

More girls have been killed in the last fifty years, precisely because they were girls, then men were killed in all the battles of the twentieth century.

– *Half the Sky: Turning Oppression into Opportunity for Women Worldwide*

The numbers are staggering. Women between the ages of fifteen and forty are more likely to be seriously injured or die from male violence than from cancer, malaria, traffic accidents and war combined. This gender based violence combined with ‘deadly discrimination’ and neglect in basic healthcare means that more women and girls have died in this routine “gendercide” in just ten years, than all the people in all the genocides of the 20th century.

When New York Times writer Nicholas Kristof and his co-author (and wife) Sheryl WuDunn addressed the United Nations on Tuesday they were clear in their message that women are not simply the “problem” and ending violence and discrimination against women and girls is not a “women’s issue.” Violence and discrimination against women and girls is deeply engrained in culture, it affects not just women and girls but the development of their families, communities and nations. Given the opportunity in education and business women and girls make a difference, not just in their own lives but for those around them.

Access to education, improved health and freedom from violence for girls and women is the cause of our time, they argue, just as ending the Trans-Atlantic slave trade was the cause of the 19th century. Their book, *Half the Sky: Turning Oppression into Opportunity for Women Worldwide*, lays out an agenda for the work ahead, as well as the three major abuses: sex trafficking and forced prostitution; gender-based violence including honor killings and mass rape; and maternal mortality, which needlessly claims the life of one woman a minute.

The panel and book signing proved to be a major event. Kristof and WuDunn were joined by Chief of the United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime Antonio Costa and the Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon, proof of the recent assertion that gender-based violence and maternal mortality are high on the peace and security agenda.

The Secretary General, founder of the campaign UNite to End Violence against Women & Girls, was a co-sponsor of the event. He recounted a story of a young girl he met in Goma, a city in the war-torn Democratic Republic of the Congo, who had been raped at gunpoint by soldiers on both sides of the conflict. In war, girls become the common enemy.

Kristof has long championed the voices of women through his excellent op-ed columns. Not long ago, he introduced us to his hero, a teenage girl from Pakistan named Assiya Rafiq. Assiya was abducted and raped repeatedly and when she was finally dropped off to the police, several of them took turns raping her. Given the stigma assigned to rape victims in Pakistan, her story might be expected to end with suicide. Instead she is speaking out and prosecuting her attackers, even under threats against her and her family by the police. *Half the Sky* is full of the similar stories of remarkable women and girls, and their male allies turning the world around. More information can be found at www.halftheskymovement.org

Sponsored by UNODC and UNite

Antonio Costa, UNODC Chief

- Trafficking is a crime that shames us all. [This saying moves the shame/stigma from the victim to the whole society for letting it continue.]
- The Vienna Protocol has three basic components (the three Ps): Prevention, Protection of Victims and Prosecution. It is a good Protocol, but must be enforced to be successful.
- Women seen as sex objects create a market for women as commodities to be bought and sold.

Secretary General Ban Ki Moon

- If an alien came to earth and was shown the systematic abuse and murder of women, she might ask: “Are the people in charge of this world morally blind?”
- In Goma, DRC, met a young girl raped at gunpoint by 4 soldiers recovering at the Heal Africa hospital. In conflict, girls become the enemy, they are being raped and maimed by soldiers on all sides of the conflict in the DRC
- Nothing will change unless we stop shielding the perpetrators and thereby perpetuating their crimes
- Violence against women is not a “women’s concern”, the UNite campaign to end violence against women is a collaborative effort. Violence against women must be high on the agenda of peace and security matters.
- We must see universal compliance with CEDAW [Only xxx countries have not ratified: the US, xxx
- The UN Gender Architecture Reform plan was approved just yesterday, it was 3 year process, and finally the GA has approved the Secretary Generals plan

Sheryl Wudunn, co-author Half the Sky: Turning Oppression into Opportunity for Women Worldwide

- In China, 39,000 baby girls ‘disappear’ every year. These are cases of girls being discriminated against to death
- In the developing world, girls die from child marriage and early childbirth. As babies they suffer from not receiving vaccinations, other inadequate medical care. Demographers say that overall there more males overall in the world
- Women are not the ‘problem’ but women can be the ‘solution’
- Violence against women is not just simply something men to do women, older women commit FGM against little girls, women are traffickers and pimps. Violence against women and girls is societal, cultural and deeply seeded.

