

Statement on the Occasion of International Women's Day, 8 March 2013

**Dr. Babatunde Osotimehin, United Nations Under-Secretary-General and
UNFPA Executive Director**

On the occasion of International Women's Day, I want to take this opportunity to renew the commitment of UNFPA, the United Nations Population Fund, to strengthening and expanding our efforts to do everything we can to bring an end to gender-based violence. Gender-based violence remains a major health and human rights concern and no human development can be achieved as long as women and girls continue to suffer from violence or live in fear of it.

This year's International Women's Day coincides with the ongoing meeting at the United Nations, at New York, of the Commission on the Status of Women, which this year focusses on the priority theme of Addressing Violence against Women.

Globally, millions of women and girls are subjected to all forms of violence, including rape, intimate partner violence, female genital mutilations, child marriages and sexual violence in armed conflict and during humanitarian crisis.

Women and girls who are abused may suffer prolonged psychological pain, may be rejected by their families and communities, and may be denied opportunities for health care and economic self-sufficiency. In addition, there are direct physical consequences. Sexual violence can result in unwanted pregnancies, unsafe abortions, traumatic fistula and sexually transmitted infections, including HIV—all of which can be fatal. As part of the global community, we have an obligation to ensure that these human rights violations come to an end.

Building on the work of the Commission on the Status of Women, we must come together to find an internationally agreed consensus which will bring us closer to keeping women and girls safe and free from violence or the threat of violence. This is our chance to have a positive impact on the lives of millions. We cannot afford to miss this opportunity.
