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The President's Interagency Council on Women



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Brochure "Platform for Action"
Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, China



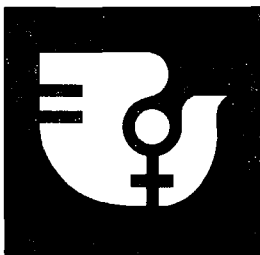
UNITED NATIONS

*Fourth World
Conference
on Women
Beijing, China
4-15 September 1995*

Obstacles

Strategies

Actions



Summary

Platform for Action



The President's Interagency Council on Women

First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton • Secretary of State Madeleine K. Albright • Secretary of Health and Human Services
Honorary Chair Chair Donna Shalala, Immediate Past Chair

December 1998

The First Lady, Hillary Rodham Clinton, Honorary Chair

Secretary of State, Madeleine K. Albright, Chair

*Secretary of Health and Human Services, Donna Shalala,
Immediate Past Chair*

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The President's
Interagency Council on Women

**COUNCIL MEMBER
BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION**

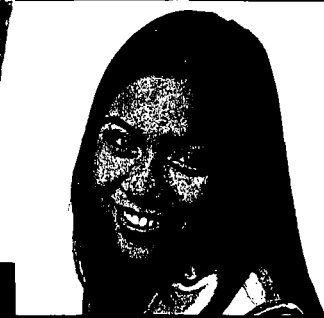


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WOMEN IN TRANSPORTATION
Changing America's History



MONTHLY PLANNER

Welcome to



The President's Interagency Council on Women

[What's New!](#) | [Members](#) | [Public Remarks](#) | [Archives](#)

On August 26, 1995, prior to the UN Fourth World Conference on Women, President Clinton announced the formation of an interagency Women's Council. The President said:

"The (Women) Conference is going to talk about education and domestic violence and grass roots economics, employment, health care, political participation . . . And we don't intend to walk away from it when it's over. I'm going to establish an interagency council on women to make sure that all the effort and good ideas actually get implemented when we get back home."

This intragovernmental body is charged with coordinating the implementation of the [Platform for Action](#) adopted at Beijing, including the U.S. commitments announced at the Conference.

The Council is also charged with developing related initiatives to further women's progress and engage in outreach and public education to support the successful implementation of the Conference agreements.

First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton serves as Honorary Chair of the Council. Secretary of Health and Human Services Donna Shalala chaired the Council from its inception through March 1997. On March 8, 1997, the President announced that Secretary of State Madeleine K. Albright, following the strong leadership provided by Secretary Shalala. The Council consists of high level representatives from Executive Branch agencies.

The President's Interagency Council on Women

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(202) 647-6227 (Fax: (202) 647-5337)

For additional international information, visit the [USIA International Women's Bulletin Board](#)



[Back to Secretary's Home Page](#) | [Back to State Department Home Page](#)



Take Our Daughters to Work Day



Secretary of State Madeleine K. Albright in the Treaty Room at the U.S. Department of State with some of the young women from Washington, DC public high schools who participated in the Take Our Daughters to Work Day event sponsored by the President's Interagency Council on Women on April 23, 1998.

Take Our Daughters to Work Day afforded the Secretary the opportunity to meet with these young women and generated an inspiring reaction from one of the participants. Natasha Tekeste, now a freshman at Norfolk State University, wrote this letter about her experience with the Council:

"The most memorable experience for me during the Take Our Daughters to Work Day was when all the participants broke into groups and discussed daily issues that affect our lives and solutions that would help solve some of the problems. This was a really good chance to meet other girls my age and debate different topics and see one another's views.

"In 10 years I would like to be a successful broadcast journalist. My dream job is to be a reporter for 'Primetime' or '20/20.'

"Being involved in Take Our Daughters to Work Day has helped me want to achieve my goals even more. Just talking to these dynamic ladies for one day has inspired me to 'push for the stars.' If other young ladies could be exposed to the same opportunity that I was, I'm sure that would be a successful start."

For more information about the Council's Take Our Daughters to Work Day program and other activities to involve girls and young women in U.S. foreign policy, please contact Alyse Nelson at the U.S. Department of State: (202) 647-6195.

For more information about sponsoring a Take Our Daughters to Work Day in your institution, please call the Ms. Foundation for Women at (800) 676-7780 or visit their website: <http://www.ms.foundation.org>

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UNITED NATIONS FOURTH WORLD CONFERENCE ON WOMEN, BEIJING CHINA, 4- 15 SEPTEMBER 1995
12 CRITICAL AREAS OF CONCERN

1. **Poverty:** *develop macroeconomics mechanisms to improve access to economic resources.*
2. **Education and Training:** *ensure equal to education and promote lifelong education and training for girls and women.*
3. **Health:** *increase women's life-long access to affordable, appropriate, and quality health care, and to information dealing with maternal mortality, sexually transmitted diseases, HIV/AIDS and sexual and reproductive health.*
4. **Violence:** *adopt and implement legislation to end violence against women, ratify the UN Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women, encourage international cooperation to dismantle trafficking in women.*
5. **Armed Conflict:** *increase participation of women in conflict resolution at decision-making levels, condemn ethnic cleansing and rape as a consequence of war and a violation of human rights.*
6. **Economy:** *promote women's economic rights and independence, including access to employment and appropriate working conditions and control over economic resources.*
7. **Decision-Making:** *ensure women's equal access to and full participation in public sector power structures, increase women's capacity to participate in decision-making and leadership positions.*
8. **Institutional Mechanisms:** *create/strengthen national bureaucracies to ensure that advancement of women is vested in the highest possible level of government.*
9. **Human Rights:** *promote human rights of women by fully implementing all human rights instruments, especially the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women.*
10. **Media:** *promote a balanced and non-stereotyped portrayal of women in the media.*
11. **Environment:** *integrate gender concerns and perspectives in policies and programs for sustainable development.*
12. **The Girl-Child:** *eliminate discrimination against the girl-child: enforce rights to succession, and to inherit, eliminate female genital mutilation, son preference, economic exploitation of child labor, and strengthen the role of the family in improving the status of the girl-child.*

MATRIX OF WORKING GROUPS AND CROSS-CUTTING CRITICAL AREAS OF CONCERN

PRESIDENT'S INTERAGENCY COUNCIL ON WOMEN WORKING GROUPS

UN FOURTH WORLD CONFERENCE ON WOMEN 12 AREAS OF CRITICAL CONCERN

| | |
|--|---|
| <p>WOMEN AND THE GLOBAL ECONOMY Chaired by Kitty Higgins, Department of Labor: works to ensure that policy deliberations on global economic issues give appropriate consideration to women by coordinating such efforts throughout the U.S. government.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • poverty • education & training • economy |
| <p>WOMEN AND PRISONS Chaired by Bonnie Campbell, Department of Justice: seeks to improve conditions for incarcerated women and their families by heightening public awareness, lending support from federal personnel, state corrections officials and NGOs.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • poverty • education & training • health • violence • human rights |
| <p>RURAL WOMEN Chaired by Jill Long Thompson, USDA: seeks to improve the status of rural women; serves as follow-up to the International Conference on Women and Agriculture held on June 28 - July 2 in Washington, DC.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • poverty • education & training • health • violence • economy |
| <p>TRAFFICKING IN WOMEN AND GIRLS Chaired by Anita Botti, Department of State: works to coordinate and increase U.S. government efforts to prevent and combat trafficking in women and girls.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • poverty • violence • human rights • child-girl |
| <p>GENDER AND INSTITUTIONAL CHANGE Chaired by Sally Shelton Colby, USAID: works to develop a gender perspective into governmental policies and operations.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • institutional mechanisms • decision-making |
| <p>(NEW!) MICROENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT Co-chaired by Ellen Lazar, CDFI and John Gray, SBA: works to better coordinate federal initiatives supporting microenterprise development.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • poverty • education & training • economy |
| <p>(NEW!) VITAL VOICES: WOMEN IN DEMOCRACY Chaired by Theresa Loar, Department of State: focuses interagency attention and resources on enhancing participation of women in the political and economic life of their countries.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • education & training • violence • economy • human rights • media |
| <p>(NEW!) EMPOWERING DISABLED WOMEN AND GIRLS Co-chaired by Judith E. Heumann, Department of Education and Susan Daniels, U.S. Social Security Administration: works to follow-up the International Leadership Forum for Women with Disabilities in June 1997; focusing on employment and leadership development.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • poverty • education & training • economy • decision-making |

WORKING GROUPS

The Council has established several interagency groups to work towards policy development, organized around a specific event, or promote dialogue and coordination on an issue. The working groups are chaired by Council representatives but other staff members of agencies participate. As with all of the Council's activities, the working groups derive from specific strategies or cross-cutting themes in the Beijing Platform for Action. All groups will have extensive contact and consultation with NGOs as they go about their work.

- **WOMEN AND THE GLOBAL ECONOMY.** Chaired by Kitty Higgins, Deputy Secretary of the Department of Labor, this group is working to ensure that Administration policy deliberations on global economic issues give appropriate consideration to the effects of various policies and programs on women; to coordinate the development of US government participation in international fora dealing with economic issues of concern to women; and to serve as a forum for interaction and information exchange on global economic issues with interested U.S. non-governmental organizations. Contact Liz Toohey, 202-219-6151.
- **WOMEN AND PRISONS.** Chaired by Bonnie Campbell of the Department of Justice, the group seeks to improve conditions for women incarcerated in the U.S. and their families by heightening public awareness, lending high level support to seek solutions, and establishing cooperation among federal personnel, state corrections officials and NGOs. Contact Wendy Patten, 202-514-3274.
- **RURAL WOMEN.** Chaired by Jill Long Thompson, USDA, the group seeks to improve the status of rural women. The goal of the working group is to serve as follow up to the International Conference on Women in Agriculture held June 28 - July 2 in Washington, DC. Contact Leanne Powell, 202-720-4581.
- **TRAFFICKING IN WOMEN AND GIRLS.** Chaired by Anita Botti of the State Department, the group works to coordinate and increase US government efforts to prevent and combat trafficking in women and girls. The group is implementing a concrete and comprehensive plan of action focusing on prevention, protection and enforcement. Contact Anita Botti, 202-647-5440.
- **GENDER AND INSTITUTIONAL CHANGE.** Chaired by Sally Shelton Colby of the Agency for International Development, this group is working to develop procedures that ensure the integration of a gender perspective into the policies and operations of government so that different impacts on men and women may be determined and inequities addressed. This includes the examination of disaggregated data as a model to measure program impacts. Contact Margaret Lycette, 202-712-0570.
- **[NEW!] MICROENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT.** Co-chaired by Ellen Lazar of the Department of Treasury's Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFI) Fund and John Gray of the Small Business Administration, this group is charged with better coordination of federal initiatives supporting microenterprises. This work rose directly from the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995, when the United States made a commitment to promoting microenterprise development. Contact Helen Szablya, CDFI Fund, (202) 622-8401.

