

Clinton Presidential Records

Digital Records Marker

This is not a presidential record. This is used as an administrative marker by the William J. Clinton Presidential Library Staff.

This marker identifies the place of a tabbed divider. Given our digitization capabilities, we are sometimes unable to adequately scan such dividers. The title from the original document is indicated below.

VII

Divider Title: _____



Santiago Declaration

The Wives of the Heads of State and Government of the Americas and Delegates meeting in Santiago, Chile from the 28th through the 30th of September of 1998 under the theme "The Americas Pave Today the Way for the Year 2000" for the purpose of sharing the achievements and lending new impetus to our commitment to contribute to the development of the countries in the Hemisphere, hereby sign the following Declaration:

1. We recognize the growing need to contribute more actively to finding solutions to social problems that require a hemispheric effort by pooling skills, sharing experiences, strengthening initiatives, and designing strategies that permit us to take effective action in this area.
2. We value our potential as a shared network of common goals and projects that transcend our borders for the purpose of bringing together, developing and using capabilities and resources to the benefit of our societies, especially its vulnerable sectors.
3. Our actions are oriented towards supporting and promoting social policies and strategies consistent with international agreements and resolutions that foster the strengthening of democracy, the eradication of poverty, the protection and promotion of human rights, progress toward economic stability and social justice for all the peoples of the Americas.
4. We commit ourselves once more to the agreements concluded as part of the Panama Declaration with respect to high-risk population groups who are hardest hit by the effects of poverty and social exclusion. We reaffirm our commitments to ensure that policies and programs are fully incorporated into the development processes of our countries.
5. We recognize that globalization is generating in each of our countries new scenarios that present a series of new demands and opportunities with respect to national capabilities.
6. We endorse and value the strides made as set forth in the "Follow-up Report on the Agreements and Projects Adopted at the Seventh Conference of Wives of Heads Of State and Government of the Americas" regarding: Teen Pregnancy Prevention; Cancer Prevention and Control; Eradication of Measles; Elimination of all Forms of Violence; Reduction of Maternal Morbidity and Mortality; Compliance with Rights and Obligations with respect to Children; Improvement of the Quality of Childhood Education Systems; Equal Access by Boys and Girls to Education; and Equal Access by Women to Decision-Making Processes.
7. We agree to adopt, as central priority issues of this Eighth Conference, given their importance and relevance to the situations in the countries gathered here: Education; Promotion of Women's Rights to Participation; Prevention and Elimination of Domestic Violence and Child Abuse, and coordination with the agreements and resolutions of the Second Summit of the Americas held in Santiago, Chile, in April 1998 and other conferences on these topics.
8. We underscore, in the field of education, the importance of the comprehensive development of the child, with emphasis on the early education of boys and girls under 6 years of age living in poverty and other high-risk situations. We also underscore the importance of continuing to combine our efforts to support the inclusion and retention of women in the labor force and promote educational strategies that target women and children's health.
9. We recognize that problems that need to be addressed in the Americas on an urgent basis include: increased teenage pregnancy and a higher incidence of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome. We agree to dedicate our efforts to encourage and support sexual education for boys and girls, regarding the prevention of AIDS and other STD.



10. We reaffirm our support for strengthening the rights of women to participate in all areas of social, political, economic and cultural endeavors involving our peoples. We greatly value and support the initiatives taken to include rural women in this process.
11. We declare our firm intent to continue to strive for equal treatment and opportunities for women, which serve as barometers of actual progress made in consolidating the democratic mechanisms that our countries are promoting. We will lend support to programs aimed at strengthening the capabilities of women, particularly those that encourage and develop their leadership skills.
12. We recognize and value the progress made in the countries of the Hemisphere with respect to legislation applicable to domestic violence. We agree to devote our efforts to strengthening those entities that guarantee proper implementation of and actual compliance with the rights and duties resulting from this legislation.
13. We reiterate the need to guarantee continuity of efforts aimed at eradicating measles in our Hemisphere by the year 2000. Moreover, we support other initiatives aimed at implementing innovative strategies for the promotion of physical and mental health.
14. We agree that within the context of the International Year of Senior Citizens, scheduled by the United Nations to cover the period September 1, 1998 through September 30, 1999, to work systematically in our countries for their full social, economic and cultural inclusion. We will also provide assistance with exchanges and technical support in this area among our countries.
15. We note that our meeting coincides with the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and we undertake to comply fully with the goals set forth in that important Declaration, reaffirming the universal, indivisible and interdependency of these rights.
16. We declare our firm intention to promote equal opportunities for persons with disabilities, in order to strengthen their participatory rights.
17. We emphasize the valuable assistance being provided by cooperation agencies, international organizations and multilateral programs to support social policies, governmental and non-governmental institutions to bolster initiatives and resources aimed at the implementation of our activities that benefit the vulnerable groups.
18. We reaffirm our support for access to and participation of women in decision-making processes as one of the most important ways of achieving our goals and "paving today the way for the year 2000".
19. We express our solidarity with the countries affected by the recent disaster caused by nature particularly by Hurricane George.
20. We express our appreciation to the First Lady of the Republic of Chile, Mrs. Marta Larraechea de Frei, and in particular, the Chilean government and people, for the hospitality extended during our stay.
21. We are grateful for and accept the courteous offer of the wife of the Prime Minister of Canada, Mrs. Aline Chrétien, to host the Ninth Conference of Wives of the Heads of State and Government of the Americas in 1999.



Mrs. Dora Boyd de Pérez Balladares
First Lady of Panama

Mrs. Mary Flake de Flores
First Lady of Honduras

Mrs. Marta Larraechea de Frei
First Lady of Chile

Mrs. María Dolores Alemán Cardenal
First Lady of Nicaragua

Mrs. Aline Chrétien
First Lady of Canada

Mrs. Mirta Gusinky de Cubas
First Lady of Paraguay

Mrs. Yolanda Prada de Banzer
First Lady of Bolivia

Ms. Keiko Sofía Fujimori Higuchi
First Lady of Peru

Mrs. Ruth Correa de Leite Cardozo
First Lady of Brazil

Mrs. Carmen L. Campos de Fernández
First Lady of the Dominican Republic

Mrs. Norha Puyana de Pastrana
First Lady of Colombia

Mrs. Calliopa Pearlette Louisy
First Lady of Saint Lucia

Mrs. Lorena Clare de Rodríguez
First Lady of Costa Rica

Mrs. Ismay Patricia D'Leon
First Lady of Suriname

Ms. Paola Mahuad Calderón
First Lady of Ecuador

Mrs. Oma Panday
First Lady of Trinidad and Tobago

Mrs. Elizabeth de Calderón Sol
First Lady of El Salvador

Mrs. Teresa González Fernández de Solá
Government Delegate of Argentina

Mrs. Hillary Rodham Clinton
First Lady of the United States of America

Mrs. Vilma Lucila Espín de Castro
Government Delegate of Cuba

Mrs. Patricia Escobar de Arzú
First Lady of Guatemala

Mrs. Elsie Schmilinsky de Altimari
Government Delegate of Venezuela

Mrs. Yvonne Zereder Hinds
First Lady of Guyana

Mrs. María Amparo Canto González
Secretary of Foreign Affairs of Mexico

Mrs. Géri Benoit Preval
First Lady of Haiti

Mrs. Escribana Gabriela Sierra del Cioppo
Technical Advisor of Uruguay



Declaration of Panama

The First Ladies of Antigua and Barbuda, Brazil, Canada, Colombia, Costa Rica, Chile, Ecuador, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Nicaragua, Panama, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, and the United States, and the Representatives designated by the Governments of Argentina, Bolivia, Cuba, El Salvador, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru, the Dominican Republic, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Uruguay and Venezuela, meeting in Panama on October 8-9, 1997, with the theme "Building the Future of America with Human Rights and a Culture of Peace," to evaluate progress made and to renew our commitment to find a solution to the social problems of our Continent, agree to sign the following Declaration:

1- We recognize that the social problems which our countries are facing are, in some respects, common to us, and that their solution requires the participation and commitment of all sectors of society.

2- We firmly believe that the promotion and respect of human rights, the achievement of equality and the strengthening of values such as solidarity, tolerance, a culture of peace, pluralism and the right to self-determination of people, are fundamental conditions for the development and integration of a community of nations.