Nicholas Kristof, co-author Half the Sky: Turning Oppression into Opportunity for Women Worldwide

- Moral judgments are not intellectual but an emotional process. The only difference between modern day and 19th century slavery is that these girls would die of AIDS , or murdered in their 20s
- The book addresses three main issues that greatly affect women: Trafficking, Mass Rape & Honour Killings and Discrimination in Healthcare.

- Addiction to drugs is another 'lock & key' used by the traffickers to keep women and girls at the brothel. The book has the story of a girl, forced into drug use by the traffickers, who then returned to the brothel even after 'rescue' to get methamphetamine.

Antonio Costa

- The victims of trafficking of overwhelmingly women and girls (80%). In most crimes the perpetrators are overwhelmingly male, however in trafficking more of the perpetrators are female than would be expected 20 to 50% in some countries
- One major limitation is that good statistics are not widely available. Governments need to step in with reliable data.

Nicholas Kristoff

- The 19th century abolitionists worked from the grassroots, bringing people in from the left & right. The counter argument was that the conditions in slavery 'weren't so bad' and so it was the abolitionist's job to produce testimonies and show manacles. And yet, it was important for them not to exaggerate numbers or conditions. They talked about the best case scenario and showed how bad that was.
- Things you can do in 10 minutes at www.halfthesky.org

Antonio Costa

- Dance therapy can be important, lets them focus on doing something with their bodies other than what they did before rescued
- Regarding rape as a weapon of war, Deputy prosecutor of the ICC has said "Women's bodies are envelopes that are used to send messages to the enemy"
- The stigma of rape makes it a great weapon, destroys while keeping itself quiet. It undermines the patriarchy, leaving men feeling inadequate for not being able to protect the women in their society.
- The Protocol is good but governments aren't moving on it quickly enough.
- Security Council should be pressured to name and shame those countries in which women are routinely raped as a weapon of war, similar to the list of countries financing terrorism

Half the Sky Book Notes

- They got interested because 1 year after Tiananmen Square they read a report which found that 39K baby girls die in China every year because of medical neglect. How could some human right abuses be front page news and this not even be mentioned? (xiv)
- Less than 1% of US foreign aid is directed to women & girls specifically (xiv)
- 100 million women are missing @ at a rate of 2 million per year (xv)
- In some places women are discriminated against to death (xv)
- Globally, more girls have been killed in the last 50 years (precisely because they are girls) than men killed in all the battles of 20th century. More girls killed in this 'gendercide' in any one decade, than all the genocides of the 20th century. (xvii)
- The Girl Effect. Lawrence Summers, as chief economist of the World Bank "Investment in girls education may well be the highest return investment available in the developing world." (xx)
- China has more 'willing' prostitutes than India, where more are physically enslaved. The stricter the moral code (India, Pakistan, Iran) the more forced prostitution. Rural Nepalese or Bangladeshi girls are forced into prostitution in India. (6-7)
- In Brazil, China and sub-Saharan Africa there is more 'voluntary' prostitution out of economic necessity. (9)
- Their own estimate is that 3 million women & girls are enslaved in the sex trade forcibly, not counting the manipulated, coerced and those under 18 who cannot meaningfully consent. (11)
- "Although volume upon volume is written to prove slavery a very good thing, we never hear of the man who wishes to take the good of it, by being a slave himself." – Abraham Lincoln
- Runs through the problems of DMSC in Cambodia, once hailed as a shining example of legalizing 'sex work' and empowering 'sex workers', including forced underage prostitution. (26-30)