(see back page)

- **[NEW!] VITAL VOICES: WOMEN IN DEMOCRACY.** Chaired by Theresa Loar of the Department of State, this group is charged with focusing interagency attention and resources on the full participation of women in the political and economic life of their country. First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton has keynoted the three *Vital Voices* conferences in Vienna, Belfast and Montevideo. Public-private partnerships to implement the conferences' outcomes are underway. Contact Alyse Nelson, Department of State, (202) 647-5440.
- **[NEW!] EMPOWERING DISABLED WOMEN AND GIRLS.** Co-Chaired by Judith E. Heumann of the Department of Education and Susan Daniels of the U.S. Social Security Administration. This working group will follow-up the International Leadership Forum for Women with Disabilities in June 1997. The two key issues this working group will address are: employment and leadership development. Four domestic and four international training sessions are planned for 1999 and 2000 with assistance from Council members. Contact Peggy McLeod, Department of Education, (202) 260-9163, or Ilene Zeitzer, Social Security Administration, (410)965-7302 .

**PRESIDENT'S INTERAGENCY COUNCIL ON WOMEN
1998 - 2000 TIMELINE**

1998

- January 16 Council Meeting with First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton and Secretaries Albright and Shalala
- March 11 Observance of International Women's Day, White House
- April 7 Council's NGO Public Briefing, U.S. Department of State
- April 23 *Take Our Daughters to Work Day*, Council Representatives mentored DC highschool students, Secretary Albright held a reception for the young students
- June 1 - 18 United Nations' Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women's Visit to the United States to look at conditions in U.S. prisons
- June 28 - July 2 The Second International Conference on Women in Agriculture: *Women Coming Together to Feed the World*, Washington, DC
- July 11 Secretary of State Albright inducted into National Women's Hall of Fame
- July 16 - 19 150th Anniversary of the Women's Rights Convention, Seneca Falls, NY, Keynote address by First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton
- August 31 - September 2 *Vital Voices: Women in Democracy*, Belfast, Northern Ireland, Keynote: First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton
- September 11 Council's NGO Public Briefing, U.S. Department of State
- October 1 - 3 *Vital Voices: Women in Democracy*, Montevideo, Uruguay
Keynote: First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton
- October 15 - 16 APEC Ministerial Meeting on Women, Makati, Philippines
Head of Delegation: Deputy Secretary of Labor, Kitty Higgins in her capacity of Chair of the Council's Working Group on Women and the Global Economy

December 4 Council Meeting with Secretary Albright and First Lady Hillary Clinton

December 17 Council's NGO Public Briefing and Holiday Open House at U.S. Department of State

1999

**January 14 Council Retreat with Principal Representatives
Conference Room A, 11AM - 1PM**

January 17 Updates to *America's Commitment* due from Executive Branch Agencies to S/PICW

February Joint Event with Women Policy, Inc. and Women Members of the 106th Congress on Council's Work

March 1999 Update of *America's Commitment* completed

March 1 - 12 United Nation's Commission on the Status of Women

March 12 International Women's Day

March 15 - 19 **First Preparatory Conference on Beijing Plus Five held at the United Nations**

March-November Regional UN Preparatory Conferences on Beijing Plus 5

April Final response from USG is due to the United Nations on Beijing implementation

April 7 **Council's Quarterly NGO Public Briefing**

April 22 *Take Our Daughters to Work Day* Event

April 28 *America's Commitment: Year 2000 Edition.* Council members begin collecting comprehensive information on five years after Beijing

June **Council's Quarterly NGO Public Briefing**

October 15 Deadline for Executive Branch submission to *America's Commitment: Year 2000 Edition.*

October **Council's Quarterly NGO Public Briefing**

December

Council's Quarterly NGO Public Briefing

2000

March

America's Commitment: Year 2000 Edition produced for International Women's Day and kick-off for the fifth anniversary of UN Fourth World Conference on Women

March 6 - 17

United Nation's Commission on the Status of Women

March 12

International Women's Day

March 19 - 23

Second Preparatory Conference on Beijing Plus Five held at the United Nations

April

Council's Quarterly NGO Public Briefing

April

Bring Your Daughter's to Work Event

June 5 - 9

United Nation's General Assembly, Special Session on Beijing Plus Five

July

Council's Quarterly NGO Public Briefing

September

Council's Quarterly NGO Public Briefing

December

Council's Quarterly NGO Public Briefing



Secretary of State Madeleine K. Albright
Remarks upon her induction into the National Women's Hall of Fame

Seneca Falls, New York, July 11, 1998
As released by the Office of the Spokesman

As Delivered

SECRETARY ALBRIGHT: Thank you all very, very much. Thank you, Karen Stone, for those very kind words and thank you all for your very warm welcome.

Sister inductees and the families and representatives, congratulations. Mayor Jones, Lyn Bedell, organizers of Honors Weekend, guests and friends, like many public officials, I am often compared to illustrious predecessors. So you can imagine how happy I am to be the first American Secretary of State to join the Women's Hall of Fame. (Applause.)

I am tempted to call up Henry Kissinger just to say, "Henry, eat your heart out."
(Applause.)

As a little girl, I had many dreams, but I never imagined something like this. When I look at the list of members of this Hall of Fame, I am inspired by the incredible range and richness of their accomplishments. As someone who cannot sing like Ella Fitzgerald, write like Emily Dickinson, act like Helen Hayes or shoot like Annie Oakley, I am astonished and humbled to be in their company, and to be in the company of the awesome women you honor today.

As I contemplate the world at the end of the 20th century, I draw encouragement especially from the memory of women who dared to stand up and fight for human dignity and freedom.

Simply being in Seneca Falls is a reminder of the debt we owe. So much of what we've accomplished as individuals and as a nation is attributable to the courage, vision and brilliance of our foremothers. After all, who but the crafters of the Seneca Falls Declaration could have found a way, in just their second sentence, to get the better of Thomas Jefferson?

(Applause.)

Because they asserted that men and women are created equal. Lucretia Mott, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Lucy Stone and their compatriots were scorned, ridiculed, laughed at and vilified. Day after day, they were advised to abandon their foolish quest for suffrage. For decades, they experienced more setbacks than steps forward. But like the movement to abolish slavery, the campaign for women's rights exposed a fundamental contradiction between American ideals and reality, between the promise of liberty for all and the denial of real freedom to millions of people.

Once that contradiction was exposed, and every stratagem for rationalizing it had been tried and found wanting, it had to be confronted; it had to be eliminated. And ultimately, the appeal made by the signers of the Seneca Falls Declaration to "the divinely implanted principles of human nature," as they put it, could not be denied.

Today, we look back across the years of inspiration and instruction. But we also look ahead, for the movement launched here is still young, still blossoming, still spreading the good news of equality and empowerment, justice and freedom. It is now far more than an American movement; it is universal -- it has gone global.

(Applause.)

And I believe that of all the forces that will shape the world of the 21st century, this may be the most important. (Applause.)

From the tiniest village to the largest city, surmounting every barrier of geography, language, ethnicity and background, the movement to unleash the full capacities and energies of women and girls is gaining strength.

In recent years, I have had the privilege of seeing in virtually every region of every continent the continuous working out, in ways unimaginable at the time, of the principles long ago formulated here in Seneca Falls. In Bosnia, I have seen women's groups insisting on a voice in the affairs of their country, so that they may re-create a culture of tolerance and heal the wounds of past strife. In Central Europe and the New Independent States, I have seen the birth of movements designed to give women a partnership role in the construction of new democracies. In Central Africa, I have seen women from different ethnic groups working side by side to prevent the return of genocidal violence to their lands. In Latin America, I have seen women coming together to achieve economic opportunity and legal equity in societies where habits of machismo have been deeply entrenched. In China, where females are all too often not accorded the value they deserve, the First Lady and I saw women, just two weeks ago, helping each other to find a place in the new world economy through education, training and micro-enterprise.

Around the world, I have seen women of virtually every national, religious and cultural affiliation joined in support of more open political systems.

Of course, this does not mean that women everywhere want to be the same. The desire for self-expression is universal, but different women do not express themselves in the same way. Certainly, not every woman looks to the Western model for emulation. It is worth noting, for example, that in the West a woman's right to own property is a fairly recent development. Under Islamic law, women have always had that right. And although women have made great political progress here in the United States, unlike the largest Hindu nation and three of the most populous Islamic countries, we have not yet had a female head of government.

(Applause.)

So when we talk about advancing the status of women, we're not trying to force our particular way of doing things or our particular values upon other people. We're trying instead to make progress towards consensus goals that have been articulated and agreed upon by women everywhere. These include the great wellspring of respect for human dignity passed on to us by those who convened in Seneca Falls. They include the currents of equality and justice that gathered strength in Beijing. And they are why efforts to advance the status of women can never again be confined to the backwaters or side channels. (Applause.)

They must be -- and I am proud to say -- they have become a part of the mainstream of the foreign policy of the United States. (Applause.)

Helping women to move ahead is the right thing to do for America; it is also the smart thing. For as we approach the new century, we know that despite the great strides made in recent decades, women remain an undervalued and underdeveloped human resource. This is not to say that women have trouble finding work. In many societies, in addition to bearing and nurturing the children, women do most of the non-child related work. But often, women are barred from owning land and permitted little if any say in government, while girls are often excluded from schools and provided less nourishment than boys.

It is no accident that, today, most of the world's poor are women. Frequently, they are left to care for children without the help of the children's father. Many are entangled at a young age in a web of ignorance, discrimination, exploitation and abuse.

In our diplomacy, we are working with others to change that, because we know from experience that when women have the knowledge and power to make our own choices, societies are better able to break the chains of poverty; birth rates stabilize; environmental awareness increases; the spread of AIDS and other sexually transmitted disease slows; and socially constructive values are more likely to be passed on to the young. This is how human progress is generated. This is how peaceful and democratic societies evolve. This is how lasting prosperity is built.

To these ends, our overseas aid programs include many projects that expand the ability of women to succeed economically through legal reform and access to education, credit and health care. This is vital because economists will tell you that especially in the developing world, income controlled by the mother is many times more likely to be used to promote the health and education of children than income controlled by the father.