3- We have proven the existence of vulnerable population groups who have been greatly impacted by poverty, unemployment, and social disintegration. Among these, children, young people, urban and rural women, the elderly and disabled require policies and programs which will facilitate their incorporation into the development process and its benefits.

4- We reiterate our desire to put our capabilities as managers, mobilizers, facilitators or ralliers of social programs and policies at the service of our countries, with an emphasis on the vulnerable sectors, in complete unity with the national interests of each country, gaining inspiration from dialogue, negotiation and mutual respect.

5- We will continue to use as a frame of reference and presentation the recommendations and decisions supported

by our Governments at the World Summit on Children in 1990; the United Nations Conference on the Environment and Development of 1992; the Geneva Declaration on Rural Women of 1992; the World Conference on Human Rights of 1993; the International Conference on Population and Development of 1994; the Summit of the Americas of 1994; the World Summit on Social Development of 1995; the IV World Conference on Women of 1995; the World Food Summit of 1996, and the Summit for Sustainable Development in Santa Cruz, Bolivia, in 1996.

6- Conscious of the rapid changes which characterize today's world, we reiterate our commitment to increase the access and to improve the systems of education, training, information and technology, with the aim of providing our populations with the necessary tools to successfully assume the responsibility to contribute to their development.

7- We reiterate our commitment to continue to supporting the fulfillment of our agreements on:

- Prevention of Early Pregnancy
- Prevention and Control of Cancer
- Elimination of all Forms of Violence
- Reduction of Maternal Morbidity-Mortality
- Observance of the Rights and Duties of Children
- Improvement of the Quality of the Educational Systems for Children
- Equal Access for Girls and Boys to Education
- Equal Access of Women in Decision-making Processes

8- We value the work carried out by countries in the region who support the elimination of measles.



9- We continue to be concerned with the poverty and inequality which persist among rural women in the Americas. For this reason, we view with great satisfaction the advances achieved in the establishment and launching of the regional proposal to strengthen the integration of rural women in educational, productive and commercial activities. We request that the Pro-Tempore Secretariat present the project in the manner deemed convenient at the next meeting of the Inter-American Agricultural Board and of other interested regional organizations.

10- We consider that the process of educating children and adolescents must include the development of knowledge, abilities, and a sense of responsibility to look after their health, to guarantee and promote their rights and to promote co-existence, non-discrimination, equality among men and women, and conflict resolution through dialogue, communication, negotiation and mutual respect.

11- We commit our efforts to contribute to the eradication of child labor, whose repercussions bar the harmonious and integral education and development of boys and girls in our countries. Because of this, we request the United Nations to establish an International Year for the Eradication of Child Labor.

12- We recognize the urgency of all the countries in adopting the necessary measures to comply with the Treaty on the Rights of Children in particular, and to confront as soon as possible, the elimination of all forms of violence against boys and girls which irreparably mutilate and lacerate their bodies and spirits.

13- We invite countries which have not done so, to ratify the Inter-American Treaty for the Prevention, Sanction, and Eradication of Violence against Women, known as the Treaty de Belem do Pará, adopted in 1994.

14- We support initiatives promoting Human Rights, to lay the foundation for a real Culture of Peace and Development, such as the ones already in place, to overcome poverty on our continent.

15- We recognize that to reach our goals of achieving a true culture of peace and development, it is indispensable to support the access and participation of women in the process of decision-making within the framework of a diverse and active civil society.

16- We recognize the valuable participation and contribution of international organizations and financial institutions which have supported our initiatives, making possible the execution of projects and programs destined for the neediest and most vulnerable sectors of our societies.

17- We gratefully appreciate and accept the kind offer of the First Lady of Chile to host the VIIIth Conference of the Wives of Heads of State and Governments of the Americas in 1998.

18- We thank the First Lady of Panama, Dora Boyd de Pérez Balladares, the people and government of Panama, for the kind attention we have received during our stay.

Two copies were signed in the city of Panama in their original form in Spanish and English on October 9th, 1997.



Annex

Participants and special guests

- | COUNTRY |
|------------------------|
| 1. Antigua |
| 2. Chile |
| 3. Colombia |
| 4. Costa Rica |
| 5. Guatemala |
| 6. Guyana |
| 7. Nicaragua |
| 8. Suriname |
| 9. Trinidad and Tobago |
| 10. Brazil |
| 11. Ecuador |
| 12. Haiti |
| 13. Canada |
| 14. United States |
| 15. Jamaica |
| 16. Panama |

- | FIRST LADIES |
|---------------------------------|
| Patricia Bird |
| Marta Larrechea de Frei |
| Jacquin Strouss de Samper |
| Josette Altmann de Figueres |
| Patricia Escobar Dalton de Arzú |
| Ivonne Hinds |
| María Dolores de Alemán |
| Patricia De León |
| Ismay Patricia Robinson |
| Ruth Correa Leite de Cardoso |
| Lucía Peña Ochoa de Alarcón |
| Géri Benoit Préval |
| Aline Chrétien |
| Hillary Rodham Clinton |
| Lady Ivy Silvia Watson de Cooke |
| Dora Boyd de Pérez Balladares |

- | COUNTRY |
|------------------------|
| 1. Argentina |
| 2. Cuba |
| 3. Peru |
| 4. Uruguay |
| 5. St. Kitts |
| 6. Venezuela |
| 7. Paraguay |
| 8. Mexico |
| 9. Bolivia |
| 10. El Salvador |
| 11. Dominican Republic |

- | GOVERNMENT DELEGATES |
|-------------------------------------|
| Ambassador Zelmira Mireya Regazzoli |
| Sonia Beretervide Dopico |
| Ambassador Beatriz Ramacciotti |
| Deputy Diana Cristina Saravia Olmos |
| Verónica Liburd |
| Elsie de Altimari |
| Beatriz Barriocanal de Breuer |
| María Carmen Oñate |
| Virginia Gaylle de Quiroga |
| Abigail Castro de Pérez |
| Lissy Campos de Fernández |

- | SPECIAL GUESTS |
|------------------------------|
| 1. Her Majesty Queen Fabiola |
| 2. Rebeca Grynspan |
| 3. Sir George Alleyne |
| 4. Muni Figueres |
| 5. Mayra Buvinic |
| 6. Juan Méndez |
| 7. Ana Botella de Aznar |
| 8. Ofelia Calcetas-Santos |
| 9. Carmen Moreno |
| 10. Elaine Wolfensohn |
| 11. Tomás Jiménez Araya |
| 12. Ricardo Alba |
| 13. Anaisabel Prera |
| 14. Larry Boone |
| 15. Margarita Roque |
| 16. Marta Maurás |
| 17. Roberto Leal Ocampo |

- | |
|---|
| Queen of Belgium |
| Vice-President of Costa Rica |
| General Manager of PAHO |
| IDB External Relations Advisor |
| Head of the IDB Unit for Women in Development |
| Executive Manager of the Inter-American Institute of Human Rights |
| Wife of the President of the Government of Spain |
| Special Reporter of the United Nations on the subject of Child Abuse |
| Subregional Manager -IPEC |
| Head of the World Bank Delegation |
| Head of the UNFPA Delegation |
| ALICC- representing the Countess of Elda |
| Special Counsellor to the Director of UNESCO |
| General Deputy Manager of IICA, Costa Rica |
| Executive Secretary of the CIM |
| Regional Manager of UNICEF for Latin America and the Caribbean |
| Director of the Inter-American Confederation of the International League for Mentally Disabled People |



1ª CONFERENCIA DE ESPOSAS
DE JEFES DE ESTADO
Y DE GOBIERNO
DE LAS AMERICAS
Secretaría Pro-Teniente

SIXTH CONFERENCE OF WIVES OF HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT OF THE AMERICAS

DECLARATION OF LA PAZ

WE, THE WIVES OF HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT OF THE AMERICAS AND REPRESENTATIVES OF GOVERNMENTS, MEETING IN THE CITY OF LA PAZ BETWEEN 3 AND 6 DECEMBER, 1966, WITH THE PURPOSE OF ANALYZING "THE RIGHTS OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF SUSTAINABLE HUMAN DEVELOPMENT" AND IN AGREEING UPON ACTIONS, INSPIRED IN DIALOGUE, SOLIDARITY AND MUTUAL RESPECT, SUBSCRIBE TO THE FOLLOWING DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES:

