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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – March 7, 2005

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INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY IS AN OPPORTUNITY TO FOCUS ON BRINGING HELP TO VICTIMS OF SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND TRAFFICKING

Human Rights Organization Encourages Leaders to Keep Pressure on Traffickers

ARLINGTON, Va.- International Women's Day is Tuesday, March 8, and Gary Haugen, founder and president of International Justice Mission is calling on government and NGO leaders to keep the pressure on people who traffic in human beings and send a strong message that the exploitation of women and girls will not be tolerated.

"The fact is, today is an unrelenting nightmare of serial rape for millions of women and girls victimized by sex trafficking around the world," Haugen said. "No International Women's Day should proceed without raising a voice on their behalf." According to Haugen, much needed attention has been drawn to this problem and he believes International Women's Day is another opportunity to remind leaders of the plight of women and girls around the globe who have been trafficked. "We know the traffickers are committed to the sexual exploitation of women 365 days a year; and what their victims want to know after International Women's Day is whether we are equally committed to their liberation. That is the test that will make this day meaningful for them in the 364 days that follow."

In recent weeks IJM has deployed investigators to the region devastated by the tsunami to investigate reports of orphans who may be vulnerable to trafficking. IJM also recently worked on a case in Cambodia where three criminals charged were convicted and sent to prison. IJM rescued three teenagers who were trafficked into brothels in Cambodia and represented them in court as the girls faced their oppressors and testified about their abuse and exploitation.

Haugen is the author of "Terrify No More," a book released last month that chronicles IJM's work rescuing 37 girls from brothels in Svay Pak, Cambodia and tells the story of other victims of slavery, land grabbing and illegal imprisonment who have been helped by IJM.

About International Justice Mission:

International Justice Mission is a human rights organization that rescues victims of violence, sexual exploitation, slavery and oppression. IJM is working in Cambodia training police officers on investigative techniques, evidence gathering and law enforcement procedures to combat sex trafficking. The work of IJM has been featured on Dateline NBC, FOX News, CNN, MSNBC, in Forbes Magazine, the New York Times Magazine, Wall Street Journal and other media outlets. IJM was founded by Gary Haugen who was the Officer in Charge of the U.N. investigation into the Rwandan genocide. Haugen has just released the book "Terrify No More" which chronicles IJM's efforts to rescue 37 girls from a brothel in Cambodia.