We also support international family planning programs, because we believe that women have a right to control their own bodies and because we want to reduce the number of abortions. (Applause.)

And we want to make it more likely that when children are born, they survive and thrive.

We are working to equip women in emerging democracies with skills and knowledge they need to participate politically, whether as officials, advocates or simply as citizens exercising what Susan B. Anthony called "the right protective of all other rights,"--the right to vote.

From Central Asia to Central America, we have a vital interest in the spread and deepening of democracy. But as the sentiments expressed here in Seneca Falls affirm, there can be no democracy if the voices of half the population are not heard. (Applause.)

Fifty years ago, a great American First Lady, Eleanor Roosevelt, was the driving force behind the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Three years ago, at the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women, another great First Lady--Hillary Rodham Clinton eloquently reaffirmed -- (Applause.) --eloquently reaffirmed America's commitment to that declaration and to its application to all people; stating specifically that there can be no distinction drawn between human rights and women's rights, for each includes the other and both must be observed.

Now, I don't know whether this resulted from a conversation between those two First Ladies.

(Laughter.)

But I do know that the Universal Declaration embodies values that are central to all cultures, reflecting both the wondrous diversity that defines us and the common humanity that binds us.

Unfortunately, today, despite progress that has been made, in many countries appalling abuses are still being committed against women. These include coerced abortions and sterilizations, children sold into prostitution, ritual mutilations, dowry murders and domestic violence. There are those who suggest that all this is cultural and there's nothing we can do about it. I say it's criminal and we each have a responsibility to stop it. (Applause.)

That is why we persist in our effort to persuade key members of the Senate -- and they know who they are -- that it is long past time for America to become party to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women. (Applause.)

That is why we back so strongly the international war crimes tribunals, because we believe that the authors of ethnic cleansing should be held accountable, and those who see rape as just another tactic of war must pay for their crimes. (Applause.)

That is why we are speaking up on behalf of the women and girls of Afghanistan, who have been victimized by all factions in their country's bitter civil war. The most powerful of those factions, the Taliban, seems determined to drag Afghan women back from the dawn of the 21st century to the 13th. The only female rights they appear to recognize are the rights to remain silent and invisible, uneducated and unemployed. Afghan women and girls have asked for our help. I know because last fall, I sat in a tent in the high mountains of Central Asia and listened to their stories.

I'll tell you what I told them. The United States can not and will not abandon them. We are increasing our support for education and training. And we have made it clear that if leaders of the Taliban or any other Afghan faction want international acceptance, they must treat women not as chattel, but as people; and they must respect human rights.

(Applause.)

Finally, because we believe in helping every woman to have a fair chance in life, we have undertaken a major diplomatic and law enforcement effort to halt trafficking in women and girls. After all, if we believe in zero tolerance for those who sell illegal drugs, shouldn't we feel even more strongly about those who buy and sell human beings?

(Applause.)

This is one of the fastest growing criminal enterprises in the world. It exploits the desperate economic needs of more than a million mostly young women every year -- women who think they're applying for jobs as governesses, waitresses or sales clerks, but who end up virtual slaves of thugs, pimps or unscrupulous employers.

Our strategy is to educate the public, assist the victims, protect the vulnerable and apprehend the perpetrators. Our approach is to develop and implement specific plans in countries, including our own, where predators and the preyed upon are most often found.

For example, as a result of my talks with Prime Minister Netanyahu, Israel has set up

special police units in Tel Aviv and Haifa. We have established a joint working group with Italy. And in response to a request from the government of Ukraine, we are preparing a comprehensive strategy for responding to trafficking in and out of that country.

We see these as potential models of cooperation to be replicated as often as required. Our goal, ultimately, is to mobilize people everywhere so that trafficking in human beings is met by a stop sign visible around the equator and from pole to pole. (Applause.)

My friends, the invitation presented by the Hall of Fame is to "Come Stand Among Great Women." In recent years, I have had that honor many times; not in fancy meeting rooms or the high councils of state, but in refugee camps, in villages constructed out of mud and tin, in urban health clinics where malnutrition and disease conspire against life, in arid wastelands where nothing grows but the appetites of small children.

It is in these places that I have most often stood in the presence of great women -- women who have been beaten back and beaten down and beaten up, but never defeated because their pride is too strong, their love too fierce, their spirit unshatterable.

The sentiments contained in the Seneca Falls Declaration have endured not simply because of their logic and eloquence, but because of the underlying power of their central premise, which is that every individual counts. This basic idea of valuing each human person fairly is what has united the women's movement across the boundaries of nation, status, culture, through the window of time, back to our great-grandmothers, and forward to embrace the youngest girls here in this auditorium today.

This philosophy is not based on any illusions. Advocates of social progress have seen far too much of hardship and frustration to indulge in sentimentalism. But we live in a nation and a world that has been enriched beyond measure by those who have overcome enormous obstacles to build platforms of knowledge and accomplishment from which others might advance.

It is said that all work that is worth anything is done in faith. And so, on this day of warm memory and renewed resolve, let us all pledge to keep the faith that our perseverance and dedication will make a difference; that every door opened by our striving, every life enriched by our giving, every soul inspired by our commitment and every barrier to justice brought down by our determination will ennoble our own lives, inspire others and explode outward the boundaries of what is achievable on this Earth.

Let us go forward with respect and gratitude for those who came before us; with determination and love for our daughters, and for the sons whose own lives will only be enriched by progress towards a world more equitable and democratic, more peaceful and fully free.

Thank you all very much for your attention and for this honor.

(Applause.)

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First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton
150th Anniversary of the First Women's Rights Convention
Seneca Falls, New York
July 16, 1998

Thank you for gathering here in such numbers for this important celebration. I want to thank Governor Pataki and Congresswoman Slaughter and all the elected officials who are here with us today. I want to thank Mary Anne and her committee for helping to organize such a great celebration. I want to thank Bob Stanton and the entire Park Service staff for doing such an excellent job with the historic site. I want to thank our choirs. I thought the choirs really added; I want to thank our singers whom we've already heard from and will hear from because this is a celebration and we need to think about it in such terms.

But for a moment, I would like you to take your minds back a hundred and fifty years. Imagine if you will that you are Charlotte Woodward, a nineteen-year-old glove maker working and living in Waterloo. Everyday you sit for hours sewing gloves together, working for small wages you cannot even keep, with no hope of going on in school or owning property, knowing that if you marry, your children and even the clothes on your body will belong to your husband.

But then one day in July, 1848, you hear about a women's rights convention to be held in nearby Seneca Falls. It's a convention to discuss the social, civil, and religious conditions and rights of women. You run from house to house and you find other women who have heard the same news. Some are excited, others are amused or even shocked, and a few agree to come with you, for at least the first day.

When that day comes, July 19, 1848, you leave early in the morning in your horse-drawn wagon. You fear that no one else will come; and at first, the road is empty, except for you and your neighbors. But suddenly, as you reach a crossroads, you see a few more wagons and carriages, then more and more all going towards Wesleyan Chapel. Eventually you join the others to form one long procession on the road to equality.

Who were the others traveling that road to equality, traveling to that convention? Frederick Douglass, the former slave and great abolitionist, was on his way there and he described the participants as "few in numbers, moderate in resources, and very little known in the world. The most we had to connect us was a firm commitment that we were in the right and a firm faith that the right must ultimately prevail." In the wagons and carriages, on foot or horseback, were women like Rhoda Palmer. Seventy years later in 1918, at the age of one-hundred and two, she would cast her first ballot in a New York state election.

Also traveling down that road to equality was Susan Quinn, who at fifteen will become the

youngest signer of the Declaration of Sentiments. Catharine F. Stebbins, a veteran of activism starting when she was only twelve going door to door collecting anti-slavery petitions. She also, by the way, kept an anti-tobacco pledge on the parlor table and asked all her young male friends to sign up. She was woman truly ahead of her time, as all the participants were.

I often wonder, when reflecting back on the Seneca Falls Convention, who of us -- men and women -- would have left our homes, our families, our work to make that journey one hundred and fifty years ago. Think about the incredible courage it must have taken to join that procession. Ordinary men and women, mothers and fathers, sisters and brothers, husbands and wives, friends and neighbors. And just like those who have embarked on other journeys throughout American history, seeking freedom or escaping religious or political persecution, speaking out against slavery, working for labor rights. These men and women were motivated by dreams of better lives and more just societies.

At the end of the two-day convention, one hundred people, sixty-eight women and thirty-two men, signed the Declaration of Sentiments that you can now read on the wall at Wesleyan Chapel. Among the signers were some of the names we remember today: Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Lucretia Mott, Martha Wright and Frederick Douglass and young Charlotte Woodward. The "Seneca Falls 100," as I like to call them, shared the radical idea that America fell far short of her ideals stated in our founding documents, denying citizenship to women and slaves.

Elizabeth Cady Stanton, who is frequently credited with originating the idea for the Convention, knew that women were not only denied legal citizenship, but that society's cultural values and social structures conspired to assign women only one occupation and role, that of wife and mother. Of course, the reality was always far different. Women have always worked, and worked both in the home and outside the home for as long as history can record. And even though Stanton herself had a comfortable life and valued deeply her husband and seven children, she knew that she and all other women were not truly free if they could not keep wages they earned, divorce an abusive husband, own property, or vote for the political leaders who governed them. Stanton was inspired, along with the others who met, to rewrite our Declaration of Independence, and they boldly asserted, "We hold these truths to be self-evident that all men and women are created equal."

"All men and all women." It was the shout heard around the world, and if we listen, we can still hear its echoes today. We can hear it in the voices of women demanding their full civil and political rights anywhere in the world. I've heard such voices and their echoes from women, around the world, from Belfast to Bosnia to Beijing, as they work to change the conditions for women and girls and improve their lives and the lives of their families. We can even hear those echoes today in Seneca Falls. We come together this time not by carriage, but by car or plane, by train or foot, and yes, in my case, by bus. We come together not to hold a convention, but to celebrate those who met here one hundred and fifty years ago, to commemorate how far we have traveled since then, and to challenge ourselves to persevere on the journey that was begun all those many years ago.