1. WE RECOGNIZE THAT THE SUBJECTS OF SOCIAL POLICIES SHOULD PARTICIPATE IN AN ORGANIZED AND ACTIVE MANNER IN THE PLANNING, IMPLEMENTATION AND FOLLOW-UP OF ECONOMIC, POLITICAL AND SOCIAL ACTIVITIES SO THAT EVERYONE MAY DEVELOP TO THEIR MAXIMUM POTENTIAL IN ORDER TO ASSURE THE RIGHTS OF PEOPLE TO RECEIVE PROPER CARE INCLUDING NUTRITION, HOUSING, HEALTH, EMPLOYMENT AND RECREATION.
2. WE RECOGNIZE, NEVERTHELESS, THAT ON OUR CONTINENT BARRIERS EXIST FOR THE MOST VULNERABLE SECTORS OF OUR POPULATION, ESPECIALLY WOMEN AND CHILDREN, IN REACHING THEIR FULL POTENTIAL AND EXERCISING THEIR RIGHTS.
3. WE BELIEVE THAT IN ORDER TO MEET THE CHALLENGES OF SUSTAINABLE HUMAN DEVELOPMENT, GOVERNMENTS AND CIVIL SOCIETIES SHOULD WORK WITH RESPONSIBILITY AND SOLIDARITY PROMOTING CONDITIONS OF OPPORTUNITY AND EQUITY THAT WILL ALLOW THE DEVELOPMENT OF ABILITIES, MEANS OF ORGANIZATION AND PARTICIPATION IN THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS.
4. WE RECOGNIZE THE LINK BETWEEN SOCIAL, POLITICAL, ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS WHOSE INTER-RELATIONSHIP MAKES POSSIBLE THE SUSTAINABILITY OF DEVELOPMENT, AND GUARANTEES THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE QUALITY OF LIFE FOR PRESENT GENERATIONS WITHOUT COMPROMISING THE WELFARE OF FUTURE GENERATIONS.
5. WE REAFFIRM OUR COMMITMENT TO PROMOTE AND SUPPORT POLICIES AND STRATEGIES FOR SUSTAINABLE HUMAN DEVELOPMENT THAT SEEK COMPLETE AND FAIR PARTICIPATION FOR THE MOST VULNERABLE SOCIAL SECTORS.

Despacho de la
Primera Dama
de la Nación

Av. Arce 2335

Tells. 361061 - 361460 - 355603

Fax (591-2) 356973

La Paz - Bolivia

6. WE OFFER OUR MANAGEMENT AND MOBILIZING ABILITY TO CONTINUE FULFILLING COMMITMENTS WE HAVE MADE, IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE NATIONAL INTERESTS OF EACH COUNTRY, MADE AT THE MEETINGS OF VENEZUELA, COLOMBIA, COSTA RICA, SANTA LUCIA AND PARAGUAY, AND ALSO TO IMPLEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS AND DECISIONS ADOPTED AT THE WORLD CONFERENCE ON CHILDREN, HELD IN NEW YORK IN SEPTEMBER OF 1990; THE UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT, HELD IN RIO DE JANEIRO IN JUNE OF 1992; THE WORLD CONFERENCE ON HUMAN RIGHTS, HELD IN VIENNA IN JUNE OF 1993; THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT, HELD IN CAIRO IN SEPTEMBER OF 1994; THE SUMMIT ON SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT, HELD IN COPENHAGEN IN MARCH OF 1995; THE IV WORLD CONFERENCE ON WOMEN, HELD IN BEIJING IN SEPTEMBER OF 1995; THE WORLD FOOD SUMMIT HELD IN ROME IN NOVEMBER 1996; AND THE SUMMIT OF THE AMERICAS, HELD IN MIAMI, RELATING TO THE PRINCIPLES OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT; AS WELL AS THOSE EXPRESSED IN AGENDA 21 CONCERNING WOMEN AND CHILDREN.

7. WE COMMIT OUR FIRM SUPPORT TO SOUND AND EFFECTIVE SOCIAL POLICIES AND STRATEGIES THAT THE GOVERNMENTS OF THE HEMISPHERE FOSTER, IN ORDER TO ACHIEVE SUSTAINABLE HUMAN DEVELOPMENT.

8. WE HIGHLIGHT THE ETHNIC AND CULTURAL VALUE OF OUR SOCIETIES AS AN ESSENTIAL FACTOR TO BE CONSIDERED IN FORMULATING AND IMPLEMENTING POLICIES AND STRATEGIES DIRECTED TOWARD WOMEN AND CHILDREN, IN AN ATMOSPHERE OF HARMONY, PEACE, EQUITY, PLURALISM AND DIVERSITY.

9. WE REAFFIRM OUR COMMITMENT TO JOIN EFFORTS, COORDINATE ACTIONS, AND SHARE EXPERIENCES WITH THE PURPOSE OF STRENGTHENING COOPERATION AND INTEGRATION OF ALL COUNTRIES OF THE CONTINENT.

10. WE RECOGNIZE THE IMPORTANCE OF HEALTH IN OUR POPULATIONS, ESPECIALLY FOR WOMEN, IN ORDER FOR THEM TO REACH THEIR FULL PARTICIPATION WITHIN THE ECONOMIC, POLITICAL AND SOCIAL LIFE OF OUR SOCIETIES, FOR WHICH WE STRIVE TO SUPPORT PROGRAMS AIMED AT SOLVING CRITICAL HEALTH PROBLEMS IN THE AMERICAS.

11. WE REITERATE OUR SUPPORT FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF PROGRAMS TO REDUCE MATERNAL MORTALITY, INCLUDING ACCESS TO PRENATAL CARE AND DELIVERY BY TRAINED PERSONNEL; THE DEVELOPMENT OF SERVICES ABLE TO SOLVE OBSTETRIC EMERGENCIES; SEXUAL EDUCATION AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH*; AND DEVELOPMENT OF VOLUNTARY, ACCESSIBLE AND HIGH QUALITY FAMILY PLANNING SERVICES AVAILABLE TO COUPLES. FURTHERMORE, WE REAFFIRM OUR COMMITMENT TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF WOMEN'S HEALTH CARE AT ALL LEVELS OF THE HEALTH SYSTEM AND AT ALL STAGES OF WOMEN'S LIVES.

* Guatemala considers that the term "reproductive health," in accordance with its national legislation, should be understood as "integrated health".

Despacho de la
Primera Dama
de la Nación

Av. Arce 2335

Tel/s. 351061 - 361460 - 355603

Fax: (591-2) 355973

La Paz - Bolivia

12. WE REAFFIRM OUR COMMITMENT TO MOBILIZE NATIONAL EFFORTS TO PROTECT CHILDREN FROM MEASLES AND TO ERADICATE THIS ILLNESS FROM THE AMERICAS. WE APPLAUD THE EFFORTS AND SUCCESSES ATTAINED BY ALL OUR COUNTRIES IN THE FIGHT AGAINST THIS ILLNESS AND ALL THOSE ILLNESSES THAT CAN BE PREVENTED THROUGH IMMUNIZATION. WE WILL CONTINUE TO SUPPORT ACTIONS IN ORDER TO MAINTAIN THE HIGH COVERAGE OF IMMUNIZATION SO THAT THE GOAL OF ERADICATING MEASLES CAN BE MET BY THE YEAR 2000.

13. WE ENCOURAGE AND SUPPORT THE IMPLEMENTATION OF A REGIONAL PROJECT DIRECTED TO THE REDUCTION OF MALNUTRITION FROM MICRONUTRIENT DEFICIENCY IN THE HEMISPHERE, AND TO THE HIGH RATES OF ANEMIA AND THEIR SEVERE CONSEQUENCES FOR WOMEN AND CHILDREN.

14. WE EMPHASIZE THE PRINCIPLE ROLE OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN ORDER FOR PEOPLE TO DEVELOP THEIR SKILLS, BROADEN THEIR SPECTRUM OF THEIR OPPORTUNITIES, STIMULATE THEIR CREATIVITY, IMPROVE THEIR INCOME, AND PROMOTE THEIR ADAPTATION TO TECHNOLOGICAL CHANGES THAT WILL IMPROVE THE CONDITION OF WOMEN.

