



## ***NEWS RELEASE***

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### **Global Dispatches: Ending Violence and Discrimination Against the Girl Child**

SAN DIEGO, CA –The Joan B. Kroc Institute for Peace & Justice (IPJ) at the University of San Diego brings to light successful strategies to protect girl children around the world at the Third Annual International Women’s Day Celebration Breakfast, “Global Dispatches: Ending Violence and Discrimination Against the Girl Child.” This event coincides with the 51<sup>st</sup> session of the United Nation’s Commission on the Status of Women (CSW 51) convening February 26 to March 9, 2007 in New York City.

Around the globe, many children face threats to their basic human dignity and rampant violations of their human rights:

- 1.2 million children are trafficked each year;
- 1.8 million children suffer sexual exploitation each year;
- 300,000 boys and girls are forced to be child soldiers;
- 77 million children are not in school, 70% of whom are girls;
- As many as 2 million girls experience practices of female genital cutting each year.

Dee Aker, interim director of the IPJ, and Erika Lopez, program officer for the IPJ’s Women PeaceMakers program, along with other experts and San Diego high school students, will speak on the global movement against cruel treatment of the girl child.

Respected internationally for their work in this field, Aker and Lopez spoke at the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women on March 1, 2007 during a parallel workshop – *No Excuses: Defending Women’s and Children’s Rights in Times of Terror*. At the March 8 breakfast, the team will report on the U.N.’s global standards and concrete policies for promoting gender equality and protecting girl children.

## International Women's Day Celebration Breakfast

Other members of San Diego's CSW 51 delegation who will speak at the March 8 breakfast include Institute for Peace & Justice Program Officer Laura Taylor; Jenni Prisk, founder of Voices of Women; Anne Hoiberg, United Nations Association, Lilia Velasquez, human rights lawyer, and High Tech High student Tuyaymya Osuna. Voices of Women and the Women's Equity Council of the United Nations Association - San Diego Chapter are co-conveners of the event.

The Joan B. Kroc Institute for Peace & Justice at the University of San Diego is dedicated to fostering peace, cultivating justice and creating a safer world through education, research, and peacemaking activities.

The University of San Diego is a Catholic institution of higher learning chartered in 1949; the school enrolls approximately 7,500 students and is known for its commitment to teaching, the liberal arts, the formation of values and community service. The establishment of the Joan b. Kroc School of Peace Studies will bring the University's total number of schools and colleges to six. Other academic divisions include the College of Arts and Sciences and the schools of Business Administration, Law, Leadership and Education Sciences and Nursing and Health Science.