We are, as one can see looking around this great crowd, men and women, old and young,

different races, different backgrounds. We come to honor the past and imagine the future. That is the theme the President and I have chosen for the White House Millennium Council's efforts to remind and inspire Americans as we approach the year 2000. This is my last stop on the Millennium Council's tour to Save America's Treasures -- those buildings, monuments, papers and sites -- that define who we are as a nation. They include not only famous symbols like the Star Spangled Banner and not only great political leaders like George Washington's revolutionary headquarters, or creative inventors like Thomas Edison's invention factory, but they include also the women of America who wrote our nation's past and must write its future.

Women like the ones we honor here and, in fact, at the end of my tour yesterday, I learned that I was following literally in the footsteps of one of them, Lucretia Mott, who, on her way to Seneca Falls, stopped in Auburn to visit former slaves and went on to the Seneca Nations to meet with clan mothers, as I did.

Last evening, I visited the home of Mary Ann and Thomas M'Clintock in Waterloo, where the Declaration of Sentiments was drafted, and which the Park Service is planning to restore for visitors if the money needed can be raised. I certainly hope I can return here sometime in the next few years to visit that restoration.

Because we must tell and retell, learn and relearn, these women's stories, and we must make it our personal mission, in our everyday lives, to pass these stories on to our daughters and sons. Because we cannot -- we must not -- ever forget that the rights and opportunities that we enjoy as women today were not just bestowed upon us by some benevolent ruler. They were fought for, agonized over, marched for, jailed for and even died for by brave and persistent women and men who came before us.

Every time we buy or sell or inherit property in our own name -- let us thank the pioneers who agitated to change the laws that made that possible.

Every time, every time we vote, let us thank the women and men of Seneca Falls, Susan B. Anthony and all the others, who tirelessly crossed our nation and withstood ridicule and the rest to bring about the 19th Amendment to the Constitution.

Every time we enter an occupation -- a profession of our own choosing and receive a paycheck that reflect earnings equal to a male colleague, let us thank the signers and women like Kate Mullaney, who's house I visited yesterday, in Troy, New York

Every time we elect a woman to office -- let us thank ground breaking leaders like Jeannette Rankin and Margaret Chase Smith, Hattie Caraway, Louise Slaughter, Bella Abzug, Shirley Chisholm -- all of whom proved that a woman's place is truly in the House, and in the Senate, and one day, in the White House, as well.

And every time we take another step forward for justice in this nation -- let us thank extraordinary women like Harriet Tubman, who's home in Auburn I visited yesterday, and who

escaped herself from slavery, and, then risked her life, time and again, to bring at least two hundred other slaves to freedom as well.

Harriet Tubman's rule for all of her underground railroad missions was to keep going. Once you started--no matter how scared you got, how dangerous it became -- you were not allowed to turn back. That's a pretty good rule for life. It not only describes the women who gathered in Wesleyan Chapel in 1848, but it could serve as our own motto for today. We, too, cannot turn back. We, too, must keep going in our commitment to the dignity of every individual -- to women's rights as human rights. We are on that road of the pioneers to Seneca Falls, they started down it 150 years ago. But now, we too, must keep going.

We may not face the criticism and derision they did. They understood that the Declaration of Sentiments would create no small amount of misconception, or misrepresentation and ridicule; they were called mannish women, old maids, fanatics, attacked personally by those who disagreed with them. One paper said, "These rights for women would bring a monstrous injury to all mankind." If it sounds familiar, it's the same thing that's always said when women keep going for true equality and justice.

Those who came here also understood that the convention and the Declaration were only first steps down that road. What matters most is what happens when everyone packs up and goes back to their families and communities. What matters is whether sentiment and resolutions, once made, are fulfilled or forgotten. The Seneca Falls one hundred pledged themselves to petition, and lit the pulpit and used every instrumentality within their power to affect their subjects. And they did. But they also knew they were not acting primarily for themselves. They knew they probably would not even see the changes they advocated in their own lifetime. In fact, only Charlotte Woodward lived long enough to see American women finally win the right to vote.

Those who signed that Declaration were doing it for the girls and women -- for us -- those of us in the twentieth century.

Elizabeth Cady Stanton wrote a letter to her daughters later in life enclosing a special gift and explaining why. "Dear Maggie and Hattie, this is my first speech," she wrote, "it contains all I knew at that time; I give this manuscript to my precious daughters in the hopes that they will finish the work that I have begun." And they have. Her daughter, Harriot Blatch, was the chief strategist of the suffrage movement in New York. Harriot's daughter, Nora Barney, was one of the first women to be a civil engineer. Nora's daughter, Rhoda Jenkins, became an architect. Rhoda's daughter, Colleen Jenkins-Sahlin is an elected official in Greenwich, Connecticut. And her daughter, Elizabeth is a thirteen-year-old, who wrote about the six generations of Stantons in a book called, 33 Things Every Girl Should Know.

So, far into the twentieth century, the work is still being done; the journey goes on. Now, some might say that the only purpose of this celebration is to honor the past, that the work begun here is finished in America, that young women no longer face legal obstacles to whatever education

or employment choices they choose to pursue. And I certainly believe and hope all of you agree that we should, everyday, count our blessings as American women.

I know how much change I have seen in my own life. When I was growing up back in the fifties and sixties, there were still barriers that Mrs. Stanton would have recognized -- scholarships I couldn't apply for, schools I couldn't go to, jobs I couldn't have -- just because of my sex. Thanks to federal laws like the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Title 9, and the Equal Pay Act, legal barriers to equality have fallen.

But if all we do is honor the past, then I believe we will miss the central point of the Declaration of Sentiments, which was, above all, a document about the future. The drafters of the Declaration imagined a different future for women and men, in a society based on equality and mutual respect. It falls to every generation to imagine the future, and it our task to do so now.

We know that, just as the women 150 years ago knew, that what we imagine will be principally for our daughters and sons in the 21st century. Because the work of the Seneca Falls Convention is, just like the work of the nation itself, it's never finished, so long as there remain gaps between our ideals and reality. That is one of the great joys and beauties of the American experiment. We are always striving to build and move toward a more perfect union, that we on every occasion keep faith with our founding ideals, and translate them into reality. So what kind of future can we imagine together.

If we are to finish the work begun here -- then no American should ever again face discrimination on the basis of gender, race or sexual orientation anywhere in our country.

If we are to finish the work begun here -- then \$0.76 in a woman's paycheck for every dollar in a man's is still not enough. Equal pay for equal work can once and for all be achieved.

If we are to finish the work begun here -- then families need more help to balance their responsibilities at work and at home. In a letter to Susan B. Anthony, Elizabeth Cady Stanton writes, "Come here and I will do what I can to help you with your address, if you will hold the baby and make the pudding." Even then, women knew we had to have help with child care. All families should have access to safe, affordable, quality child care.

If we are to finish the work begun here -- then women and children must be protected against what the Declaration called the "chastisement of women," namely domestic abuse and violence. We must take all steps necessary to end the scourge of violence against women and punish the perpetrator. And our country must join the rest of the world, as so eloquently Secretary Albright called for on Saturday night here in Seneca Falls, "Join the rest of the world and ratify the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against women."

If we are to finish the work begun here -- we must do more than talk about family values, we must adopt polices that truly value families -- policies like a universal system of health care

insurance that guarantees every American's access to affordable, quality health care. Policies like taking all steps necessary to keep guns out of the hands of children and criminals. Policies like doing all that is necessary at all levels of our society to ensure high quality public education for every boy or girl no matter where that child lives.

If we are to finish the work begun here -- we must ensure that women and men who work full-time earn a wage that lifts them out of poverty and all workers who retire have financial security in their later years through guaranteed Social Security and pensions.

If we are to finish the work begun here -- we must be vigilant against the messages of a media-driven consumer culture that convinces our sons and daughters that what brand of sneakers they wear or cosmetics they use is more important than what they think, feel, know, or do.

And if we are to finish the work begun here -- we must, above all else, take seriously the power of the vote and use it to make our voices heard. What the champions of suffrage understood was that the vote is not just a symbol of our equality, but that it can be, if used, a guarantee of results. It is the way we express our political views. It is the way we hold our leaders and governments accountable. It is the way we bridge the gap between what we want our nation to be and what it is.

But when will the majority of women voters of our country exercise their most fundamental political right? Can you imagine what any of the Declaration signers would say if they learned how many women fail to vote in elections? They would be amazed and outraged. They would agree with a poster I saw in 1996. On it, there is a picture of a woman with a piece of tape covering her mouth and under it, it says, "Most politicians think women should be seen and not heard. In the last election, 54 million women agreed with them."

One hundred and fifty years ago, the women at Seneca Falls were silenced by someone else. Today, women, we silence ourselves. We have a choice. We have a voice. And if we are going to finish the work begun here we must exercise our right to vote in every election we are eligible to vote in.

Much of who women are and what women do today can be traced to the courage, vision, and dedication of the pioneers who came together at Seneca Falls. Now it is our responsibility to finish the work they began. Let's ask ourselves, at the 200th anniversary of Seneca Falls, will they say that today's gathering also was a catalyst for action? Will they say that businesses, labor, religious organizations, the media, foundations, educators, every citizen in our society came to see the unfinished struggle of today as their struggle?

Will they say that we joined across lines of race and class, that we raised up those too often pushed down, and ultimately found strength in each other's differences and resolved in our common cause? Will we, like the champions at Seneca Falls, recognize that men must play a central role in this fight? How can we ever forget the impassioned plea of Frederick Douglass, issued in our defense

of the right to vote?

How can we ever forget that young legislator from Tennessee by the name of Harry Burns, who was the deciding vote in ratifying the 19th Amendment. He was planning on voting "no," but then he got a letter from his mother with a simple message. The letter said, "Be a good boy Harry and do the right thing." And he did! Tennessee became the last state to ratify, proving that you can never ever overestimate the power of one person to alter the course of history, or the power of a little motherly advice.

Will we look back and see that we have finally joined the rest of the advanced economies by creating systems of education, employment, child care and health care that support and strengthen families and give all women real choices in their lives.

At the 200th anniversary celebration, will they say that women today supported each other in the choices we make? Will we admit once and for all there is no single cookie cutter model for being a successful and fulfilled woman today, that we have so many choices? We can choose full-time motherhood or no family at all or like most of us, seek to strike a balance between our family and our work, always trying to do what is right in our lives. Will we leave our children a world where it is self-evident that all men and women, boys and girls are created equal? These are some of the questions we can ask ourselves.