15. WE REAFFIRM OUR COMMITMENT TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION OF THE CHILDREN OF THE AMERICAS, PROMOTING BROAD AND EFFECTIVE EDUCATIONAL POLICIES AND ADOPTING BETTER INTERNATIONAL DIALOGUE IN ORDER TO SHARE INFORMATION AND EXPERIENCES FOR THE PURPOSE OF IMPLEMENTING THE MOST EFFECTIVE EDUCATIONAL POLICIES AND STRATEGIES, IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE REALITY AND REQUIREMENTS OF EACH COUNTRY.

16. WE REITERATE THE IMPORTANCE OF PROMOTING THE EDUCATION AND INTEGRATED TRAINING OF WOMEN, PARTICULARLY IN THE RURAL AREAS, AND PROGRAMS THAT WILL ALLOW THEM TO BENEFIT FROM THE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS OF OUR COUNTRIES.

17. WE RECOGNIZE INTRAFAMILY VIOLENCE AS A PUBLIC HEALTH PROBLEM AND A VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS WHICH AFFECTS IN A SPECIAL MANNER WOMEN OF ALL AGES AND SOCIAL GROUPS. FOR THIS REASON, WE URGE GOVERNMENTS TO DEVELOP PUBLIC POLICIES ORIENTED TOWARDS CONFRONTING THIS PROBLEM IN AN INTEGRATED MANNER.

18. WE URGE GOVERNMENTS TO DEVELOP PUBLIC POLICIES WITH THE OBJECTIVE OF PROMOTING WOMEN'S EQUAL ACCESS TO THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES AND TO POWER STRUCTURES IN ALL ASPECTS OF PUBLIC AND POLITICAL LIFE. CONSEQUENTLY, WE RECOMMEND FORMULATING AND IMPLEMENTING SPECIFIC PROGRAMS, IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE ORIENTATION AND MEASURES AGREED UPON BY GOVERNMENTS AT THE FOURTH WORLD CONFERENCE ON WOMEN HELD IN BEIJING IN 1995 WHICH ARE DETAILED IN CLAUSE "G" OF THE PLATFORM OF ACTION, WHICH RESULTED FROM THIS CONFERENCE.

Despacho de la
Primera Dama
de la Nación

Av. Arce 2335

Tel's. 361061 - 361460 - 355603

Fax. (591-2) 356973

La Paz - Bolivia

19. WE DECIDE TO STRENGTHEN THE ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE OF THE PRO TEMPORE SECRETARIAT THROUGH ACTIVE MECHANISMS OF CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION, TO FOLLOW UP ON THE COMMITMENTS MADE AT ALL MEETINGS, AND TO FOSTER THE EXCHANGE OF EXPERIENCES AT THE NATIONAL AND REGIONAL LEVELS IN ORDER TO MAXIMIZE OUR ACTIONS.

20. WE RECOGNIZE THE VALUABLE CONTRIBUTION OF INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AND GOVERNMENTAL AND NON-GOVERNMENTAL ENTITIES IN FACILITATING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF PLANS, PROGRAMS AND PROJECTS DIRECTED TO MEETING THE NEEDS OF THE PEOPLE OF OUR COUNTRIES. WE URGE THEM TO CONTINUE TO COOPERATE IN ORDER TO REACH THE OBJECTIVES PROPOSED IN THE PLAN OF ACTION FOR THE SIXTH CONFERENCE OF WIVES OF HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT OF THE AMERICAS.

21. WE EXPRESS OUR SATISFACTION TO THE REPUBLIC OF GUATEMALA FOR THE SIGNATURE OF THE PEACE AGREEMENT SIGNED IN OSLO, NORWAY ON DECEMBER 4, 1996 AMONG THE SECTORS INVOLVED, WHICH CONSTITUTES A DECISIVE STEP IN THE PEACE PROCESS OF THIS FRATERNAL NATION.

22. WE ACCEPT THE KIND OFFER OF THE FIRST LADIES OF PANAMA AND CHILE THAT PANAMA BE THE SEAT OF THE VII CONFERENCE OF WIVES OF HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT OF THE AMERICAS IN 1997, AND THAT CHILE BE THE SEAT OF THE VIII CONFERENCE IN 1998.

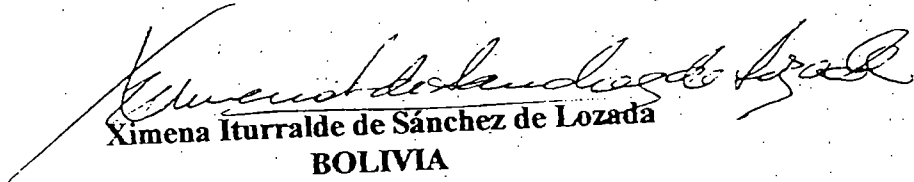
23. WE THANK THE FIRST LADY OF BOLIVIA, AND, THROUGH HER, EXPRESS OUR THANKS TO THE PEOPLE AND GOVERNMENT OF THIS COUNTRY FOR THEIR WARM WELCOME AND HOSPITALITY.

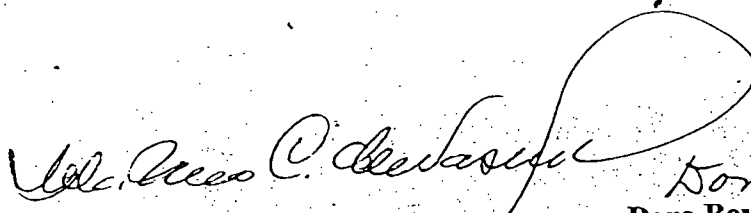
24. SIGNED IN THE CITY OF LA PAZ, BOLIVIA, WITH TWO ORIGINAL DOCUMENTS IN SPANISH AND ENGLISH, ON THE SIXTH DAY OF THE MONTH OF DECEMBER OF THE YEAR ONE THOUSAND NINE HUNDRED NINETY-SIX.

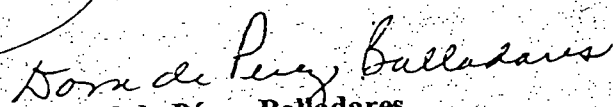
Despacho de la
Primera Dama
de la Nación

Av. Arce 2335
Tells. 361061 - 361460 - 355603
Fax. (591-2) 356973
La Paz - Bolivia

WIVES OF HEADS OF STATE AND
GOVERNMENT OF THE AMERICAS

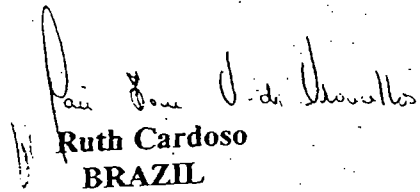

Ximena Iturralde de Sánchez de Lozada
BOLIVIA

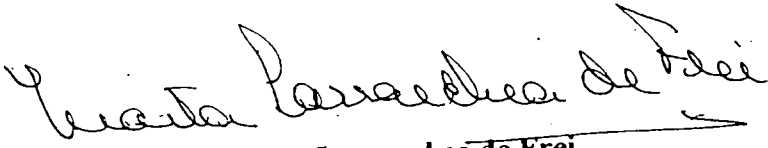

María Teresa Carrasco de Wasmosy
PARAGUAY


Dora Boyd de Pérez Balladares
PANAMA

WIVES OF HEADS OF STATE AND
GOVERNMENT


Patricia Bird
ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA


Ruth Cardoso
BRAZIL


Marta Larraechea de Frei
CHILE


Jacquín Strouss de Samper
COLOMBIA

Despacho de la
Primera Dama
de la Nación

Arce 2335
Tel's. 361061 - 361450 - 355603
Fax. (591-2) 356973
La Paz - Bolivia

Josette Altman de Figueres
Josette Altman de Figueres
COSTA RICA

Elizabeth de Calderón Sol
Elizabeth de Calderón Sol
EL SALVADOR

Hillary Rodham Clinton
on behalf of Hillary Rodham
Clinton
Hillary Rodham Clinton
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Maria Marietta Mitchell
Maria Marietta Mitchell
GRENADA

