in the forms of violence used by those who have power to subjugate and those who do not, and also to point out that there are differences in the way people can access and wield power which we need to examine carefully if we want to succeed in challenging the discrimination that results from the misuse of such power. One way to do this is to ask questions: Why, for example, don’t we talk about what it is that really separates violence in the home in Vienna, from violence on the streets in Athens, from violence in the forest outside Goma? Is it the scale and viciousness of the violence alone? Is it the fact that one is still seen as private while the other is considered public, and publicised further by the media? Is it the speed and efficiency with which police and the justice system in these different places react – if they ever do? Getting those connections is a vital part of challenging the different levels at which power is gained and misused, which is necessary to establishing functioning systems of gender justice and extending them to all.

There’s another part of this intersectionality that is also given too little attention, and my comments today will focus on this point: what is it that connects the Palestinian brother who escorts his little sister across an Israeli checkpoint to school each morning, to the Sowetan son who goes home early on payday so he help his mother feed his younger siblings, to the Parisian dad who takes his kids to the park while his spouse finishes a work assignment? While so much attention is given to ending gendered forms of violence, or to focusing on “the problem that is men”, how can the daily peacefulness of so many men be acknowledged – and amplified and celebrated and organised? How we can best involve men and boys in preventing domestic and sexual violence, and more ambitiously, how can we engage men and boys as agents of gender justice, as opponents to militarised masculinity, and as champions of human rights for all? My answers to these questions will be informed by my work at two organizations: Sonke Gender Justice Network and the MenEngage Alliance. I will say a few words about both and then return to a fuller description of Sonke’s work towards the end of this paper.

Sonke Gender Justice: Established just five years ago, Sonke Gender Justice (Sonke) is a South African NGO working across Africa to engage men and boys in achieving gender equality and working specifically to address the intersection of masculinities, gender based violence and HIV and AIDS. We work across all of South Africa’s nine provinces and in about fifteen countries in Africa, including a number of conflict and post-conflict settings such as Cote D’Ivoire, Burundi, Sudan, Kenya, Uganda and Rwanda, where we are working closely with UNDP, UNFPA and the International Centre for...
Research on Women to carry out research on the gender and HIV dimensions of conflict and post-conflict situations and to develop policies and programmes to support emerging efforts to engage men and boys in gender transformation.

Sonke employs a range of social change strategies to challenge harmful notions and expressions of masculinities and to promote gender equality—from individual and small group education to mass media and the use of community mobilisation and advocacy to secure the passage and implementation of new laws and policies. We work hard to hold political leaders and institutions to account and use the controversy that this often generates to encourage inclusive national debate through the media about the roles and responsibilities of men in public positions—especially those in senior positions of power within government, key political offices and the private sector. Sonke also serves as global co-chair of the MenEngage Alliance.

**MenEngage Alliance:** The MenEngage Alliance was established in 2006 to increase men’s involvement in achieving gender equality with a strong focus on preventing gender based violence. MenEngage country networks have since been established in over 30 countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, Europe and North America. Many of the organisations that make up the MenEngage Alliance are in countries with recent histories of conflict, including in Africa: Rwanda, Sierra Leone, DRC, Burundi, Uganda, Ethiopia, Cote D’Ivoire and my own country, South Africa.

Our work with men and boys has attracted significant attention over the last few years, including some controversy. It’s worth saying a few words about what this work is and is not. Both Sonke and MenEngage are guided by the following principles: we work towards gender equality and women’s rights, we strive to be accountable to women’s rights organisations and movements, we believe men are diverse and shaped by many different life circumstances and experiences but share the common experience of finding existing gender roles restrictive, stifling and often dangerous for our own and our partners’ health. We believe that change requires working closely with women’s rights organisations and other social movements to demand a more just world—for women and girls, men and boys. Increasingly, this means that our work goes beyond running workshops and engaging in community education. We are becoming more and more politically engaged as we strive to hold our political leaders and institutions to account for their commitments and obligations. As is, I hope is clear, neither Sonke nor MenEngage, nor the organisations that make up the alliance are “men’s rights organisations” involved in a backlash against women’s rights.

