

25 November 2013

**Message of H.E. John W. Ashe
President of the 68th Session of the United Nations General Assembly,
on the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against
Women and Girls**

On this International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women and Girls we, the international community, are again reminded that violence, including sexual violence, against women and girls, is one of the gravest, most pervasive violations of women's human rights.

Violence against women and girls respects no boundaries: it affects women and girls even before birth, and is constant throughout their lives, continuing into old age. It is committed by family members and by strangers, as well as in the wider community – at work, school, and on the streets.

Women and girls all over the world are bearing the onslaught of these many forms of violence. Sexual violence, particularly in situations of armed conflict, is an especially heinous form of violence that rips apart communities and societies and prevents sustainable peace; intimate partner violence; violence justified in the name of culture and tradition; violence resulting from women's quest to escape extreme poverty; female infanticide and femicide; forced and early marriage, are also causes for universal concern.

As we prepare to craft a post-2015 development agenda, violence against women and girls remains an enormous global problem that must be overcome. Great strides have been made in the last twenty years, but the hurdles are high, and it is imperative that Member States redouble their support for global prevention and response.

No sustainable development agenda can be achieved without ending this global violation of human rights, without ending all violence against all women and girls in every country in the world.