

DEPUTY SECRETARY-GENERAL, IN REMARKS TO COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF

Following the text of UN Deputy Secretary General Asha-Rose Mingo's remarks to the Commission on the Status of Women, in New York today 2 March:

I am honoured to be with you today for the opening of the fifty-third session of the Commission on the Status of Women. I take this opportunity to assure you that the Secretary General and I are strongly committed to gender equality, the empowerment of women and the important work of this Commission.

On my right, I see Mr. Sha Zukang Under-Secretary General for Economic and Social Affairs] who has also given tremendous support to gender issues, and I welcome his participation.

I welcome the Commission's decision to focus on the equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men, including care-giving in the context of HIV and AIDS, as the priority theme for this session.

Imbalances and inequalities in the sharing of responsibilities between women and men persist in both the private and public spheres and in relation to both paid and unpaid work. Most domestic and care work, for example, is done by women and girls in developed and developing countries alike.

reconciliation of work and family responsibilities for both women and men. This includes closing the gap in pay, increasing flexibility in working arrangements, providing better leave provisions and increasing the degree to which men take advantage of these provisions.

We must also develop innovative ways to eliminate gender stereotypes about the roles of women and men, beginning at an early age in homes, schools and communities, and engaging leaders in all walks of life.

Without proper social and rights protection, too many women continue to carry the heaviest burden in caring for those affected by HIV and AIDS. This is unjust and a serious form of discrimination, even a form of violence against them. Through his campaign, "UNite to End all Forms of Violence against Women and Girls", the Secretary-General is resolved to put an end to this scourge. A commitment he has reaffirmed yesterday as he was visiting the Kibati refugee camp near Goma in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The Secretary-General continues to promote the message that violence against women is