Indeed, the experiences of many of my colleagues at Sonke and within the MenEngage Alliance inform and hopefully embody our principles. Many of our members have themselves been affected by violence—as direct victims of Apartheid-era violence or armed conflict in West Africa and the Great Lakes region or, in some cases, exposed to domestic violence in their homes of origin or forced to witness indescribably cruel sexual violence inflicted against family members during situations of civil war. Many of our members, too, are not victims: they are caring men who are, or wish to be, in loving, generous and equal relations with women. To be this way often requires daily acts of quiet courage and resistance to dominant images of masculinity. They join us because they see the importance of sharing their actions with others who may not yet have the same capacity to bring positive change in their homes, schools and workplaces. Whether borne of anguish and hardship or

of generosity and existing capacity and desire to be catalysts for change, their determination to work with each other to prevent domestic and sexual violence celebrates the fact that men too have a stake in creating a world where they, and women, are able to live joyful lives that are free from the threat and trauma of violence.

With these background musings in place, I will now turn to the topic at hand: how do we understand sexual violence in conflict and post-conflict settings, and what we can do to mobilise men and boys to take action to end it?

THE EXTENT OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN CONFLICT

The issue we’re here to talk about is so hard to talk about that it’s tempting to discuss it in the abstract and keep the horror and pain of it at a distance. I don’t want to do that tonight so bear with me as I try to ground us in the severity of the situation.

I’m fortunate to serve on the advisory council to the Nobel Women’s Initiative new campaign to end gender based violence in conflict. When we last met I sat at lunch with Denis Mukwenge, the widely revered medical doctor based at the Panzi Hospital in Bukuavu, in the Democratic Republic of Congo’s war-torn South Kivu province. Himself a survivor of the 1996 civil war, Dr Mukwenge provides medical services to rape survivors, including emergency surgery to women who have been literally torn apart by brutal rapes, including very often gang rapes or rapes perpetrated with objects. With fatigue palpable in his voice and eyes, Doctor Mukwenge told a group of us that now in 2011 he is operating on some women for the third time—women who he did not think would survive their first fistula surgery are now showing up for the third time, some with their daughters, and sometimes their sons, also in need of emergency services. It’s hard to get ones head around.

Of course, the violence isn’t just in the DRC. The January 2012 UN Secretary General’s report on sexual violence in conflict is hard to read. It doesn’t tell us much we haven’t heard before though. It’s filled with stories of brutal rapes committed by soldiers and by armed combatants. Some of the countries listed are familiar to us, others listed as sites of routine violence against women in conflict are new, like Egypt, Libya and other Arab Spring settings. It includes the following damning passages:

“The last year has seen several new and ongoing armed conflicts where sexual violence was widespread and, in some instances, may have been systematically targeted at civilians by armed forces and armed groups, in order to punish, humiliate and destroy. Mass rapes against women and girls were also witnessed. The general breakdown in law and order, the absence of justice, continuing conflict, entrenched discriminatory attitudes and practices and the prevailing culture of impunity in these situations allowed for these crimes to be committed not only with appalling consequences for the victims, but with a force that destroys the fabric of society as a whole. In all these situations, cases of conflict-related sexual violence remain largely unreported owing to several factors, such as social stigma, fear of reprisals, insecurity, a lack of available response services and the perceived futility of reporting as a result of weak administration of justice, apathy and political pressure.”

Increased awareness and symbolic commitments: Stark and alarming as its language is, the very existence of a UN Secretary General’s annual report on sexual violence in conflict settings indicates
that women’s rights activists – and increasingly, activists who draw attention to sexualised violence in conflict that targets males – have been successful in drawing attention to the urgency of the issue and mobilising UN commitment to addressing it. As the issue becomes more public, so the language defining the violations becomes more refined: I will discuss this point in more detail later.

The UN Security Council and its signatory states have also made a range of commitments to addressing sexual violence in conflict. These include a number of Security Council Resolutions on women, peace and security including SCR 1325 on women and peacekeeping, passed in 2000, SCR 1820 on sexualised violence in conflict, passed in 2008 and SCR 1960 passed in 2010 to reaffirm and deepen commitments made on women, peace and security. The Secretary General has also appointed a Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict and many UN agencies, including especially those involved in post-conflict disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration are attempting to address sexual violence as a priority.