Bessie Watson de Reina
Bessie Watson de Reina
HONDURAS

Lady Ivy Sylvia Lucille Cooke
Lady Ivy Sylvia Lucille Cooke
JAMAICA

REPRESENTATIVES OF GOVERNMENT

Zelmira Mireya Regazzoli
Zelmira Mireya Regazzoli
ARGENTINA

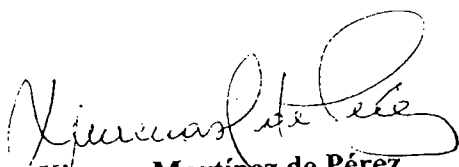
E. Arnold
Elizabeth Arnold
BELIZE

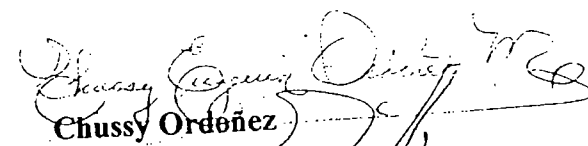
Jean Augustine
Jean Augustine
CANADA

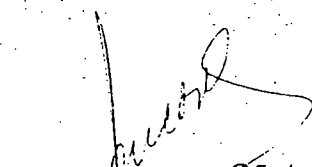
Yolanda Ferrer Gómez
Yolanda Ferrer Gómez
CUBA

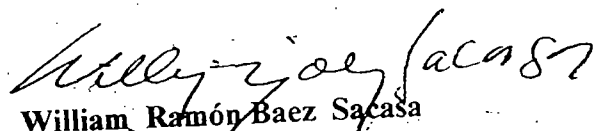
Despacho de la
Primera Dama
de la Nación

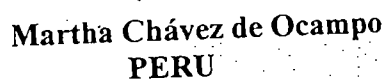
Av. Arce 2335
Tells. 361061 - 361480 - 355603
Fax. (591-2) 356973
La Paz - Bolivia


Ximena Martínez de Pérez
ECUADOR


Chussy Ordoñez
GUATEMALA

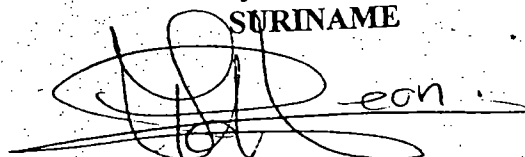

María Carmen Oñate
MEXICO


William Ramón Baez Sacasa
NICARAGUA


Martha Chávez de Ocampo
PERU


Ismay Patricia D'León
SURINAME


Nelly Leites de Moraes
URUGUAY


Elsie Schmilinsky de Altamari
VENEZUELA

Despacho de la
Primera Dama
de la Nación

Av. Arce 2335
Telf: (591-2) 351460 - 355833
Fax: (591-2) 356973
La Paz - Bolivia



5 ^{ta.} CONFERENCIA DE ESPOSAS
DE JEFES DE ESTADO
Y DE GOBIERNO
DE LAS AMERICAS
SECRETARIA PRO - TEMPORE

DECLARATION OF PARAGUAY

5TH CONFERENCE OF WIVES OF HEADS OF STATE AND OF GOVERNMENT OF THE AMERICAS

WE, the Wives of Heads of State and of Government and Representatives of Governments and of First Ladies of the Americas gathered in the City of Asunción, Capital of the Republic of Paraguay, on October 16-19, 1995, to exchange ideas and strategies concerning the "Health and Education of Women and Children" in our Region, as a follow-up to the 4th Conference of Wives of Heads of State and of Government of the Americas held in Saint Lucia on October 11-13, 1994 and to the Symposium on Children of the Americas held in Miami last December 10,

WE recognize that our countries face common challenges regarding the health and education of women and children and that by sharing experiences and promoting regional actions through these conferences, we can foster the development and the well-being of our nations.

IN ACCORDANCE WITH THESE CONSIDERATIONS, WE DECLARE THAT WE WILL:

1. Work in favor of the health and education of women and children, under the principles of: comprehensive development, equality, democratization of information and awareness, and family and social participation.
2. Support actions that improve the health of children and women throughout their life cycles by promoting universal and quality health care, thus contributing to the reduction of maternal morbidity and mortality.

Despacho de la
Primera Dama
de la Nación





5^a CONFERENCIA DE ESPOSAS
DE JEFES DE ESTADO
Y DE GOBIERNO
DE LAS AMERICAS
SECRETARIA PRO - TEMPORE

3. Encourage and support the implementation - while respecting the national interest and legislation of each country - of the agreements and recommendations reached at the World Summit on Children, the United Nations International Conference on Population and Development, the Summit of the Americas, the United Nations World Summit on Social Development, and the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women.
4. Contribute to the attainment of the goal to eliminate measles in the Americas by the year 2000.
5. Promote strategies and activities to improve the health and education of women and children, particularly in poor rural areas and marginalized urban areas.
6. Promote women's and girls' access to formal and non-formal education programs, to ensure

equal opportunity for full participation in society and their active contribution to the development of their countries.
7. Promote a hemispheric dialogue to share information and exchange experiences on education reform efforts which increase school enrollment rates and completion rates, improve the quality of primary and secondary education and expand coverage of non-formal family and community based early childhood education.



5

5^{ta.} CONFERENCIA DE ESPOSAS
DE JEFES DE ESTADO
Y DE GOBIERNO
DE LAS AMERICAS
SECRETARIA PRO - TEMPORE

Contribute to the prevention and elimination of all forms of violence against women and children through the provision of norms and adoption of necessary mechanisms, as well as fostering respect for human rights.

IN ADDITION:

We agree to express our gratitude to International Organizations and other entities for the interest and support manifested at the Conference of Wives of Heads of State and of Government and Representatives of Governments and of First Ladies of the Americas.

We agree to hold the 6th Conference of Wives of Heads of State and of Government of the Americas in the Republic of Bolivia in 1996; agree to hold the 7th Conference in the Republic of Panama, and form the new Pro-Tempore Secretariat composed of the Offices of First Ladies of Bolivia, Paraguay and Panama.

We congratulate and thank our host, Mrs. María Teresa Carrasco de Wasmosy and the Government and people of Paraguay for their warm hospitality and congratulate the Pro-Tempore Secretariat and the General Coordination Committee for the successful culmination of the Conference.

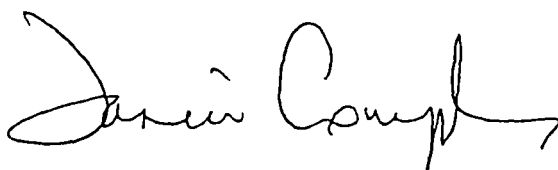
Signed in Asunción, capital of the Republic of Paraguay on the nineteenth day of the month of October of the year nineteen hundred and ninety-five.

Despacho de la
Primera Dama
de la Nación

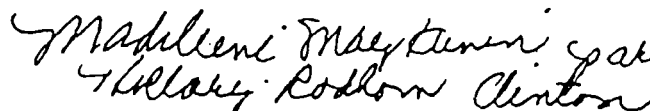
5

1a. CONFERENCIA DE ESPOSAS
DE JEFES DE ESTADO
Y DE GOBIERNO
DE LAS AMERICAS
SECRETARIA PRO - TEMPORE

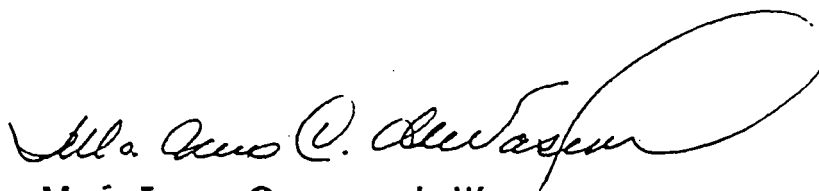
First Ladies
Members of the Pro Tempore Secretariat



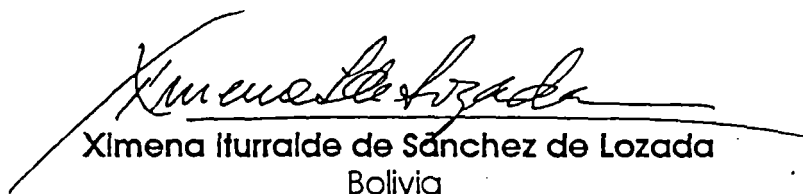
Janice Compton
Saint Lucia



Hillary Rodham Clinton
United States of América



María Teresa Carrasco de Wasmosy
Paraguay



Ximena Iturralde de Sánchez de Lozada
Bolivia

Despacho de la
Primera Dama
de la Nación

5

ta. CONFERENCIA DE ESPOSAS
DE JEFES DE ESTADO
Y DE GOBIERNO
DE LAS AMÉRICAS
SECRETARIA PRO - TEMPORE

First Ladies

Participating at the 5th Conference of Wives of Heads of State and of Government of the Americas