Help us imagine a future that keeps faith with the sentiments expressed here in 1848. The future, like the past and the present, will not and cannot be perfect. Our daughters and granddaughters will face new challenges which we today cannot even imagine. But each of us can help prepare for that future by doing what we can to speak out for justice and equality for women's rights and human rights, to be on the right side of history, no matter the risk or cost, knowing that eventually the sentiments we express and the causes we advocate will succeed because they are rooted in the conviction that all people are entitled by their creator and by the promise of America to the freedom, rights, responsibilities, and opportunity of full citizenship. That is what I imagine for the future. I invite you to imagine with me and then to work together to make that future a reality.

Thank you all very much.

Vital Voices
Montevideo, Uruguay
Address by Hillary Rodham Clinton
October 2, 1998

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you very much. Thank you. I feel like I am sure many of you do, that we have had such a rich morning already hearing from our conference participants, and others who have inspired us, and motivated us, and educated us. It is a great honor and privilege for me to be here in Uruguay, and to join all of you – the vital voices of the Americas. The voices of the four conference participants that we have just heard represent the extraordinary intelligence, enthusiasm and diversity of the people who have come together for this third historic Vital Voices Conference. I want to begin by thanking our hostess, Mrs. Sanguinetti – for your warm hospitality and for that fascinating archeological education. That I will immediately go and read about.

This is my first visit to your beautiful country, and both you and the President have made me feel so much at home even in these few short days that I cannot wait to return. And I look forward to a time when I can do that in the very near future.

I also want to express my great appreciation to the Conference's co-sponsor, the Inter-American Development Bank. Now we have heard from the President, who is our great friend. Who I believe said again today how committed the bank is to all these projects. I have had the great honor of working with the bank and I've seen how hard he has worked to promote micro-credit, working against domestic violence, doing everything that the bank could do to make clear to everyone who would listen that it is not just a bank, it is an instrument of social justice, social investment and transformation of the Americas and I thank you for that Enrique.

I too want to thank Mayra for her work. She has been a powerful and effective advocate at the Bank for women.

And I want to thank Theresa for your efforts leading our U.S. government team to make "Vital Voices" an effective instrument of American foreign policy.

This is the third Vital Voices Conference. The purpose of these conferences is to give women from various parts of the world the opportunity to come together as you all have to share experiences, to build stronger networks and partnerships, to look for ways that we can introduce new and effective strategy in our common search for ways that will enable women to take their rightful places in all of our societies.

At this particular conference we brought together women leaders from all the democracies of the Western Hemisphere. Leaders in business, non-governmental organizations, trade

unions, from small villages and from very large cities, mayors and cabinet officials. We have also brought together and we have heard eloquently expressed today from our panel many who suffered under brutal dictatorships, many who lost family members to terrorism, people who have been in the forefront of the struggles to end repression, protect human rights, and restore democracy. This is a critical moment in history because so many of you have struggled so long to bring us to it. I want to begin by thanking you. You have set an example, you have served as a model, and you have given heart to literally millions of peoples throughout the Americas because you have never given up on yourselves and your future. And yet I know that with the coming of democracy, with the spread of the global economy, we face new challenges. How do we ensure that democracy and free market economies produce better lives for all people, especially the poor and the marginalized? How do we create conditions in which women are equipped with the tools of opportunity to become full participants in their societies? How do we bolster civil society and its institutions?

The countries represented here may be at different stages of political and economic development, but we are all searching for answers to basic questions such as those. And we share a common belief: we believe that a nation's progress depends on the progress of women; that the strength of democracy depends on the inclusion of women; that the vibrancy of an economy depends on the hard work of women; that the richness of civil society depends on the full participation of women; and that human rights are women's rights; and women's rights are human rights from one end of this hemisphere to the other.

I've heard reports how at this conference – in workshops, over coffee, in hallways – you've been gathering and talking with one another about how to achieve progress. You've been learning from each other. And you have been focussing on three broad areas: First how do we expand political participation for women in public life? Second how do we strengthen the rule of law? And third, how do we promote women's access to economic opportunities?

If this were only a conference where we came together and we met one another, and we heard speeches and we shared ideas, that would be a good thing, but it would not be enough. It would disappoint all of us who are here because it would not fulfill the promise that such an extraordinary gathering holds for us. What we have to think through is how we will, from this point, create those strategies and support one another within our nations and across our hemisphere to see that they are fulfilled. How will we answer the questions we have been asking ourselves? How will we reach progress in the three areas you have been focussing on? Let me take them one by one.

We have seen the fruits of the efforts that have gone into creating political opportunities for women in public life. Throughout the Americas, because we have obtained peace and stability that so many of you have fought for so long, we now have democratic governments that are open to debate, and free speech and association that were not there

before. We hope we will never, ever see in our hemisphere again a young woman driven from her own country because she stood up for the human rights of her fellow citizens. We hope that we will never hear the heart-wrenching emotion that we heard in the voice from our mayor from Peru when she talked about terrorism. We must never, ever allow terrorism to have a grip in this hemisphere again.

So this hard-fought-for peace and stability, these democracies, these free-market economies, they're an enormous step forward. But they are also not enough if they do not give people the belief that they have a stake in the future and do not provide opportunities for participation.

But think about some of the women who are here amongst us. Women who have pushed open the doors of political leadership. Some of them are known, so many others are unknown, but they lifted their vital voices when others were silent. They organized their work places, often at great risk to themselves, and they have been willing to run for office and accept appointed office when still there are so many attitudes that argue against a woman doing that in public life. Their voices should inspire us. Think of just a few examples.

A senator from Brazil – the granddaughter of a slave – who worked within the Catholic church on behalf of workers – and who became her country's first black woman senator.

A mother from a small town in Peru who, when elected mayor, developed projects to protect women's rights and created training workshops for women so they could increase their family incomes without leaving their homes.

A grandmother in Argentina who refused to bend under the brutality of the generals and who kept her eyes on the plight of her nation's grandchildren.

There are thousands of examples like that. Each of us could stand and tell them. But they should serve the purpose of reminding and inspiring us, of the price that has been paid to open those doors to democracy, and how disappointed all those who sacrificed would be if now women did not assume their rightful position and walk through those doors to make contributions to their families, to their communities, and their nations.

Today, more than at any other time in history, women have the opportunity and the responsibility not only to raise our own voices but to empower others to raise theirs as well. The women gathered here, we are among the blessed. Even though many have suffered, the spirit was not broken. And you are here as testimony to resilience and determination.

But think of the thousands and thousands and thousands of women throughout the Americas for whom no one speaks. Who believe they are not worth anything. Who have

been denied education and even sometimes fundamental health care. What will we do to raise our vital voices for them? And among the many reasons why women must participate in the political process and must take the risks of putting themselves forward on behalf of issues of concern to us all, is because all of those women and their children need our voices.

There is a very important report that was completed recently by the Women's Leadership Conference of the Americas which details all of the progress and the obstacles that still face women in the Americas. This report confirms what we all know: that while many governments, organizations, and individual citizens acknowledge the importance of women's participation in both formal and informal ways, women are still blocked from realizing their own positions, from going as far as their talents would take them.

Yesterday I was privileged to meet with the Women's Political Network here in Montevideo. I want to thank all of the women who came together to educate me about what they are doing here. They were a remarkable group of women leaders. A cabinet minister, a city council member, others who hold elective office, others who were very prominent in their parties. One of them said: "We grew to realize that what unites us is far more important than what differentiates us." For the women from different parties who honestly hold different philosophical and ideological positions understand that they can cross party lines to work on behalf of issues in common. And I have heard that Paraguay is doing the same. This is one very important idea that can come out of this conference: that there must be ways for women in political life to support each other across party and ideological lines when it comes to fundamental women's rights and children's needs. And this political network can serve as an example for us all. And I would include my own country in that example.

If one reviews the progress that has been made, you can see that the once closed doors have been pried open. More and more countries require a minimum level of women's participation in local and national elections. Others have created agencies to promote women and family policies. Some programs are now seeking to increase the pool of qualified women to compete for leadership positions, and others help women exercise effective leadership once they are elected or promoted.

These changes are having an impact. By 1996 – all but two countries in Latin America had at least one woman cabinet member. In Colombia, over a third of the cabinet positions are now held by women. And while women are still vastly under-represented in legislative assemblies, there are signs of progress. In the Bahamas, women fill as many as 33 percent of the senate seats. And in Argentina, as a result of their new law, women's representation in the lower house of congress is 28 percent, the eighth highest in the world.

If those nations can assure women that level of women's participation, then we all must do better to make sure that parties are fair to women and include them in electoral lists, that

governments seek out qualified women and give them opportunities to serve. Because we will all benefit if more women assume positions of political responsibility. And I hope that one result of this conference will be very specific ways we can all participate in bringing that about.

The second challenge you have been discussing is strengthening the rule of law. Now there is, of course, general agreement in polite company that women deserve equal rights under the law. But there are still laws in the Americas that do not give women equal rights. And our first order of business should be to change those laws.

There are countries in the Americas that prohibit women from doing certain work: from working at night; from lifting heavy objects. Now I have always believed that the job should be suited to the person. And many women could not lift heavy objects, but some women could. And if they could qualify, they should be permitted to compete for those jobs, and jobs like them so they can better support their families, and we should change laws that stop them from doing so.

The larger problem though is that on paper we have equal rights under the law, but they are not enforced. There is uneven or no enforcement. Or there is enforcement only for the rich and not for the poor. So we have to do a better job of making all of our laws fairly enforced and making access to our justice system one that is not in any way prohibited to people on the basis of their background or their income. We have to do much more to absolutely institutionalize the rule of law in the Americas. With independent judiciary, with due-process being respected so that impunity will no longer exist. That the rights of all citizens will be strengthened. We know we will have achieved that goal when a poor, indigenous woman somewhere in the Americas is able to walk into a court and demand that the police stop harassing her, that people in the street stop treating her poorly, and that she be given the same rights as every other person.

And I would hope that by opening up the legal system to more women judges and women prosecutors, women will make sure that women's rights are respected and the rule of law is enshrined in all of our countries.

That is beginning to happen. Again some examples from vital voices that inspire us.

The first woman to sit on Haiti's supreme court helped draft the decree abolishing gender inequality.

The female director of the Inter-American Institute for Human Rights launched a gender equity program when she was a leading Costa Rican jurist.

There are many more examples we can point to. But we need more women lawyers, more women judges, more women prosecutors. And as a lawyer, I hope that more women will

go into the law in the Americas and use the tools of the law to promote social justice throughout our hemisphere.

I also want to say a specific word about something we have seen terrific progress in but have a long way to go and that is in domestic violence. Many of you have been leaders, both inside and outside of governments to make it clear that violence between spouses, between parents and children, in families is not a custom, it is a crime and must be treated as a crime.