Outside of the UN system there is also significant attention to the issue of sexual violence in conflict. The Nobel Women’s Initiative, established by Women Nobel Peace Prize laureates, has launched a high profile Campaign to End Gender Based Violence in Conflict and late last year the Nobel Peace Prize was jointly to Ellen Johnson Sirleaf and Leymah Gbowee from Liberia and Tawakkol Karman from Yemen "for their non-violent struggle for the safety of women and for women’s rights to full participation in peace-building work". Then, just a week ago, the International Criminal Court decided to bring charges against leading Kenyan politicians for allegedly promoting violence, including sexual violence, in the wake of Kenya’s disputed 2008 elections. In July last year, the Refugee Law Project at Makerere University, Uganda, produced a documentary on male survivors of sexual violence called “They Slept With Me”, which received significant media coverage, and we at Sonke and the MenEngage Alliance released a documentary film entitled “A Way to Justice” which also sketches out potential ways to understand and address the violence.

These are encouraging developments; but as I’ll elaborate, much remains to be done to turn these mostly symbolic actions into changed reality on the ground. Seen together, they do appear to indicate that urgency of of the need to stop widespread sexualised violence in conflict is finally being understood in the international arena. Much more needs to be done of course and I’m going to turn to one aspect of that now—how we understand and address the gender dimensions of conflict and post-conflict reconstruction.

**TRYING TO UNDERSTAND THE VIOLENCE**

As I said earlier, sexualised violence needs to be seen on a continuum of power abuse. Sexualised violence is the same in its intent, and often in its lasting effects, whether it is used in conflict settings or not. Whether in war or peacetime, the perpetration of sexualised violence is driven by socially sanctioned male dominance over women – and over socially weaker men, and children -- by notions of manhood and power that valorise sexual conquest and give powerful men a sense of entitlement with no consequences, as many male politicians have shown us. It’s permitted because of social stereotypes that grant some men a sense of entitlement to use and abuse other people’s bodies. It’s entrenched by slow, ineffectual and often corruptible justice systems, with male-dominated policing systems playing a part in what sometimes looks like systemic impunity. Perhaps most egregiously

and hardest to change is exclusionary, male-dominated systems of power that allow men, no matter their class, race or creed, to trivialise and normalise their own and other men's violence against women, other men, and children, to laugh it off, including through verbal violence, and to treat it as a private matter without fear of serious sanction from either the state or their friends.

If we consider how easy it is for all these social norms and failed institutions to facilitate violence in communities that are not actually at war, then we can begin to see why it is so much more exaggerated in situations of armed conflict. When institutions and social norms break down, as they do in armed conflict, there is little to stop men’s use of sexualised violence. The scale and severity of the violence that ensues is a chilling testimony to the fragility of the norms that promote gender equality, or at the very least, help discourage such violence because potential perpetrators fear the consequences of their actions. Think of the complexity of effort it takes to prevent and sanction violence, even in peaceful places, and you will realise that nearly constant effort and significant machinery is needed to keep it in check. What then of a warzone? War interferes with schooling, disrupts economic activities and public institutions. It destroys livelihoods and causes massive social dislocation. War and armed conflict can ruin social cohesion and undermine the rule of law as well as local customary practices and accountability mechanisms that used to protect against domestic and sexual violence. Once war takes hold everyone in the affected society will be traumatised by exposure to violence. Studies of inter-generational violence and trauma show that victims may become more likely to use violence themselves. In some settings men and boys are forced at gunpoint to commit or witness atrocious acts of violence, often directed at their own family or community members. This, then, generates acts of reprisals and the conflict deepens and the atrocities become simultaneously more appalling and more commonplace.

In post-conflict settings, very often the trauma goes unattended to. It not only festers but becomes normalised: in other words, people cannot forget what they saw, did or experienced, but they are simultaneously unable to stop it from happening to others; or they may even forget a time when such violence was not part of their everyday experience. Former combatants who derived their wealth, power and sense of manhood from carrying a gun and having easy access to women’s bodies and other spoils of war continue to hold the same attitudes in settings with weak legal and criminal justice systems, failed economies and a fragile peace accord. In addition and controversially, some researchers argue that in post-conflict settings some men resent the attention and resources granted to women by international aid agencies and, as a result, subject women in their homes and communities to retaliatory violence which allows them to maintain control.

No matter the explanations we are offered for why it happens, the violence described in the Secretary General’s 2012 report and so many others is endemic and has to be stopped. I will argue that to achieve that goal we have to think differently about how men’s roles and responsibilities are determined, and how violent and exploitative behaviours continue to be rewarded, no matter where they occur.

