

## **Opening Remarks**

**Ambassador Stephen Mull**

**2012 White Ribbon Award Ceremony**

**Teatr Kamienica**

**December 7, 2012**

I would like to express my appreciation today to all those involved in organizing this White Ribbon Award ceremony and to all of you here for recognizing the need to address this critical issue.

Seventeen years ago Hillary Clinton, who was then First Lady, declared at the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing that violence against women and girls is a violation of human rights.

And as Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton has continued to speak out on behalf of women and girls around the world.

One in three women around the world today experience some form of gender-based violence; one in five will experience rape or attempted rape.

But no matter what form it takes, gender-based violence is an intolerable violation of human dignity. No one can quantify the personal pain and anguish of any form of abuse. But medical and legal bills, lost wages and lower productivity, and health costs are things on which we can put a price. And there we do see - in dollars and cents – that violence against women costs everyone in a society.

The consequences of this violence extend, though, beyond the immediate injury or economic loss. There are often severe and lasting health outcomes, such as sexually transmitted infections, and social and psychological damage that affects survivors, their children, families, and entire communities.

Each year between November 25 -- the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women -- and December 10 -- International Human Rights Day -- people around the world commit themselves to speaking out about violence against women and girls and improving the protection of women worldwide. I want to assure you that the U.S Embassy and the Government of the United States join you in this important effort to put an end to the abuse that traps so many women.

Thank you very much.