Aline Chrétien

Aline Chrétien
Canada

Marta Larraechea de Frei

Marta Larraechea de Frei
Chile

Josette Altmann de Figueres
Josette Altmann de Figueres
Costa Rica

Josefina Villalobos de Durán Ballén
Josefina Villalobos de Durán Ballén
Ecuador

Ma. Eugenia Morales de De León
Ma. Eugenia Morales de De León
Guatemala

Janet Jagan
Janet Jagan
Guyana

Bessie Watson de Reina
Bessie Watson de Reina
Honduras

Lady Yvy Sylvia Lucille Cooke
Lady Yvy Sylvia Lucille Cooke
Jamaica

Nilda Velasco de Zedillo
Nilda Velasco de Zedillo
Mexico

Dora Boyd de Pérez Balladares
Dora Boyd de Pérez Balladares
Panama

Liésbeth Venetiaan Vanenburg
Suriname

Zalayhar Hassanali
Zalayhar Hassanali
Trinidad and Tobago

Cherwell Vaz

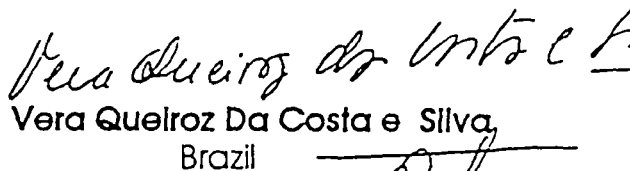
Despacho de la
Primera Dama
de la Nación

Maestro Pellegrini 495 esq. Avda. Stma. Trinidad. Tel. (595-21) 290-753 y 290-757 Fax (595-21) 291-631

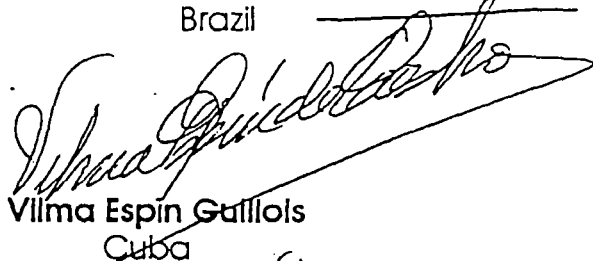
Asunción - Paraguay

*Representatives of Governments
and of First Ladies of the Americas*

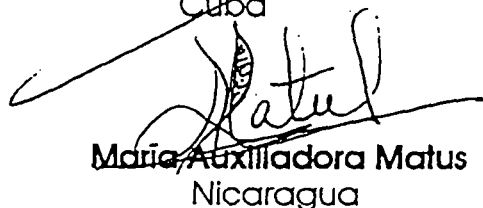

Zelmira Milreya Regazzoli
Argentina

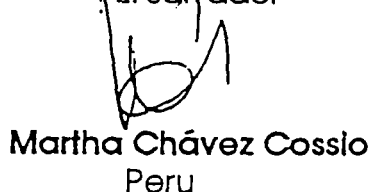

Vera Quéiroz Da Costa e Silva
Brazil

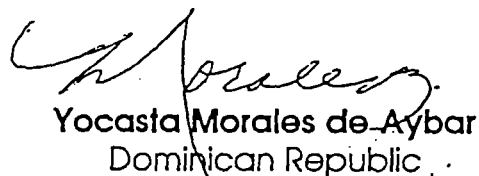

María Cristina Dussán
Colombia

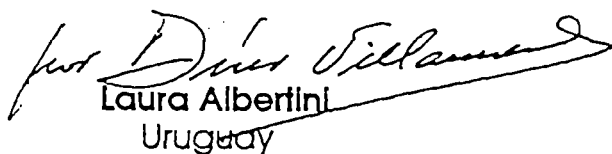

Vilma Espín Guillols
Cuba


Claudia Marleia Avila
El Salvador

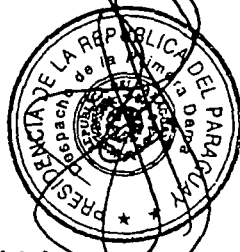

María Auxiliadora Matus
Nicaragua


Martha Chávez Cossio
Peru


Yocasta Morales de Aybar
Dominican Republic


Laura Albertini
Uruguay


Beatriz Rodríguez de Walter
Venezuela



This is a faithful copy of the original document
Pro-Tempore Secretariat

Despacho de la
Primera Dama
de la Nación



5 1a. CONFERENCIA DE ESPOSAS
DE JEFES DE ESTADO
Y DE GOBIERNO
DE LAS AMERICAS
SECRETARIA PRO - TEMPORE

RECOMMENDATIONS AND PROGRAMS OF THE 5TH CONFERENCE OF WIVES OF HEADS OF STATE AND OF GOVERNMENT OF THE AMERICAS

As advocates for the health and education of women and children within a framework of equality, peace, freedom, solidarity, social progress and sustainable human development, we recommend consideration of the following strategies and programs:

A. Concerning Women's Health:

- 1.a. Support the resolution of PAHO's XXIII Pan American Sanitary Conference which encourages Governments of the Americas to establish "policy of comprehensive attention of women's health for the prevention of morbidity and the reduction of maternal mortality by at least 50%, to be achieved by the year 2000".
- b. Promote the allocation of resources to allow for the adequate implementation and follow-up of the "National Plans of Action to Accelerate the Reduction of Maternal Mortality and Morbidity in the Americas," elaborated in collaboration with PAHO and other international organizations.
- c. Promote the disaggregation of morbidity and mortality rates by sex.
2. Create mechanisms in those countries which are engaged in the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) Project, "Prevention of Adolescent Pregnancy,"





5

5^a CONFERENCIA DE ESPOSAS
DE JEFES DE ESTADO
Y DE GOBIERNO
DE LAS AMERICAS
SECRETARIA PRO - TEMPORE

to contribute to more efficient implementation of this project in response to the following needs:

- a. Encourage the participation of local UNFPA offices in the elaboration, implementation and follow-up of the local components of the Project, so as to guarantee the coordination of this initiative with similar projects funded by other international cooperation agencies, both bilateral and multilateral.
 - b. Widen the scope of action of the project, whenever necessary, so as to include activities related to the reduction of maternal mortality.
 - c. Analyze the possibility of redistributing unallocated financial resources, among those countries which are already implementing the project and need additional resources.
 - d. Adjust the project in order to support, while respecting the national interest of each country, the implementation of the recommendations from the United Nations International Conference for Population and Development and the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women.
3. Support the proposal of the Association of Ibero-American Leagues Against Cancer (ALICC) to continue and expand the program "Latin America in the Struggle Against Cancer" to countries in the region.

B. Concerning Women's Education/Training:

1. Recommend the disaggregation of data by sex and analyze these data in such a way as to take into account the condition and position of each sex within

Despacho de la
Primera Dama
de la Nación



5. 1a. CONFERENCIA DE ESPOSAS
DE JEFES DE ESTADO
Y DE GOBIERNO
DE LAS AMERICAS
SECRETARIA PRO - TEMPORE

specific social contexts.

2. Promote mechanisms through which women can be active participants in the design, implementation and evaluation of projects that promote social equality of women.
3. Based on the experiences of the Projects, "Rural Women in Latin America and the Caribbean" implemented through IICA and "Promotion of Women's Participation in Development," request the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) to expand and continue, respectively, the projects to other countries in the region.
4. Request the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) to study the possibility of creating a fund to finance specific projects that improve the quality of life of rural women.

C. Concerning Children's Health:

1. Promote and follow-up on progress made toward achieving the goals of the World Summit for Children by the year 2000.
2. Work with Ministries of Health, the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) and other international organizations on the campaign to eliminate measles transmission from the Americas by the year 2000 and strengthen the surveillance of preventable diseases by vaccination.
3. Request the World Health Organization (WHO) to extend the "Program on Substance Abuse and Street





5^{ta} CONFERENCIA DE ESPOSAS
DE JEFES DE ESTADO
Y DE GOBIERNO
DE LAS AMERICAS
SECRETARIA PRO - TEMPORE

Children in the Americas" and urge the Mentor Foundation to continue funding this Program.