UNDERSTANDING MEN’S VARIED RELATIONSHIP TO SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN CONFLICT:

Today, I’m going to argue—as we do at Sonke—that it’s useful to think of men in three ways when it comes to their varied roles in and relationship to sexual violence in conflict: 1) men as perpetrators of sexual violence, 2) men as primary and secondary victims of other men’s sexual violence and 3) men as actual and potential agents of change for gender justice.

Given what I’m going to say next, I want to reiterate what I’ve hopefully already conveyed. Many men commit rape with impunity and all too frequently face little to no social sanction. Their violence devastates the lives of women, other men, and children, and it has to be stopped. They should face the full extent of the law, whether in their home countries or at the International Criminal Court in The Hague.

Nonetheless, while it is true that it is men who commit the vast preponderance of domestic and sexual violence in conflict and post-conflict settings, I want to repeat what I said earlier because it simply is not said enough: it is absolutely critical that we recognise that it is not all men who commit such violence. It is not even the majority of men.

There are so many easy assumptions, accompanied and reinforced by a set of familiar tropes and stereotypes that characterize men, and particularly men in Africa, in terms that are racist, classist and ‘othering’. Rape was widespread in Europe during both World Wars One and Two although it’s taken decades for this fact to be openly discussed. Rape (of women, men and children) continues, in ‘peacetime’ Europe, to be one of the most widespread crimes and prosecution rates for such violence, even when it is lethal, remain abysmally low. Yet, men in the global South, and particularly men in Africa, are portrayed quite uniformly in the Western Media as perpetrators, supportive, silent indifferent bystanders, callous and stigmatizing, likely to ostracise and abandon their wife, girlfriend or daughter if she is raped in conflict. They are also characterised as unable to empathise with the suffering of men whose families are victims, and seen as homophobic, incapable of and unwilling to support or acknowledge men who have themselves survived sexual violence. These stereotypes are deeply damaging and problematic for several reasons. They deter women and men from seeking assistance from men who might otherwise provide love and support, they reinforce negative stereotypes, alienate many men and sometimes generate a backlash against women’s rights; and they decrease the likelihood that men will be mobilised as advocates for change and for gender justice because they close the space for alternative expressions of masculinity to be celebrated. They play a central role in a vicious cycle because they simply shut down public and private debate on how men can be different.

The stereotypes about African men as violent, indifferent and callous also hide the fact that a significant number of men are themselves raped, sometimes repeatedly. Some are abducted and forced to perpetrate rape in order to stay alive. Finally, almost none of them are given the tools to think differently about themselves or their behaviour towards those closest to them.

The stereotype about the violent or indifferent man also hides the fact that many men are deeply troubled by violence committed against women they love and care about. The stereotype makes it difficult to remember that such men have a deep personal investment in bringing the violence to a stop, but worse than that, it prevents men from taking actions for positive change.

If we want to meet the needs of survivors of sexualised violence, and if we want to assist communities to address the deep and debilitating trauma left by all other kinds of violence that are perpetrated in conflict, we have to simultaneously hold perpetrators accountable AND recognise that it is critical to engage men as survivors of violence and as potential agents of change.

**Men as Victims of Sexual Violence in Conflict:** In a significant departure from many others UN documents, the 2012 SG report acknowledges the emerging evidence indicating that men can also be victims of sexual violence in conflict:

“Sexual violence, and the long shadow of terror and trauma it casts, disproportionately affects women and girls. However, recent information underscores that the situation of male victims and the plight of children born as a result of wartime rape require deeper examination. The issue must be understood from all perspectives and addressed at all levels as part of a comprehensive approach to protecting civilians.”

The acknowledgement by the UN that men can also be victims of sexual violence in conflict is important. In many ways it is long overdue. Studies suggest that rape against men is widespread in situations of conflict. The study *Male Rape and Human Rights* documents widespread male rape in war, including in Chile, Croatia, Greece, Iran, Kuwait, the former Yugoslavia and the former Soviet Union. According to the study, at least one incidence of sexual torture and of 6,000 male concentration-camp inmates in Sarajevo fully 5,000 reported having been raped. Here it’s important to reiterate the point made by the SG in his report. The vast majority of rape in conflict is perpetrated by men against women. However, naming men as victims should not detract from the urgency of meeting women’s needs. Quite the opposite, it should strengthen calls for justice, as the Refugee Law Project’s work has steadfastly maintained. Like those women, men raped in war also desperately need care and justice. In both cases, action has to be taken to address the consequences and hold the perpetrators accountable.\(^1\)

We’ve seen then that men are both perpetrators and victims of sexual violence in conflict. What gets less attention, but for the purposes of our work at Sonke and MenEngage is absolutely critical, is the role that men can play as agents of change.

