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Advocates Voice Support For International Violence Against Women Act

WASHINGTON, D.C. –Several advocacy groups and activists have issued statements in support of the House and Senate bi-partisan legislation to combat violence against women and girls, *The International Violence Against Women Act*. These statements of support demonstrate the strong momentum to see this legislation passed into law:

Nicole Kidman, UNIFEM Goodwill Ambassador said, "Violence against women and girls is perhaps the most systematic, widespread human rights violation in the world. I believe that IVAWA, when passed, will be a beacon, lighting the way forward in other countries. I commend the efforts that have gone into the drafting of IVAWA, and in particular appreciate the consultation with the real actors and the real beneficiaries to incorporate best practices and effective approaches."

"I applaud the introduction of the International Violence Against Women Act, and urge its swift, bipartisan passage. Although we currently face many challenges around the world, nothing is more important than ensuring the safety of women and girls everywhere," said **Reese Witherspoon, Honorary Chairwoman for the Avon Foundation for Women**. "The passage of IVAWA will give us another vital set of tools, so we can better focus existing investments, and continue to add new resources - so we can strengthen the most effective programs we have, and innovate beyond them. It will allow us to achieve our goal: to dramatically reduce violence against women and the damage it wreaks around the globe."

"Sexual violence against women and girls increases their vulnerability to HIV infection and must be stopped. This is a health and human rights concern of epidemic proportions. Violence can be a major obstacle to universal access to HIV prevention, treatment, care and support—keeping women and girls from getting information and services they need." said **Mr. Michel Sidibé, Executive Director of UNAIDS**. "We can stop violence against women and girls by making the AIDS response an opportunity to reduce intimate partner and sexual violence. We must urgently scale up promising interventions designed to address HIV and violence—fully funding these efforts is essential for providing a comprehensive and integrated response to violence."

“Preventing violence against women and girls must be a priority if we are to address the underlying causes of gender inequity in the AIDS epidemic. The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria has made this an integral component of our strategy, but we rely on partners like the US government to ensure that we are all working together to make it a reality. I congratulate the US Congress on taking this important step toward ending violence against women and girls through the introduction of the International Violence Against Women Act,” said **Dr. Michel Kazatchkine, Executive Director of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria.**

“Every day around the world, girls and women are subjected to indescribable acts of violence. Rape, sexual exploitation, and physical abuse are daily occurrences and these crimes too often go unpunished. The International Violence Against Women Act is an important step in addressing gender-based violence and in protecting the rights of women and girls,” said **Ann M. Veneman, Executive Director, UNICEF.**

“I support the International Violence Against Women Act, not only as an Amnesty International advocate opposing violence against women but also as an individual whose childhood was marred by domestic violence. This is a human rights issue which blights millions of families and homes and takes its cruel toll behind closed doors. I commend the United States Congress for addressing this issue. This legislation will help women around the world to stop abuse, achieve justice and pursue their ambitions,” said **Sir Patrick Stewart, advocate for Amnesty International.**

Kerry Kennedy, Chair of Amnesty International USA Executive Director's Leadership Council said, “Violence against women is the greatest challenge faced by the international community today. Worldwide, one of three women will be subjected to domestic abuse, acid burnings, honor killings, rape as a weapon of war and other forms of violence during her lifetime. That violence in turn impacts all the girl and boys, women and men in her family, her community, her country and beyond. IVAWA will transform millions of lives, and bring hope to women and men across the world. IVAWA will bring prevention, protection, education and services for women, and will show the world that the United States is determined to protect women’s rights.”

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