More and more governments throughout the Americas are reforming their penal codes and passing anti-discrimination legislation. And we see the results. Twelve Latin American countries have adopted new laws classifying domestic violence finally as a crime, and enforcement has been stepped up, prison sentences extended. There are now special police stations for women in many countries, shelters and counseling centers and training courses for law enforcement officials and judges.

Yesterday I was privileged to meet with professionals here in Montevideo who are working both with victims and perpetrators of domestic violence. And this particular crime is so important for us to focus on because we know that if women have their spirits broken inside the family, by the violence that so many face day in and day out, how can they ever have the confidence to be citizens of a democracy, to participate fully in the life of their democracy?

The Summit of the Americas which met first in Miami and then in Santiago set a goal of full equality between men and women by the year 2002. Now I know that is an ambitious goal. But I like that goal. And I like to remind people that that goal was agreed upon by all the leaders of our hemisphere. And I believe we must accept nothing less than doing all that we can to try to reach that goal.

Our third priority, at this conference, is opening up economic opportunities for women. There are some fundamental issues that we have to address before we can even get to economic opportunities. One is education and one is health care.

Women cannot earn good income for themselves and their families, and advance to the fullest of their god-given potential if they are not educated, or if they are held back by poor, or substandard, or unavailable health care.

So we must continue to do everything we can to ensure access to education, for girls and women, and to make available quality health care throughout the hemisphere. Because talking about economic opportunities in the absence of emphasizing education and health care is an empty promise. Because we certainly know that the economy of the 21st century will be unforgiving for those who are not educated and not healthy and not able to make their own way.

Now we all know that women contribute enormously to the economic growth of their countries. Both inside and outside the home. But that work, both in the home and in the informal economy is not counted in a country's GDP. I believe it is time for economists and bankers to start figuring out ways to count women's economic contributions in their nations' GDP and overall world economies.

I remember talking to an economist during one of my visits to Africa. He said "well women have no real economic role to play in the African economies that are emerging". And I said, "well you know I have only spent a few days in Africa but every where I looked I saw women working: I saw women in the fields, I saw women carrying water; I saw women in the markets; I saw women building their own houses. Now tell me what exactly is it that they are doing if not contributing to the economic well-being of their country?"

We also have to face up to continuing wage discrimination against women. Women in Latin America receive salaries well below those of men. And women who work in the informal sector, as many do, have no benefits and no security. Working women have never held the rights and opportunities and benefits that men have traditionally have held. So we have to attack those inequities as well.

We need to celebrate the contributions that women have made. And I especially appreciate the comments about how women have been the ones who have managed poverty and have day in and day out, and year after year kept families going with very little in the way of meager resources. So let us celebrate what is really very good budgeting and extremely good economic planning if we stop to think about it, and let's look for ways to bring more opportunities and greater income into the lives of these women who have already proven that they know how to stretch a peso as far as possible.

We also need to look at ways of getting more capital and credit into women's hands. And I want to thank everyone who has supported micro-credit because it is truly transforming lives and societies. Micro-enterprise loans are expanding the support from international and bilateral donors and non-governmental organizations. USAID and IDB programs are already reaching well over one million women in this hemisphere.

I would once again issue a plea to commercial banks, and other potential funders, to look at the success of micro-credit as a tool for creating market activity at the grassroots level, giving more people within a society a stake in the free market. And I would ask, as I did in Belfast, that commercial banks look for ways to partner with the IDB or non-governmental organizations to put some funds into micro-credit so that we could expand their reach. I'm always amazed when I read in the newspaper about some very bad loan that a commercial bank has made and they write it off when we know that loans to poor women are repaid at a rate of between 95 and 99 percent throughout the world.

I have talked with such women from one end of our hemisphere to another, including in

my own country where we are using micro-credit to try and help develop economic opportunity for women, particularly women who were formerly on welfare.

Think of these vital voices:

A rural woman in El Salvador who overcame low expectations – of herself and others – to turn her roadside tortilla stand into a profitable business with the help of a \$46 loan. And who, because of that increased economic activity that she was able to generate, all of a sudden had the respect of everyone in her village. And she and her small village group of people who were borrowing and supporting each other understood that they had a real stake in their future. She was selected president of her village bank group. And she said something that all of us would agree with, and that is “courage is half of life.” Well for her, having the courage to do what she did was half of life, but having the credit to put that courage into action was the other half. And that is the kind of partnership we need more of.

A woman organizer at a banana plantation who has stood up to death threats to lead and inspire her co-workers. They have been locked out of their jobs because their company won't recognize their union.

Workers' rights are an important part of the global economy.

We have such great opportunities ahead of us if we are able to take the extraordinary benefits of the global economy and ensure that they are spread fairly to everyone. We cannot permit greater inequity in income to be part of the new global economy. And workers' rights are part of that. Regular and equal pay, medical examinations, training programs, benefits, all of that should be on the front burner for women and men who understand how important it is that workers be given the opportunity to share in the fruits of their labor.

Now where does this leave us as we are looking at this conference and all that you have discussed and heard? Well I hope that we are building on the progress so many of you have begun. And I hope we are producing real partnerships that will strengthen democracies and improve lives of women throughout the Americas.

Today I am pleased to make several announcements. First, the United States Government through USAID will commit \$50 million to support the common goals of this conference and the Summit of the Americas, to strengthen human rights, justice, and democracy particularly on behalf of women.

USAID is also increasing its loans to micro-enterprises across the Americas to \$120 million over the next three years, over two-thirds of those loans committed to going to women.

The United States Small Business Administration, whose Director, Aida Alvarez is with us

today, and I am very pleased that Ms. Alvarez could be here for this announcement. It has done a great deal in our country to promote micro-enterprise and has created an "on-line women's business center" offering training and support and research for women to start and expand their businesses. Today the Small Business Administration is unveiling the Spanish version of this website so that millions of women, throughout the hemisphere and literally around the world, can also access this information.

After this meeting you can go into the conference room, right outside here and into one of the hallways, and you can log right on to this new SBA service. And be sure and tell us how well it works, because it is our very first time to try it out.

Because of this conference the Discovery Channel, the Foreign Ministry of Argentina and the Global Foundation in Buenos Aires have come together to make sure that these voices are heard well beyond this conference. They will do this through a series of Vital Voices Public Service Announcements on issues raised here at the conference. Tomorrow each of you will have the chance to help shape those messages that will be broadcast throughout the hemisphere. So think please about the most effective way to reach women and men with the messages of the Vital Voices Conference.

Another important partnership that is taking place is that IBM Uruguay will produce computer and Internet training sessions for women in media and a political training workshop experience sponsored by USAID, the Partners of the Americas, the League of Women Voters, and USIA Women's Campaign International. This is one way that you can really test and improve your own skills and learn from one each other about how you can take messages from this conference back home.

The United States Government stands ready to continue to work with all of you. To make sure that this critical effort started here at this conference, and building on so much work that has gone before, will continue well into the future and will have the results that we all hope for.

As I travel around the world, I am very grateful for the opportunity that I have to meet with women and to listen to them. Their dreams, their aspirations, their hopes, their concerns. And I am always amazed, impressed and humbled by the extraordinary human spirit and hopefulness that I find whether I am in a very poor village in Bangladesh or Uganda, or in a very small business in Nicaragua, or Santiago, I'm always with women who inspire me. And these are the women from throughout this hemisphere who we must do all that we can to ensure that their voices are heard, heard in city halls and board rooms, and trade union offices, and political parties, in academia, in families.

If we carry forth from this conference the extraordinary example and words that we heard from our four panelists, and we take our energy and work together to make sure that these voices are heard, I think we have a great opportunity ahead of us.

I ran across a quote from an early Uruguayan woman leader, Dr. Paulina Luisi who said "We shall not reach the radiant mount toward which our eyes are fixed today. But on the ground we are breaking, our daughters will march to victory."

As the mother of a daughter, I hope with all my heart, that we will break that ground, and the youngest among us will see results, that we will make it possible in the next century for women and men to feel as they should. fully empowered, full of hope and confident, because there are no longer any of those divisions that separate us from one another, but instead a commitment creating a future that brings out the best in all of us.

Thank you very much.

file

The President's Interagency Council on Women



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The President's Interagency Council on Women

April 19, 1999

Dear Council Member:

Enclosed please find an updated booklet of the current roster of Council members, including bios and contact information.

I hope this will be a useful tool for you.

Sincerely,

Lidia Soto-Harmon
Deputy Director



The President's Interagency Council on Women

January 1999

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Director, Office for Democracy, Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs
National Security Council
OEOB, Room 302
Washington, DC 20500
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The President's Interagency Council on Women

First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton
Honorary Chair

Secretary of State Madeleine K. Albright
Chair

Secretary of Health and Human Services
Donna Shalala, Immediate Past Chair

President's Interagency Council on Women
Strategic Planning Session
Thursday - January 14, 1999 11-2pm
Martin Van Buren Diplomatic Dining Room

List of Participants

Ms. Phillipa Anderson
Assistant General Counsel
Department of Veterans Affairs

✓ Ms. Carolyn Becraft
Assistant Secretary of the Navy, Manpower and Reserve Affairs
Department of the Navy

✓ Ms. Anita Botti
Deputy Director, International Women's Initiatives
Department of State

Mr. Scott Busby
Director, Office for Democracy, Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs
National Security Council

✓ Ms. Bonnie Campbell
Director, Violence Against Women Office
Department of Justice

✓ Ms. Virginia Cantor
General Council
National Endowment for the Humanities

✓ Ms. Ida Castro
Chairwoman
U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission

- ✓ Ms. Constance Dunham
Senior Financial Economist
The Comptroller of the Currency

- Ms. Nuria Fernandez
Deputy Administrator of the Federal Transit Administration
Department of Transportation

- ✓ Ms. Frankee Greenberg
Director of Regional Operations
Environmental Protection Agency

- ✓ Kathy Hendrix
Advisor to the Council

- Ms. Nancy Hendry
General Counsel
Peace Corps

- ✓ Ms. Judith Heumann
Assistant Secretary, Special Education and Rehabilitative Services
Department of Education

- ✓ Ms. Joanne Isham
Acting Deputy Director for Science and Technology
Central Intelligence Agency

- ✓ Ms. Martha Johnson
Chief of Staff
General Services Administration

- ✓ Ms. Sarah Kovner
Special Assistant to the Secretary
Department of Health and Human Services