**Men as Agents of Change and Activists for Gender Justice: Drawing Inspiration from Post-Conflict Settings.** Sonke recently completed a documentary film on efforts to engage men and boys in achieving gender equality. The film, titled “A Way to Justice” is available online at [http://www.vimeo.com/26553725](http://www.vimeo.com/26553725) and features the stories of many men and women working across

\(^1\) It is worth noting, though, that the Security Council Resolutions on “women, peace and security” as they are known, contain deep silences on men that suggest significant ambivalence about the roles and responsibilities of men in conflict. Interestingly, Resolution 1325, passed in 2000, encourages consideration of “the different needs of female and male ex-combatants”, SCR 1820 (2008) although SCR 1960 (2010), passed more recently, contain no mention of men at all—not as victims, perpetrators or potential agents of change.
Africa to promote gender equality and social justice. It focuses especially on David Tamba and Pascal Akimana, both of whom narrowly survived war in their home countries of Sierra Leone and Burundi respectively.

Both were forced to flee their homes and spent years moving from refugee camp to refugee camp, David in Liberia and Guinea, Pascal in the DRC, Kenya and Tanzania. At the age of twelve, Pascal was forced to witness the rape of his sister. David was unable to prevent rebel forces from abducting and raping his pregnant wife. Each gave serious thought to joining rebel forces to exact revenge but chose not to, in part because of the depression and trauma they both struggled with as a result of the violence they had witnessed and suffered.

Whilst living in a refugee camp, David was approached by a UNHCR protection officer, Lynn Ngugi, who convinced him to participate in camp activities aimed at preventing endemic sexual violence. Now, a decade later, David is the director of the Men’s Association of Sierra Leone where he coordinates activities intended to increase men’s support for Sierra Leone’s three new gender equality laws. He also coordinates Sierra Leone’s fledgling MenEngage country network.

After years of moving steadily southwards from Burundi, Pascal was invited to join a Men As Partners workshop at a clinic in Johannesburg’s inner city. He was initially resistant to the ideas of gender equality discussed there but returned for subsequent workshops because they gave him a forum to discuss his trauma. He now works for Men’s Resources International and is an emerging leader in the field of gender equality work with men and boys.

David and Pascal’s stories complicate the conventional discourses about men and violence against women in conflict settings, which, as I’ve said, typically depicts men only as part of the problem—as perpetrators, probable perpetrators or indifferent bystanders. David and Pascal’s stories remind us that most men are deeply affected by violence against the women in their lives—their mothers, sisters, partners, wives—and often feel profoundly ashamed about their inability to prevent violence they experienced or suffered, or sometimes were forced to perpetrate. Men’s reactions to experiencing sexual violence are even more complex since they’re wrapped up in social stereotypes about what constitutes a ‘real man’.

But Pascal and David remind us that not all men turn their shame, confusion and pain into fuel for further violence. Perhaps most significantly, their lives and the lives of many other men like them bear testimony to the importance of developing initiatives and tools to support men to act on their convictions that sexualised violence, against women, men, and children, is wrong and that they have a role to play in stopping it and in supporting gender equality and women’s leadership.

WORKING WITH MEN AS AGENTS OF CHANGE

At Sonke, our work is to engage men and boys in efforts to end gender based violence and to promote gender equality. While South Africa is not formally a conflict setting, one of the most terrible legacies of apartheid is that the levels of men’s violence against women and against other men rival those in conflict settings.

Men in South Africa are often depicted as deeply opposed to gender transformation and to women’s rights. Our research shows that some men are indeed resistant to change and perceive women’s rights as a threat to their privilege. Other research shows that nearly 27% of men have raped a woman in their lifetime and nearly half have battered a woman. Alarmingly, 5% report having raped a woman and 15% say they’ve abused a woman in the last year.

These are disturbing statistics. Yet, they only tell about a quarter of the story, and in that sense, they hide an important reality. Fully 73% of South African men indicate that they have not raped a woman, and 55% indicate that they have never assaulted a woman. Turned around like this, these statistics indicate that a majority of South African men do not use violence and a very large majority have not abused a woman recently, quite possibly because they know it’s wrong and feel some remorse for the violence they did use. Our qualitative research with men in seven of South Africa’s nine provinces shows that alongside the men who fear and are resistant to change, a significant number support change and believe women’s rights are consistent with our new political dispensation. A smaller but still significant number argue that women’s empowerment enriches their own lives and relationships.

