

PRESBYTERIAN MISSION AGENCY BOARD

February 5-7, 2014

World Mission Ministry Area

**ITEM B.112
FOR ACTION**

<i>FOR PRESBYTERIAN MISSION AGENCY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S OFFICE USE ONLY</i>			
	A. Finance	E. Corporate Property, Legal, Finance	J. Board Nominating & Governance Subcommittee
X	B. Justice	F. PC(USA), A Corporation	P. Plenary
	C. Leadership	G. Audit	
	D. Worshiping Communities	H. Executive Committee	

Subject: A recommendation for the Presbyterian Mission Agency to become an official member of the We Will Speak Out campaign

Recommendation:

That the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board approve membership in We Will Speak Out, a faith-based coalition working together to spark a movement to end sexual violence in the U.S. and the world.

Background:

We Will Speak Out is a global faith-based campaign to end violence against women. <http://wewillspeakout.us/> and <http://www.wewillspeakout.org/> In short, We Will Speak Out advocates for churches to lead the way to end violence against women by resourcing congregations as well as acting and advocating for change.

In the past months, many offices have been working together to create movement around violence against women and have pledged their support including the Office of Public Witness, the Presbyterian Ministry to the United Nations, Racial Ethnic & Women's Ministries, Theology & Education, Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns, the Presbyterians Against Domestic Violence Network, Presbyterian Women, and Presbyterian Men. We see this as an effective way to support congregations in their efforts as we move forward into a broader movement that includes children. We hope this will be one option we can present to congregations to address the critical global initiative of ending violence against women and children.

Current coalition members include The World Council of Reformed Churches, World Vision International, International Medical Assistance (IMA) World Health, the Episcopal Church, the Mennonite Central Committee, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the Lutheran World Federation, the Disciples of Christ Week of Compassion and Jewish Women International.

The cost for a non-profit organization of our size is \$2,500. This financial commitment allows for communication staff to resource with development of educational tools for congregations and Christian schools, staffing, and support for constituents as we have needs.

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We urge Presbyterian Mission Agency Board support and sponsorship for **We Will Speak Out**. Violence against women demeans, devalues, and oppresses women and families, squelches societies from overcoming poverty and violence, and severely limits human rights efforts both here in the U.S. and around the globe.

God loves all people, and as the Scriptures teach us, has a special heart for those who are abused, neglected, and marginalized. The Hebrew Scriptures tell us that God is near to the broken-hearted and the defender of the downtrodden.

*“Wash yourselves; make yourselves clean;
remove the evil of your doings
from before my eyes;
cease to do evil,
learn to do good;
seek justice,
rescue the oppressed,
defend the orphan,
plead for the widow”
(Isaiah 1:16-17)*

*In Luke 5, Jesus recalls the prophet Isaiah when he says,
‘The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
because he has anointed me
to bring good news to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives
and recovery of sight to the blind,
to let the oppressed go free,
to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favour.’*

In the tradition of the prophets, the ministry and life of Jesus, and responding to the concerns of our global partners, peacemakers, health and education workers, mission co-workers, and many departments of the Presbyterian Mission agency, we affirm our support for We Will Speak Out as a concrete way to end violence against women and ask the Presbyterian Mission Agency to share in full sponsorship.

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World Mission

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