- ✓ Ms. Joyce Kravitz
Chief of Staff
United States Information Agency

- ✓ Ms. Ellen Lazar
Director, Community Development Financial Institutions Fund
Department of the Treasury

✓ Ms. Robin Leeds
Interagency Representative
White House Office for Women's Initiative and Outreach

Ms. Ann Lewis
Assistant to the President and Director of White House Communications
The White House

✓ Ms. Theresa Loar
Director, President's Interagency Council on Women and
Senior Coordinator for International Women's Issues
State Department

✓ Ms. Kathryn Lunney
Deputy General Counsel
Department of Commerce

Ms. Jennifer Luray
Director
White House Office for Women's Initiatives and Outreach

✓ Ms. Margaret Lycette
Director, Office of Women in Development
United States Agency for International Development

✓ Ms. Betsy Myers
Associate Deputy for Entrepreneurial Development
and Director of Small Business Welfare to Work

Ms. Jan Piercy
U.S. Executive Director
World Bank

Ms. Linda Robertson
Assistant Secretary for Legislative Affairs and Public Liaison
Department of the Treasury

✓ Ambassador Sally Shelton-Colby
Assistant Administrator
United States Agency for International Development

✓ Ambassador Wendy Sherman
Counselor of the Department of State
Department of State

Ms. Hilary Sims Feldstein
Professional Facilitator for Strategic Planning Session

Ms. Lidia Soto-Harmon
Deputy Director, President's Interagency Council on Women
State Department

Ms. Melanne Verveer
Assistant to the President and Chief of Staff to the First Lady
Office of the First Lady

✓ Ms. Joan Wainwright
Deputy Commissioner for Communications
Social Security Administration

✓ Ms. Susan Wood
Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary for Health (Women's Health)
Department of Health and Human Services



The President's Interagency Council on Women

First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton • Secretary of State Madeleine K. Albright • Secretary of Health and Human Services
Honorary Chair Chair Donna Shalala, Immediate Past Chair

DATE: ^{Jan} ~~Dec~~ 13, 1999

TO: Melanne Verveer / Katie Button
ORGANIZATION: First Lady's Office
PHONE: 456-6266 FAX: 456-6244

FROM: LIDIA SOTO-HARMON, DEPUTY DIRECTOR
PHONE: (202) 647 - 6227 FAX: (202) 647 - 5337

MESSAGE: _____

Melanne/Katie
Here is the info on tomorrow's
meeting.
① Wendy will open (see her remarks)
introduce you (Melanne - for 2 minute remarks)
② Agenda
③ List of Participants -

Looking forward to
seeing you tomorrow

NUMBER OF PAGES (INCLUDING COVER SHEET): _____

Remarks for Ambassador Wendy Sherman

- It is wonderful to see so many of you here today to discuss the future of this Council.
- It is indeed a testament to the importance of implementing the Platform of Action that you are all dedicating time to make a difference within your respective agencies. We should not forget that our strength is looking at ways that this UN/international document can effect improvements for women and girls in our country. It is the domestic agencies in our Council that can help us make that happen.
- I am happy to announce that our next Council meeting has been set for Friday, January 22nd at 3PM. Secretary Albright is looking forward to it. It is therefore, quite appropriate that this Strategic Planning Session has been scheduled today. The results of our discussion will be presented at our Council meeting next Friday.
- Secretary Albright regretted not being able to join us this morning, and wished us well in our work. I don't know how many of you saw that last week the actress Lucy Loveless named the Secretary the person most similar to Xena the Warrior Princess, saying 'she's a tough chick, cruising around the world as a force for goodness. . . I'd hate to meet her in a dark alley.' I think the Secretary would say there's a little bit of Xena in all of us." (compliments of Heather Hurlbert- use if you like!)
- At our last Council meeting, Secretary Albright agreed that the State Department would look at Sally Shelton-Colby's AID model for insitutionalizing gender concerns. Theresa Loar's office and Ambassador Craig Johnstone have made great progress in creating a permanent means of addressing the concerns of women and girls in policy development and resource allocation. I know we will be discussing other agencies work in this area today.
- Secretary Albright and I would like to thank Sally Shelton-Colby and Margaret Lycette for providing us with a excellent professional facilitator for this strategic planning session. Theresa and Lidia tell me that having Hilary Sims Feldstein help with this process has been a very valuable contribution to the work of our Council. Thank you.
- I am now delighted to introduce our distinguished colleague from the First Lady's Office: Ms Melanne Verveer.



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STRATEGIC PLANNING SESSION

Thursday, January 14, 1999

11:00AM - 2:00PM

Van Buren Dining Room (8th Floor)

U.S. Department of State

AGENDA

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| 10:45AM | Check in at C Street entrance |
| 11:00AM | Meeting begins - Introductions around the table of Council Members |
| 11:35AM | Strengthening Strategic Approaches in Your Agencies - Discussion on institutionalization |
| 12:40PM | No-host Lunch (Please bring \$16 in cash) |
| 12:55PM | Interagency Collaboration in Critical Areas of Concern - <i>The Economy</i> - <i>Women in Armed Conflict</i> - <i>The Girl-Child</i> |
| 1:25PM | Outreach to NGO Community and Hill |
| 2:00PM | Session adjourns |

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Department of Health and Human Services

THE WHITE HOUSE

Assistant to the President and
Chief of Staff to the First Lady

Implement'n of Platform
transformative for women
around the world

Pres to Beijing Aug 95
process to implement
at home.

Leadership Sec. Skhalala
& new Sec. Aclight

All over the world

Pres to travel to the
see what it's unleashed -
made all the diff 'ce
what all of you represent.
as ramp up to Beijing + 5.

has we're doing:

work w all of you

WH - SOTU - Budget -

- SS - women
- microcredit - SBA, etc
- family agenda - childcare & long term

care

THE WHITE HOUSE

Assistant to the President and
Chief of Staff to the First Lady

Angel Council -

U. of the Americas -

on going process.

No Incl.

~~the~~ former Sov. Union.

So. Amer.

labor - list'n bldg

SBA - on line - in Sp.

DOJ - domestic viol 'ce.

FL is committed to work;

get together - 22 up.

1 h start up

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The President's
Interagency Council on Women

**COUNCIL MEMBER
BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION**





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Thursday, January 14, 1999

11:00 AM - 2:00 PM

VAN BUREN DIPLOMATIC DINING ROOM, EIGHT FLOOR
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

As we look ahead to the fifth anniversary of the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women in June 2000 (B+5), we need to develop the road map for the next two years on how best to strengthen interagency collaboration and engage in effective outreach. The strategic planning session will help us accomplish this goal. This planning involves:

I. STRENGTHENING STRATEGIC APPROACHES IN YOUR AGENCIES

1. Is there institutionalized attention to issues affecting women in your agency?
 - Do you have a formal mechanism in your agency, such as a working group or task force, that leads/or implements improved programming for issues affecting women? Are there specific policies in place?
 - Have you been engaged in the Council's Working Group on Institutional Change?
2. If you have not been able to build programs or policies within your agency, what are the obstacles?
3. Are there specific ways in which the Council or another agency can help you overcome these obstacles?

II. INTERAGENCY COLLABORATION IN CRITICAL AREAS OF CONCERN

In preparation for our retreat, we took the 12 Areas of Critical Concern from the Platform for Action and developed a matrix of Council working groups. (See attached). There are three key areas that should be more fully addressed by the U.S. government. These areas are:

1. *The Economy*
 - women's economic entrepreneurship
 - unwaged work
2. *Women and Armed Conflict*
 - peacekeeping training
 - conflict resolution
3. *The Girl-Child*
 - girls' health and education (specifically science and technology)
 - empowering young girls (building on HHS's Girl Power)
 - girls in the criminal justice system

How can you and other Council members more fully address these issues?

Are there other areas of the Beijing Platform that you think should be addressed?

III. OUTREACH TO NGO COMMUNITY AND THE HILL

1. What are you doing currently to reach out to nongovernmental organizations?
2. What appropriate outreach should Council members do with the Hill to make them aware of our progress and to ensure support for issues that affect women?
3. How can the Council and your agency make more visible the progress made by the U.S. government to improve the status of women and girls?

We will be interviewing several Council members prior to the retreat to get input and further refine the issues that Council members place as priorities for the next two years. We ask that you come prepared to discuss the three areas outlined above on January 14th.

Telephone (202)647-6227 • Fax (202)647-5337

<http://secretary.state.gov/www/iacw/index.html>

MATRIX OF WORKING GROUPS AND CROSS-CUTTING CRITICAL AREAS OF CONCERN

PRESIDENT'S INTERAGENCY COUNCIL ON WOMEN WORKING GROUPS

UN FOURTH WORLD CONFERENCE ON WOMEN 12 AREAS OF CRITICAL CONCERN

| | |
|--|---|
| <p>WOMEN AND THE GLOBAL ECONOMY Chaired by Kitty Higgins, Department of Labor: works to ensure that policy deliberations on global economic issues give appropriate consideration to women by coordinating such efforts throughout the U.S. government.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • poverty • education & training • economy |
| <p>WOMEN AND PRISONS Chaired by Bonnie Campbell, Department of Justice: seeks to improve conditions for incarcerated women and their families by heightening public awareness, lending support from federal personnel, state corrections officials and NGOs.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • poverty • education & training • health • violence • human rights |
| <p>RURAL WOMEN Chaired by Jill Long Thompson, USDA: seeks to improve the status of rural women; serves as follow-up to the International Conference on Women and Agriculture held on June 28 - July 2 in Washington, DC.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • poverty • education & training • health • economy |
| <p>TRAFFICKING IN WOMEN AND GIRLS Chaired by Anita Botti, Department of State: works to coordinate and increase U.S. government efforts to prevent and combat trafficking in women and girls.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • poverty • violence • human rights • child-girl |
| <p>GENDER AND INSTITUTIONAL CHANGE Chaired by Sally Shelton Colby, USAID: works to develop a gender perspective into governmental policies and operations.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • institutional mechanisms • decision-making |
| <p>(NEW!) MICROENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT Co-chaired by Ellen Lazar, CDFI and John Gray, SBA: works to better coordinate federal initiatives supporting microenterprise development.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • poverty • education & training • economy |
| <p>(NEW!) VITAL VOICES: WOMEN IN DEMOCRACY Chaired by Theresa Loar, Department of State: focuses interagency attention and resources on enhancing participation of women in the political and economic life of their countries.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • education & training • violence • economy • human rights • media |
| <p>(NEW!) EMPOWERING DISABLED WOMEN AND GIRLS Co-chaired by Judith E. Heumann, Department of Education and Susan Daniels, U.S. Social Security Administration: works to follow-up the International Leadership Forum for Women with Disabilities in June 1997; focusing on employment and leadership development.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • poverty • education & training • economy • decision-making |

