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The Blue Fashion Runway Show on the first day of Lakmé Fashion Week kicks off the WEvolve Campaign to end gender violence

Celebrated designer Manish Malhotra has been joined by Hollywood actress Rosario Dawson to present The Blue Runway, the opening night evening slot of Lakmé Fashion Week and the launch of WEvolve, a global campaign and program aimed at empowering young men and women to challenge norms that lead to gender violence. The Blue Runway will be the longest runway in Indian fashion history, and commemorates the 25th anniversary of Manish Malhotra, and the 15th anniversary of Lakme Fashion week. WEvolve is bringing together luminaries from the film, fashion and art world, to raise awareness and inspire action to end gender based violence. To date, WEvolve has been supported by Bollywood director and actor Farhan Akhtar, Bollywood actress Poorna Jagannathan and Bollywood and Hollywood actress Nimrat Kaur. WEvolve will continue to expand globally, with plans to continue the conversation that began with The Blue Runway, which will be streamed live on Weveveglobal.org. WEvolve focuses on the worldwide problem of gender violence. The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that 35 percent of women worldwide, or more than one billion women, have or will experience either intimate partner violence or non-partner sexual violence in their lifetime. Violence against men, which is both under-researched and under-reported, is a related issue. The premise of WEvolve is that young people - both men and women - can evolve and develop new attitudes and behaviors and build healthy relationships that reduce the risk of gender violence. "It is a pleasure to be involved in the launch of this WEvolve global campaign that addresses gender violence. Fashion has a comprehensive and universal appeal and can thus be a powerful instrument to raise awareness and promote action. I congratulate and thank WEvolve and Lakmé Fashion Week for giving me this opportunity to contribute to this great cause," said designer Manish Malhotra. Models, celebrities, and leading personalities from Bollywood and beyond will unite on this critical issue while celebrating the promise of a better future. The event will provide a foundation for young men and women to come together, share experiences, and seek new ways to end gender violence. WEvolve works in global partnership with international and national organizations, private sector companies, NGOs, and foundations working on ending gender violence. Activities have been launched in countries such as Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Nigeria, and Pakistan, with these focused on: Digital and social media campaigns that engage young men and women; Performing arts, film, music and other creative ventures; Shows such as the "Blue Runway, aimed at raising awareness and calling young people to action; Youth story-telling and youth-led creative initiatives. Young men and women around the world have the opportunity to influence, challenge and change social norms. Today's digital and social media give young people a reach and a power that is unmatched in history. WEvolve provides the tools and language to empower young people to open their minds, become leaders of a new era, engage their peers and elders, and think and act differently," according to Maria Correia, a leading advocate on gender issues at the World Bank, which is a WEvolve partner. "At WEvolve, we also believe that men are integral to the change process, and understanding what drives men to use violence is central to halting it" added Gary Barker, a leading voice on engaging men and boys for gender equality, and director of Promundo, another WEvolve partner. Factsheet on Gender-Based Violence in South Asia: The global cost of violence is estimated to be 5.2 percent of global GDP, or a staggering \$4.4 trillion (Report for UNWomen by Copenhagen Consensus Center). Beyond direct and short-term consequences, child witnesses of violence are more likely to have emotional and behavioral problems, perform poorly in school, and be at risk of perpetrating or experiencing violence in the future (UNWomen). Research from developed countries shows that men and women who experienced violence in the home as children were 5 to 10 times more likely to have problems with substance abuse and 2 to 3 times more likely to suffer from cardiovascular problems, cancer and other diseases (2012 World Development Report). Businesses and employers can incur costs due to employee absences, stemming from gender violence-related health complications; incarceration of (gender violence) perpetrators; and additional security measures needed to prevent workplace violence. (UNWomen). On average, 30 percent of women who have been in a relationship report that they have experienced some form of physical or sexual violence by their partner, and as many as 38 percent of murders of women are committed by an intimate partner (WHO). Violence against men is both under-researched and under-reported. According to UNICEF's latest report on child marriage, 156 million men across the globe were married before they were 18 years old. Evidence supports the centrality of social norms in leading to gender violence. Over 35 population-based studies from Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Middle East have shown that attitudes condoning partner violence on the part of both women and men - but particularly men - are highly predictive of the perpetration of violence. Male respondents from Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Sri Lanka and Papua New Guinea cited sexual entitlement as the most common motivation for rape (London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine). Join us and learn more: Website: www.weveveglobal.org Facebook: www.facebook.com/weveveglobal Twitter: www.twitter.com/weveveglobal WEvolve is a global campaign bringing men and women together to end inequality using the power of art and media to inspire action and change. We Unite. We Challenge. We Change. WEvolve. Find out more at www.facebook.com/WEvolveGlobal or www.WEvolveGlobal.org. Media Contacts: In Washington: Joe Qian (jqian@worldbank.org) In Delhi: Sudip Mozumder (smozumder@worldbank.org) 

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