Our work at Sonke is focused on mobilising these men to speak out, to take action in their own homes and communities to stop their own and other men’s violence and to become activists for change. Our primary community education embodies this strengths based approach. It is called the One Man Can Campaign. As the name implies, the campaign affirms that men have a positive role to play in bringing about change and provides them with sequenced opportunities to reflect on the costs they bear when they adhere to rigid notions of manhood. The campaign also acknowledges that many men themselves grew up in homes where there was violence and so know the pain that many women endure. It calls on men to act on their convictions that violence is wrong and that it can be stopped.

Increasingly men who have participated in One Man Can workshops are joining local community action teams and self identify as gender activists. Some now participate in political action to ensure that the courts hold perpetrators accountable and grant justice to survivors of violence. Some joined Sonke’s campaign to hold a prominent political leader accountable for misogynist statements he made about rape survivors—a campaign which led the political leader in question to issue a public apology and retract his statements. Still others participate in a campaign to monitor police compliance with the provisions of the new Sexual Offences Act and visit police stations to assess their ability to meet the needs of rape survivors.

EVIDENCE OF PROGRAMME EFFECTIVENESS
Sonke’s successes in engaging men and boys as agents of change are by no means unique. As new programs engaging men and boys have been implemented, a broad body of effective evidence-based programming has emerged and confirmed that men and boys are willing to change their attitudes and practices and, sometimes, to take a stand for greater gender equality—whether in the rural Eastern Cape province of South Africa, the favelas of Rio de Janeiro or in New Delhi, India. Indeed impact evaluations keep confirming that with the right support, men can change their gender related attitudes and relations in relatively short periods of time.

IMPLEMENTING MULTIFACETED STRATEGIES: THE SPECTRUM OF CHANGE.

I hope I’ve given you reason to believe that it is possible to mobilise men to oppose men’s violence against women and to make tangible changes in women’s – and their own lives – by doing this. If this work is to make a significant difference at any kind of scale, if it is to bring about meaningful social change, it is necessary to use a range of social change strategies to generate a fundamental change in social norms about men’s roles and responsibilities in ending violence against women. Work with men and boys for gender equality will need to happen at many levels and in multi-faceted ways, including some of the following strategies:

1. Roll-out community based workshops and dialogues to encourage large numbers of men and boys to reflect on the costs them and to women of adhering rigidly to narrow notions of manhood that equate manhood with dominance, aggression, sexual conquest, fearlessness and risk taking.
2. Challenge men in positions of power for their sexist, homophobic and exploitative approaches to others, and challenge the impunity their power so often grants them.
3. Promote healthy gender norms through community and mass media.
4. Build coalitions and networks with key partners, including women’s rights organisations and networks.
5. Increase individual and institutional capacity to provide the psychosocial services needed to address pervasive trauma experienced by the large numbers of men and boys exposed to violence—whether in their homes or in armed conflict.
6. Develop and implement laws and policies at the national and international levels that sanction and deter men’s violence and dominance over women, support existing processes of change, encourage large numbers of men to relate in equitable and caring ways and publicly celebrate these positive actions.
7. Engage in advocacy, activism and community mobilisation to ensure that national governments and international organisations implement the many policies and programmes to which they have committed.

Efforts to engage men and boys in achieving gender equality and ending men’s violence have mostly taken the form of community education, typically workshops. These initiatives are critically important and need to be scaled up; they can bring about meaningful change in the attitudes and practices of the men who participate in them. However, by design, they reach relatively small numbers of men and boys—and typically not the men and boys who hold the power to really bring about large-scale change. Workshops and community dialogues are, in other words, vitally necessary but not sufficient. To make a real impact gender equality and accountability work has to reach men in positions of power—in multilateral institutions, national governments and political parties, non-state armed groups, the private sector and in other positions of authority.

**Demanding the resources needed to prevent and address GBV in conflict:** Earlier on tonight I made the point that the current peace enjoyed across most of Europe since the Second World War was made possible in part by infusions of huge amounts of money in the form of the Marshall Plan which
provided close to 1.5 Trillion Dollars (close to 1.5 Trillion Dollars in 2010 terms) in aid to Europe over seven years.

