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Secretary-General focuses on role of fathers for International Day of Families



A family in North Kivu, DR Congo

15 May 2008 – Fathers can make a positive impact on the development of their children, but too many men have difficulty taking up the responsibility of fatherhood, United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said in a **statement** today to mark the **International Day of Families**.

“Recent research has affirmed the positive impact of active involvement by fathers in the development of their children,” Mr. Ban said, noting that there is an increased emphasis in many countries on “the father’s role as a co-parent, fully engaged in the emotional and practical day-to-day aspects of raising children.”

But he added that challenges persist for fathers, and for society in general. “Some fathers inflict domestic violence or even sexual abuse, devastating families and creating profound physical and emotional scars in children. Others abandon their families outright and fail to provide support.” He said that the HIV/AIDS crisis demonstrates the critical importance of sexual responsibility for fathers and all men.

The Secretary-General also spoke about the difficulties caused by migration – saying that fathers often face separation from their families. He added that some fathers may even be rejected by their children once they have moved to a new country.

Mr. Ban called on families “to honour fathers for their important contributions to family life. And I call on all of us to commit ourselves to building a social environment that encourages and sustains a positive vision of fatherhood.”

At UN headquarters in New York, a panel discussion was also held today on the challenges and responsibilities of fathers following the screening of a film called To be a Father.

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