SECRETARY-GENERAL APPOINTS MARTA SANTOS PAIS OF PORTUGAL AS SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE ON VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN

United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has appointed Marta Santos Pais of Portugal as his Special Representative on Violence against Children at the level of Assistant Secretary-General.

The appointment was made following the recommendation included in the Secretary-General's Study on Violence against Children. The General Assembly, at its sixty-second session, adopted resolution 62/141 requesting the Secretary-General to appoint, for a period of three years, a Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children.

The Office of the Special Representative will be in New York and provided with administrative support by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). The position of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, as well as the Office to support her, will be funded from voluntary contributions.

Ms. Santos Pais brings to the job her tremendous passion, her firm commitment to the rights of the child, more than 25 years experience on human rights issues and engagement in intergovernmental processes.

Currently Director of the UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre, a post she has held since 2001, she joined UNICEF in 1997 as Director of Evaluation, Policy and Planning and served as Co-Chair of the United Nations Development Group Working Group on Human Rights.

From 1991 to 1997, Ms. Santos Pais was the Rapporteur of the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child, during which time, she also served as Vice-Chair of the Coordinating Committee on Childhood Policies of the Council of Europe.

She held a number of advisory positions on human rights and legal issues in Portugal, authored many studies and publications and served as Special Adviser to the Machel Study on children affected by armed conflict and to the United Nations Study on Violence against Children.

Ms. Santos Pais holds a law degree from the University of Lisbon.

Born in Portugal in 1952, she is married and the mother of two children.

UN's press announcement about the appointment: http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs//2009/sga1182.doc.htm