



SVRI FORUM 2011:

Moving the agenda forward

10 – 13 October 2011, Vineyard Boutique Hotel & Spa,
Cape Town, South Africa



PRESS RELEASE: SVRI Forum 2011: Moving the agenda forward

Sexual Violence Research Initiative www.svri.org and www.svri.org/forum2011

September 2011

Cape Town shines a spotlight on sexual violence against women at an international research conference.

Sexual violence against women remains endemic in South Africa and in many other parts of the world impacting on the health and well-being of survivors, their families, communities and society. From 10 – 13 October 2011, world leaders in sexual violence research will convene at the Vineyard Boutique Hotel in Newlands, Cape Town for the second international conference of the Sexual Violence Research Initiative.

The SVRI and the SVRI Forum 2011

The Sexual Violence Research Initiative (SVRI) is hosted by the South African Medical Research Council's Gender and Health Research Unit. The Initiative connects professionals around the globe working in the field of sexual violence research and advocacy to share and collaborate on a spectrum of issues with the overall goal of developing the evidence base to strengthen responses to victims and to end sexual violence. This 4-day conference plans to achieve just that through the delivery of an exciting mix of workshops, event launches, oral and poster presentations. The quality of the programme is world-class, and the spectrum of topics is current and broad. The presentations build on the priorities identified at the SVRI Forum 2009 (<http://svriforum2009.svri.org/>) and are structured around the following themes:

- Primary prevention (including community based interventions);
- Responding to sexual violence: Models of care; and
- Sexual violence in conflict and crisis.

To end sexual violence must be our ultimate goal and challenge. Dr Claudia Garcia-Moreno, SVRI Forum conference chair and WHO Coordinator Sexual Health, Gender, Reproductive Rights and Adolescence notes, *"Research on root causes of sexual violence is essential to our efforts to end sexual violence. Important and new knowledge on rape perpetration will be presented during the conference. Through this conference, and the cutting edge research being done globally, we hope to create a vision that it is indeed possible to develop community based multiple interventions that address the complex root causes of this violence."*

A detailed programme of the SVRI Forum 2011 is now available on the Forum website at: <http://www.svri.org/forum2011/programme.htm>

Special Guests and Events

Keynote Address:

Michele Moloney-Kitts, Together for Girls Initiative

The SVRI is also honoured to have Michele Moloney-Kitts, the Managing Director of Together for Girls, deliver the keynote address at the SVRI Forum. Prior to joining Together for Girls, Ms. Moloney-Kitts served as the Assistant Global AIDS Coordinator for the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR). As a leader in international public health for over thirty years, her primary focus has been on women and children.

Message by the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict:

Margot Wallström

“Rape is not unique to war. But in war, it is a cheap and powerful strategy, used by militia to humiliate and shame their enemy and achieve political, military and economic ends.”

Sexual violence has been recognised as a global threat to human security and a used as weapon of war devastating the communities involved. In support of the SVRI Forum 2011 and the special sessions dedicated to rape in conflict and crises settings, the UN Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict has recorded a special message for conference delegates in Cape Town this year. This voice video message will be made widely available after the conference.

Voices of Men – a One Man Play Working to End Men’s Violence against Women

The SVRI is also delighted to announce a play by Ben Atherton-Zeman. Ben is a spokesperson for the National Organization for Men Against Sexism (www.nomas.org) and is a public speaker on issues of violence prevention. The play uses humour and celebrity male voice impressions to bring these topics to audiences in a way that minimizes male defensiveness. It is highly entertaining as well as educational! For more information visit: <http://www.voicesofmen.org/>

SVRI Forum on Facebook

Conference organisers will post daily summaries of the conference on the SVRI Facebook page. Look for us by searching for ‘Sexual Violence Research Initiative’ or visit:

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Sexual-Violence-Research-Initiative/71822396561>

If you would like to learn more about the SVRI, visit: www.svri.org. For any question or queries about us or the Forum, contact: svri@mrc.ac.za.

We look forward to having you involved!