One of the key tasks before us is to insist that those in positions of power in donor agencies and government foreign affairs departments, who are, of course, mostly men, recognise, prioritise and respond to the urgency of sexual violence in conflict by making available the funds needed to address it. The amount currently available is grossly inadequate to the task and the claims made about there not being money appallingly threadbare. It’s hard not to see this as an example of women’s needs being dismissed as not sufficiently important.

The Global Fund for Women made $9 Million US Dollars available in grants last year. The United Trust Fund to End Violence Against Women has an annual operating budget of $25 Million Dollars. UN Women has more than $325 Million for 2011. Impressive work has gone into raising this money. Yet it is far from enough.

We are told that there isn’t more money available because of the recession. Yet, just today EU leaders meeting in Brussels provided 220 Billion Euros to bail out Greece and the banks holding its debt. This is one of many multi-billion Euro bail-outs granted in the last year or so. You’ll remember that the US government made 700 Billion Dollars available to prevent an economic meltdown caused by deregulation and high risk investment and banking strategies.

We have to demand that more money be made available for other kinds of spending than shoring up banks and inadequate governments, and we have to insist that the horrendous but routine violence meted out to women across the world be treated as the emergency that it is. When AIDS activists were told that there wasn’t the money necessary to make life saving anti-retroviral drugs available to people who needed it they succeeded in showing that this was not the case and managed to secure billions of dollars a year in funding from the Global Fund and from the US Government’s President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR). The Nobel Women’s Initiative’s Campaign to End Gender Based Violence in Conflict is calling for a billion dollars a year to be made available to address violence against women. This is an amount that would make a real difference. Women and men need to hold our political leaders accountable to make this money available. Without it, our responses will be piecemeal and inadequate.

One institution we should focus some of our attention on is the World Bank. Gender Action, a group that tracks spending on women’s rights by international financial institutions (IFIs), report that IFIs “spend a tiny fraction of their multi-billion dollar budgets to directly address GBV, and in some cases actually exacerbate GBV through extractive industry and post-conflict investments that undermine women’s and girls’ safety and increase their vulnerability to violence.” The report continues with examples: “in 2010, the World Bank (WB) allocated US$1.98 million—or 0.01 percent of its budget for Sub-Saharan Africa—to address GBV in the South Kivu region of East Africa, where protracted conflict has led to sexual assaults against tens of thousands of women and girls (Oxfam, 2010). The WB website lists another WB investment to combat GBV in Cote D’Ivoire as not having any funding at all. As the WB does not provide any documentation on the aforementioned projects, it is impossible to determine their quality, including the extent to which women and girls participate in

and benefit from project outcomes.” (International Financial Institutions (IFIs) and Gender Based Violence (GBV): A Primer. Gender Action April 2011.)

Money is needed to rebuild health services to ensure that women and men who survive rape have access to the critical emergency services they need. Money is needed to rebuild criminal justice systems, including ensuring that survivors of rape have access to proper policing and forensic services, prosecutors, judges and impartial courts that are willing to hold perpetrators accountable. Money is needed to ensure that complainants in cases that go to the International Criminal Court have access to currently unfunded and largely unavailable witness protection programmes. And money is, of course, needed to roll out broad-based social norms campaigns to challenge harmful gender norms that contribute to men’s use of sexual and domestic violence. The World Bank and donor countries, especially the G8 countries who have repeatedly committed and repeatedly failed to provide 0.7 percent of GDP to foreign aid, must live up to their promises. When they don’t we have to engage in advocacy to make sure that they do. AIDS activists have shown it’s possible. The issue of sexual violence in conflict is similarly urgent and equally deserving of an emergency plan to address it.

It’s not just donors who are not adequately following up on their obligations. National governments and regional bodies can and must do more too.

**Demanding action from regional bodies and national governments:** There is a lot we should expect and demand from national governments. Yet commitment and follow-through from regional bodies and national government is at best uneven.

We should expect that they use donor money in honest and transparent ways. Reports suggest that donor money often simply replaces existing budgetary commitments and allows governments to shift money previously committed in one department or ministry to another, resulting in the net amount for social development remaining the same while other budgets including for military spending or government salaries increase by the amount made available by donors for health or safety.

The African Union declared this decade, 2010-2020 as the African Women’s Decade. In Africa, political leaders have signed on to a range of human rights treaties and declarations of commitment, including CEDAW, Resolution 1325 and Resolution 1820. The Maputo Protocol specifies that there should be clear protections for women from sexual violence in situations of armed conflict. However, now 24 months into the African Women’s Decade, governments across the continent have a lot of catching up to do.