4. Urge mass media to dedicate prime time on a daily basis to the dissemination of health education information.

D. Concerning Children's Education:

1. Promote activities that contribute to investment in the education of girls and women of the Americas, as well as the reduction of school repetition and drop-out rates, by encouraging governmental institutions and civil society to improve the quality of primary education in schools by:

- a. Supporting more active child-centered teaching practices, which increase and improve the availability and use of non-sexist textbooks while ensuring effective time for learning in schools.

- b. Supporting non-formal community and family-based child development programs and enhancing the level of knowledge of parents and care givers.

- c. Promoting, disseminating and monitoring the "child-friendly school initiative"

E. Concerning the Fourth World Conference on Women:

Promote the implementation, -- according to the national interest and the legislation of each country, -- of the commitments made at the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women, held in Beijing,

Despacho de la
Primera Dama
de la Nación



China, during September of this year.

F. Concerning the topic of Violence against Women:

1. Promote the ratification and/or adherence and implementation of the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women, adopted in Belém do Pará on June 9, 1994.
2. Promote the joint PAHO / IDB initiative which is designed to implement the regional program on violence against women: "Establishment of Community Networks".
3. Urge mass media to promote awareness and educational campaigns to prevent and combat violence.

G. Concerning the U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child:

- 1.a. Promote the fulfillment of the agreements of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- b. Promote the elimination of social and family violence against children and put the topic of violence against Children on the political agenda of countries.
- c. Promote the elimination of child labor for girls and boys under 12 years old.

Clinton Presidential Records

Digital Records Marker

This is not a presidential record. This is used as an administrative marker by the William J. Clinton Presidential Library Staff.

This marker identifies the place of a tabbed divider. Given our digitization capabilities, we are sometimes unable to adequately scan such dividers. The title from the original document is indicated below.

VIII

Divider Title: _____

**Ninth Conference of the Spouses of Heads of State and Government of the Americas
Remarks by First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton**

**Ottawa, Canada
September 30, 1999**

MRS. ALINE CHRÉTIEN: And now, it is my great pleasure to introduce our next speaker, Mrs. Hillary Rodham Clinton. (Applause)

MRS. HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON: Thank you very much. I am delighted to join all of you again for this Ninth Conference of the Spouses of Heads of State and Government of the Americas.

Since we were last together, our hemisphere, particularly Central America and the Caribbean, have suffered greatly from the triple threat of the hurricanes Mitch, George and Floyd. And I know that all of us have been particularly concerned about helping our friends and neighbors in those areas that were so devastated to recover and move forward with the plans that—we know so well from the reports we have received—that they are undertaking on behalf of further progress in their countries.

I am very pleased to be back in Ottawa, a place that my husband and I have very fond memories of from our last visit here nearly five years ago.

I particularly remember ice skating with Aline on the Rideau Canal. And my piece of advice is: do not ice skate with Aline, who is a graceful, beautiful ice skater. But she does everything that way, and over the years I have come to admire and respect and have great affection for her and the way she discharges her duties. I appreciate very much the support and leadership that she has given to this endeavor and the excellent job that she has done in putting together this conference.

I also want to thank the government and people of Canada for supporting this conference, and particularly for inviting non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to this meeting. So many of us have seen firsthand the work that NGOs do in our countries and throughout our hemisphere. We have seen the patient grassroots activism; we have seen the partnerships that are created among the public, the private and the NGO sectors.

Much of the progress we are discussing today, and hoping for tomorrow, would not have been possible were it not for those partnerships and the particular role that NGOs play. So I welcome the NGOs, and I hope that they will be a continuing presence in the conference and the meetings as we go forward.

These conferences have certainly proven their worth over the years. They have been an important meeting place to bring people together, to trade ideas, to share stories, and to resolve to work more cooperatively to meet common goals that will benefit all of the people of the Americas.

Five years ago, at the Summit of the Americas in Miami, our nations pledged to work together to meet our common challenges and to look towards the future as one hemisphere. As the leaders met, we convened a parallel conference to examine how the Summit agenda could address the challenges facing the women and children of our regions. Before we left Miami, we pledged to make the concerns of children and families a priority in our home countries and a focus for cooperation throughout the Americas.

We have continued our work at meetings in Paraguay and Bolivia, Panama, and last year in Chile. We have heard the follow-up report from Mrs. Labelle and the representatives from UNICEF, from Mrs. ^{Wilkinson} from the World Bank. And we have heard so many of the representatives and first ladies, as well, discuss what has been accomplished because of these meetings.

Today we need to renew our pledge to continue our work and cooperation. Over the past five years we have made steady progress on the goals that we set, including the three that were set in Miami. Today, because we pledged to reduce maternal mortalities, health ministries throughout the hemisphere are extending prenatal care to more women, upgrading delivery rooms, and fighting centuries-old ignorance about pregnancy.

Because we set a goal of eliminating measles by the year 2000, measles cases have fallen 76 per cent in our regions, and all across the Americas children in the most remote villages are getting their first immunization against that deadly disease.

Because we called attention to education reform, the Partnership for Educational Revitalization in the Americas was formed, and finance ministers, who once only looked at GDP numbers, are now looking at school graduation rates and searching for new ways to give all children chances to learn.

We have made a lot of progress, but with the 21st century just weeks away, I know that all of us hope to do more. Every two seconds another child is born somewhere in the Americas. Each of these precious children is a child of tremendous potential, potential that can be unlocked in the first years of life or locked away for a lifetime. How we empower these children and their parents, how we provide for their education and health care will not only shape their lives, but also shape the lives of our nations and our regions.

The theme today, "A Healthy Start: Investing in Children Ages 0 to 6," is one of the most important themes we could choose. Now there are some who might argue that other meetings where the headlines are trade or security or other matters that finance ministers and presidents and prime ministers discuss are more important. But I think if we take a look at what will really matter in the 21st century—preparing our children, investing in and educating our children, making sure they have the health care they need—will determine every other issue we could possibly discuss.

So, therefore, raising awareness about early childhood development is a critical matter. It is one that many of us have worked on for many years. For more than 25 years as an attorney

and advocate for children, I have tried to make clear that what we do for a young child today matters far more than what happens later. Because we can prevent problems and save money if we invest early instead of waiting for problems or crisis to occur.

It is such an important issue that in 1997, my husband and I held the first ever White House Conference on Early Learning and Childhood Development. We were looking for strategies that would enable our children—all of our children—to have a healthy start.

Now we were building on work that has been done in the United States before, work such as Head Start, which is a critical program that has enabled thousands and thousands of young children to enter school better prepared. We have seen similar programs throughout the hemisphere, and I know how dedicated so many of you are to ensuring that these kinds of preschool, early learning programs are available as universally as possible.

We also know that a childhood free of disease and illness is basic to a healthy start in life. Every year, 12 million children under the age of five worldwide lose their lives to infectious diseases. Here in the hemisphere, it is 565,000 young children—and these diseases are largely preventable.

Through USAID, the United States has sponsored innovative efforts to combat disease throughout the hemisphere, but what we are finding today is a new challenge. Too often, the antibiotics used to treat disease in young children have been used inappropriately, and too many children, even in the very earliest years of life, have developed resistance to the medicines that could save their lives.

So I am pleased to announce today a new \$2 million USAID grant that, with the Pan American Health Organization, will enable public health experts to determine just how antibiotics are being misused and to train doctors and pharmacists in the correct way to administer prescription drugs.

Through this grant, we hope that the medicines we have developed will be able to do the job they are supposed to do, and that is particularly important in two of the major killers of young children: diarrhea and respiratory infections.

As we look at the important challenges of health and education, I know that each one of us could, as we have already heard from our distinguished colleagues, provide many examples of what is working throughout our hemisphere.

What we have learned through these conferences is that good ideas can happen anywhere, and I have seen them everywhere in my travels. But too often, if we did not have conferences such as this, we would not know what was working in Chile or El Salvador or anywhere else in the hemisphere.

So I believe that this coming together is one of the important ways we can put our children first. We were successful in Miami, and then later at the Summit of the Americas in Santiago, in persuading our governments to pay more attention to the needs of children and

women. But I believe that that is an issue that must be addressed constantly. We have to continually remind ourselves and remind our governments that they must put children first.

So on behalf of the 100 million young children of our regions, I certainly thank all of you for being part of this ongoing effort of the first ladies here, in this hemisphere, to bring attention to our problems and honestly discuss them.

I don't know how many conferences in the hemisphere would have leading citizens, such as the women around this table, stand before an open audience and talk about everything from incest to drug abuse to child abuse to domestic violence. But it is that kind of frankness and openness that will enable us to fully understand the problems we face and then work towards solutions.

