UNITED NATIONS HUMANITARIAN CHIEF:
STATEMENT ON INTERNATIONAL WOMEN’S DAY,
8 MARCH 2011

Today marks the 100th anniversary of International Women’s Day. A day dedicated to celebrating women's achievements worldwide, but also a day when we rededicate ourselves to campaigning against the violence and abuse which millions of women still face daily.

And we also remember the women displaced by conflict or national disasters. Forced to live in camps, sometimes for many years, with poor washing and sanitation facilities, and limited educational opportunities for their children.

Today I arrive in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). A country where sexual violence remains widespread in conflict affected areas and perpetrators come from all parties to the conflict, including elements of the national army. The persistence of sexual violence in DRC shames us all. A disturbing and horrifying reality for thousands of children, women and men.

On this day of all days, I hope we will all take time to pause and reflect, think about the things that can and will make a difference. Providing girls and women with education and information. Making sure they have the confidence to stand up for themselves, to challenge and to be a central part of shaping their own futures.