Research indicates that over 200,000 women have been raped in the DRC since the start of conflict. The violence is ongoing. In one instance, between July 30th and August 4th, nearly 500 women and girls, and some boys and men, were raped in and around the village of Luvungi in the Eastern DRC in a campaign of ongoing terror waged by armed groups who use rape as a weapon of war. In the wake of that violence, however, neither the Government of the Democratic Republic of Congo nor the relevant regional bodies issued statements condemning the violence. The African Union was silent

and so was the Southern African Development Community, the East African Community and the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region, which has held numerous meetings to address sexual violence in the Great Lakes region.

And, of course, it’s not just the DRC: the most recent elections in Zimbabwe saw ZANU-PF use widespread sexual violence to silence and intimidate women activists. That too was met with silence by political leaders in the region. In the wake of contested elections in Kenya, many women and some men were raped. Little action was taken until the ICC pressed charges and just last week determined that four senior politicians should face trial for allegedly coordinating widespread violence and intimidation. In my country, South Africa, we have great laws on the books but rates of domestic violence and sexual violence are the highest of any country not at war.

How can it be that the political leaders in our region remain so silent on this issue? It seems self-evident but it isn’t said enough: this inaction reflects ongoing disregard for women’s rights and dignity by male political leaders who value political allegiances over their stated commitments to women’s rights as human rights.

**Demanding the United Nations take urgent action:** The Secretary General has made many public commitments to put the full weight of the UN system behind efforts to end violence against women. As part of the UNITE to End Violence Against Women campaign he has put together what is called the Network of Men Leaders, on which I serve. It includes many influential men whose voices could make a real difference. However, even though it was established over two years ago, it is yet to meet and has no clear programme or plan of action. He and other leaders in the UN can and must do more.

Political pressure from the UN can make a real difference. It did so in South Africa when repeated pressure from UNAIDS helped shift our government from AIDS denialism to meaningful implementation of anti-retroviral treatment. It also did so recently when the Secretary General challenged Malawi’s President Dr. Bingu wa Mutharika about state driven human rights violations of the rights of the LGBTI community.

A core principle of the battered women’s movement is that perpetrators have to be held accountable if the violence is to stop. When perpetrators are senior government officials, the UN can exert pressure on regional bodies and on the International Criminal Court to take swift action. The UN can also borrow from the European Union which has developed the practice of including human rights provisions in their preferential trade agreements and put pressure on the World Bank and the IMF to link loans to human rights adherence.

The UN also has a key role to play in ensuring that it strengthens its response in places like the DRC by increasing the number of peacekeepers on the ground and by mobilising resources to provide the healthcare and medical services so desperately needed by women at the moment.

Perhaps most critically, UN member states must get back to their commitment to end discrimination against women, in whatever form it takes, as laid out in CEDAW. The so-called women, peace and
security agenda is not a replacement for ending discrimination, as it seems in so many contexts to have become. It is fundamentally a means to support gender equality and women’s empowerment. Work on women, peace and security should always be funded and carried out with an agenda for significant social change at its core: only such an approach will challenge and overcome men’s current domination. To achieve this end, the UN should work with its many partners, including with bilateral donors, to ensure that local women’s rights organisations and affected women have the resources they need to continue the important work they do to challenge their exclusion and to bring about change at every level. Without economic and political support women’s rights activists will not be able to participate meaningfully in peace negotiations, peace building processes, or institutional reform including through more effective security governance. If they are not involved in these discussions, as we see time and time again, women’s rights are all too likely to be compromised in the name of political expediency.

**Committing to urgent action:** I think all of us here tonight will agree that the task of ending sexual violence is urgent and demands an immediate infusion of financial resources and political will. I hope I’ve made the case that it also requires that we think differently about men’s roles and their potential as agents of positive change. 2015 provides us with a useful benchmark: it is the due date for achieving the Millennium Development Goals, the 20th anniversary of the Beijing Platform for Action, and the 15th anniversary of Security Council Resolution 1325. If we’re to achieve much between now and then we’re almost certainly going to have to demand more from our national governments, from our regional bodies and from the UN itself. We’ll be far more effective in achieving this if women are not expected to end discrimination against them on their own – an impossible task. It is time for men to step forward to play their part.