UNITED NATIONS FOURTH WORLD CONFERENCE ON WOMEN, BEIJING CHINA, 4- 15 SEPTEMBER 1995
12 CRITICAL AREAS OF CONCERN

1. **Poverty:** *develop macroeconomics mechanisms to improve access to economic resources.*
2. **Education and Training:** *ensure equal to education and promote lifelong education and training for girls and women.*
3. **Health:** *increase women's life-long access to affordable, appropriate, and quality health care, and to information dealing with maternal mortality, sexually transmitted diseases, HIV/AIDS and sexual and reproductive health.*
4. **Violence:** *adopt and implement legislation to end violence against women, ratify the UN Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women, encourage international cooperation to dismantle trafficking in women.*
5. **Armed Conflict:** *increase participation of women in conflict resolution at decision-making levels, condemn ethnic cleansing and rape as a consequence of war and a violation of human rights.*
6. **Economy:** *promote women's economic rights and independence, including access to employment and appropriate working conditions and control over economic resources.*
7. **Decision-Making:** *ensure women's equal access to and full participation in public sector power structures, increase women's capacity to participate in decision-making and leadership positions.*
8. **Institutional Mechanisms:** *create/strengthen national bureaucracies to ensure that advancement of women is vested in the highest possible level of government.*
9. **Human Rights:** *promote human rights of women by fully implementing all human rights instruments, especially the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women.*
10. **Media:** *promote a balanced and non-stereotyped portrayal of women in the media.*
11. **Environment:** *integrate gender concerns and perspectives in policies and programs for sustainable development.*
12. **The Girl-Child:** *eliminate discrimination against the girl-child: enforce rights to succession, and to inherit, eliminate female genital mutilation, son preference, economic exploitation of child labor, and strengthen the role of the family in improving the status of the girl-child.*



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Interagency Collaboration in Critical Areas of Concern

Women and the Global Economy

Women contribute significantly to economic life everywhere. Their share in the labor force continues to rise, they are becoming more involved in micro-, small and medium enterprises and their income is becoming increasingly necessary to all households.

However, women are largely excluded from economic decision-making. They face low wages, poor working conditions and limited employment and professional opportunities. Though women contribute to development through paid as well as unpaid work, such as domestic and community work, is not measured in quantitative terms and not valued in national accounts.

Discrimination in education and training, hiring, and remuneration and promotion, as well as inflexible working conditions, lack of access to productive resources and inadequate sharing of family responsibilities, contribute to restricted employment, economic and professional opportunities for women.

Recommendations

- Promote women's economic rights and independence, including access to employment and appropriate working conditions and control over economic resources.
- Facilitate women's equal access to resources, employment, markets and trade;
- Provide business services, training and access to markets, information and technology, particularly to low-income women;
- Strengthen women's economic capacity and commercial networks;
- Eliminate occupational segregation and all forms of employment discrimination;
- Promote harmonization of work and family responsibilities for women and men.

Women and Armed Conflict

Peace is a prerequisite for the attainment of equality between women and men. Unfortunately, armed and other types of conflict still persist in many parts of the world. Aggression, foreign occupation and ethnic and other conflicts are an ongoing reality affecting women and men in nearly every region, aided by excessive military expenditures and the arms trade.

Though women rarely have any role in the decisions leading to armed conflicts, they work to preserve social order in the midst of the conflicts. They also make an important contribution as peace educators and resolves conflicts.

The Platform recognizes that rape, which is common during armed conflicts, is a crime, and under certain circumstances is an act of genocide. It condemns "ethnic cleansing" as a strategy of war and rape as one of it's consequences. Such practices must be stopped and their perpetrators punished.

Recommendations

- Increase the participation of women in conflict resolution at decision-making levels;
- Reduce excessive military expenditures and control the availability of armaments;
- Work towards the universal ratification of the anti-mine Convention and Protocol by the year 2000;
- Recognize the important roles and contributions of women in peace movements throughout the world;
- Recognize the need to protect women living in situations of armed and other conflict or under foreign occupation, or who have become refugees or displaced.

The Girl-Child

In many countries, the girl-child faces discrimination from the earliest stages of life, through childhood and into adulthood. Due to harmful attitudes and practices, such as female genital mutilations (FGM), son preference, early marriage, sexual exploitation and practices related to health and food allocation, fewer girls than boys survive into adulthood in some areas of the world. Due to lack of protective laws, or failure to enforce such laws, girls are more vulnerable to all kinds of violence, particularly sexual violence. In many regions, girls face discrimination in access to education and specialized training.

More than 15 million girls aged 15 to 19 each year give birth and face pregnancy-related complications. Girls are also more vulnerable than boys to the consequences of unprotected and premature sexual relations, including HIV/AIDS.

Recommendations

- Eliminate all forms of discrimination against the girl-child; enact and enforce appropriate legislation that guarantees equal right to succession and ensures equal right to inherit, regardless of the sex of the child;
- Eliminate negative cultural attitudes and practices against girls;
- Eliminate discrimination against girls in education, skills development and training;
- Eliminate discrimination against girls in health and nutrition;
- Eliminate the economic exploitation of child labor and protect young girls at work;
- Strengthen the role of the family in improving the status of the girl-child.



The President's Interagency Council on Women

January 1999

BACKGROUND

- President Clinton established the Council in August 1995, on the eve of the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, in order to "make sure that all the effort and good ideas actually get implemented when we get back home."
- The Council is charged with coordinating the implementation of the Platform for Action adopted at Beijing, including the US commitments announced there. It also develops related initiatives to further women's progress and engages in outreach and public education to support the successful implementation of the Conference agreements.
- First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton serves as Honorary Chair. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright has chaired the Council since March, 1997 following the strong leadership provided by former chair Secretary of Health and Human Services Donna Shalala. The Council includes high level representatives from executive branch agencies.

BRIEFINGS

- The Council holds quarterly open public briefings and discussions. The next meeting will be held on Wednesday April 7, 1999 at the State Department. All are welcome. Sessions are intended as an occasion for dialogue on the issues between Council representatives and NGOs. Contact us at (202) 647-6227.

FEDERAL REPORT

- The Council published *America's Commitment: Federal Programs Benefiting Women and New Initiatives as follow-up to the UN Fourth World Conference on Women*, an inventory and analysis of agencies' current efforts and projected policies and programs measured against the goals of the Platform for Action. *America's Commitment* is updated quarterly. It can be obtained through the Web page or by contacting the Council's office for a copy.

CONTACT INFORMATION FOR THE COUNCIL

Theresa Loar, Director
Lidia Soto-Harmon, Deputy Director

The President's Interagency Council on Women
Department of State, Room 2906
Washington, DC 20520-7512
Telephone: 202-647-6227
Fax: 202-647-5337

WORKING GROUPS

The Council has established several interagency groups to work towards policy development, organized around a specific event, or promote dialogue and coordination on an issue. The working groups are chaired by Council representatives but other staff members of agencies participate. As with all of the Council's activities, the working groups derive from specific strategies or cross-cutting themes in the Beijing Platform for Action. All groups will have extensive contact and consultation with NGOs as they go about their work.

- **WOMEN AND THE GLOBAL ECONOMY.** Chaired by Kitty Higgins, Deputy Secretary of the Department of Labor, this group is working to ensure that Administration policy deliberations on global economic issues give appropriate consideration to the effects of various policies and programs on women; to coordinate the development of US government participation in international fora dealing with economic issues of concern to women; and to serve as a forum for interaction and information exchange on global economic issues with interested U.S. non-governmental organizations. Contact Liz Toohey, 202-219-6151.
- **WOMEN AND PRISONS.** Chaired by Bonnie Campbell of the Department of Justice, the group seeks to improve conditions for women incarcerated in the U.S. and their families by heightening public awareness, lending high level support to seek solutions, and establishing cooperation among federal personnel, state corrections officials and NGOs. Contact Wendy Patten, 202-514-3274.
- **RURAL WOMEN.** Chaired by Jill Long Thompson, USDA, the group seeks to improve the status of rural women. The goal of the working group is to serve as follow up to the International Conference on Women in Agriculture held June 28 - July 2, 1998 in Washington, DC. Contact Leanne Powell, 202-720-4581.
- **TRAFFICKING IN WOMEN AND GIRLS.** Chaired by Anita Botti of the State Department, the group works to coordinate and increase US government efforts to prevent and combat trafficking in women and girls. The group is implementing a concrete and comprehensive plan of action focusing on prevention, protection and enforcement. Contact Anita Botti, 202-647-5440.
- **GENDER AND INSTITUTIONAL CHANGE.** Chaired by Sally Shelton Colby of the Agency for International Development, this group is working to develop procedures that ensure the integration of a gender perspective into the policies and operations of government so that different impacts on men and women may be determined and inequities addressed. This includes the examination of disaggregated data as a model to measure program impacts. Contact Margaret Lycette, 202-712-0570.
- **[NEW!] MICROENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT.** Co-chaired by Ellen Lazar of the Department of Treasury's Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFI) Fund and John Gray of the Small Business Administration, this group is charged with better coordination of federal initiatives supporting microenterprises. This work rose directly from the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995, when the United States made a commitment to promoting microenterprise development. Contact Helen Szablya, CDFI Fund, (202) 622-8401.

- **[NEW!] VITAL VOICES: WOMEN IN DEMOCRACY.** Chaired by Theresa Loar of the Department of State, this group is charged with focusing interagency attention and resources on the full participation of women in the political and economic life of their country. First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton has keynoted the three *Vital Voices* conferences in Vienna, Belfast and Montevideo. Public-private partnerships to implement the conferences' outcomes are underway. Contact Alyse Nelson, Department of State, (202) 647-5440.
- **[NEW!] EMPOWERING DISABLED WOMEN AND GIRLS.** Co-Chaired by Judith E. Heumann of the Department of Education and Susan Daniels of the U.S. Social Security Administration. This working group will follow-up the International Leadership Forum for Women with Disabilities in June 1997. The two key issues this working group will address are: employment and leadership development. Four domestic and four international training sessions are planned for 1999 and 2000 with assistance from Council members. Contact Peggy McLeod, Department of Education, (202) 260-9163, or Ilene Zeitzer, Social Security Administration, (410)965-7302.