So thank you very much for continuing to build on this. And working together, I know, we can make progress on behalf of the children who need that progress so much.

Thank you very much. (Applause)

UNCLEARED TRANSCRIPT

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 women 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.



Speech given by the Honorable Mrs. Hillary Clinton, First Lady of the United States

I am honored to be part of this Seventh Conference and to share with you the third year of these important meetings. I would like to thank the government and Republic of Panama, and especially our host, for organizing this Conference and welcoming us with the hospitality we have come to associate with their country.

The United States and Panama enjoy a rich and long-lasting friendship which will be stronger in the new millennium, along with our partnership of a century with the Canal which is experiencing a time of historic transition; we shall always be united by the mutual respect and commitment we share in ensuring the benefits of democracy for all our people.

I think it is appropriate to have met in Panama for our annual Conference. Panama really is the crossroads, the bridge of the Americas, it is a nation which literally joins our hemisphere, the diversity of this country, ecologically, culturally, ethnically, it is a microcosm of all the Americas. We have arrived here from the other side of the hemisphere hoping to build a better world for all women, children and families, in numerous ways.

Difficult and Complex Task

Our task is much more difficult and complex than the task of those who built the Canal a century ago. Instead of mountains, we seek to move hearts, change old attitudes, eradicate hunger and disease, educate all our children and most importantly, give women the power throughout our hemisphere to participate in the lives of our nations.

Propitious Time

We are reaching for our goals at a time in history which is full of hope, at a time which is propitious for social change of a more positive kind.

Along the road of freely-elected democracies, today for the first time, there are millions of people who are

We are reaching for our at a time in history which is full of hope, at a time which is propitious for social change of a more positive kind.

enjoying the right to shape their own leaders, as well as forming their own opinions based on information obtained from a free press, from open talks in support or opposition of a cause.

Today we know that for every democracy, whether recently created or whether thousands of years old, the process of building and caring for a democracy can only take root when its principles are forever set in the hearts of all people. Democracy can only move forward when no one is afraid of the consequences of stopping or talking in the name of justice, and democracy can only achieve its greatest potential when women are not prohibited by law, ignorance, by tradition or custom or intimidation, from making their voices heard at the moment of voting for and achieving their most cherished dreams.

Power for Women

Because of this, I believe that the part of the Conference which is called Rights and Participation is so important in granting more women the power to seek out and claim their rights as citizens and human beings. It is the only way in which our democracies, old or new, will survive and struggle and move into the twenty-first century.

I have been told that the word "empowerment" does not translate well, however I am sure that each woman in this room knows its meaning very well. It means the right to participate in the political lives of our countries. "Empowerment" means the capacity to lead a life free of sexual and domestic violence. In addition, it means access to justice in accordance with the law, to education and health, to credit and property. In short, giving women power means giving them the same treatment as complete citizens in every country.

Domestic Violence

No nation can hope to be successful in our global economy if half their population is not given the opportunity to make use of the potential given to them by God, as we can see in many countries, where many rights have been denied women and many positions of opportunity remain closed.

Many women live in fear of violence at the hands of a



member of the family. For them, their homes do not provide a refuge, the law does not offer protection and public opinion does not offer any sympathy.

Domestic and sexual violence against women remains as one of the most serious forms of unreported violation in our region. All of us must work to offer renewed protection against this violation of human rights which is domestic violence.

Criminal Violence

As the Secretary of State in my country, our first female Minister of Foreign Affairs has said, violence cannot be classified as cultural, it is criminal. Many women, especially those who are poor and less educated, are not aware of their legal rights in the workplace, their right to their own property and their right to choose their own lives. Regardless of whether these laws exist on the books, many women and children are trapped in a cycle of endless poverty and do not have access to family planning and have received a limited education, but please, let us not forget what we already know about many solutions to these problems. We already know what is being worked on to improve our lives.

Next week I will be privileged to travel to Venezuela, Brazil and Argentina with my husband. I will be visiting micro-credit, family planning and educational programs, which, I and many of you, have worked to support here in this Hemisphere as well as around the world.

Successes have been registered in granting women the power to bring up their children, to remove their families from poverty.

Priorities

There is also encouraging news to report on the three priorities which were established following our Miami meeting of the Summit of the Americas in 1994, the elimination of measles in the Americas by the year 2000, and the reduction of maternal morbidity and educational reform, all of which we have heard about this morning.

Last year not one case of measles was reported in the 27 countries of the Americas, meanwhile we could have suffered a setback with an outbreak of this disease in Brazil, as well as in my own country.

We must maintain the same speed in reaching the goal to finally achieve it and to be able to say it has been achieved.

Contribution

All the countries in the Hemisphere have united with the PAHO to improve pre-natal and obstetrics care and many women in this room have greatly contributed to this effort.

We have brought institutions and individuals together through the Association for the Program on Rehabilitation of Education in America to push primary education. In Honduras, El Salvador and many other countries, many children are graduating from primary school and we have helped to place educational reform and revitalization at the top of the list of the agendas of our countries.

Rights of Women

However, the subject we are focused on this morning, the promotion and expansion of the legal and political rights of women, represents possibly the most difficult challenge we slowly, but surely face. We are witnesses of legal reform which is raising the status of women in the home and in society.

Law against Domestic Violence

In Costa Rica, women have pushed for the approval of a law against domestic violence. Many countries now have a human rights Ombudsman dedicated to the protection of the rights of women.

In El Salvador, legislators have updated the laws against rape, forcing perpetrators to face justice. Also, laws have been approved which force politicians to prove they have paid child support before being able to run for public office.

Here in Panama, legislators have reformed the Family Code to improve the regulation of matters such as child support and child custody.

In Latin America, we see many new laws which allow women to be elected to public posts, and in my own country we have introduced programs on violence against women which involve training police and the prosecution of delinquents throughout the 50 states.

These are a few of the ideas we have to share with you so women in our hemisphere may experience the same improvements in their lives.



Beneficial Political Changes

None of these advances would have taken place if women had not spoken and demanded changes, and obliged governments to respond to their needs. We must push women forward so their voices may be heard, so they may join in with organizations in striving for political changes which will benefit all women.

Albright and I visited the Inter-American Institute of Human Rights in Costa Rica. The Organization was set up to defend and promote respect for human rights where many regimes control the lives of many people of the Americas. Throughout the last decade, it has guided these countries on the long and difficult path towards democracy, to free societies through very critical transitional elections.

At present, the new mission of the Institute is to help new constitutional governments to understand and live for the principles of democracy, to create a new culture of human rights in the Americas. The Secretary of State and I met with official activists who told us that even though governments had changed, the tasks of safeguarding and deepening respect for human rights remained as challenging as ever.

A few years ago, the Institute began a gender and human rights program, designed to educate women in their rights and to promote the principle that women's rights are in fact human rights, and human rights are women's rights. Further on, there will be an announcement of a donation of 4.8 million dollars to aid the human rights of women.

Continuing the Struggle

Our work as individuals and as First Ladies is not over yet, we must continue to fight for democracy and to encourage women to take responsibility as citizens, to take it seriously so they can vote in local and national elections, as well as elect more women to public office.

Only women like ourselves can make democracy work for us and our families. It is a message which is taking shape in all countries around the world.

Last year, at a conference in Vienna I had the privilege of meeting with a group of women from the new democratic countries of the former Soviet Union.

They had recently recognized the power of action of independent citizens to direct changes as diverse as the traffic of women for prostitution, and they had met to share ideas and to renew and strengthen their faith in democratic values and freedom.

This type of agreement of many women could be very beneficial for our hemisphere as well, by drawing many working women to the forefront of the various changes which we advocate. In the measure in which our countries continue to expand their strategic and political alliances, women in this hemisphere can shape the path by building an alliance of democratic values which will strengthen our democracy for the next millennium.

We must work actively to empower all women to take their places in society, in government and all institutions of society, to take advantage of their talents, to begin new businesses, to pay off their loans and to vote to elect presidents, to have their voices heard, and we must not rest until we have abolished laws and the cobwebs of tradition, until we have brought down the forces of intimidation which threaten the potential of women and children, and which nations maintain to prevent them from being democratic and free.

Last year I took part in a radio call-in program of the Voice of the Americas. One listener called from the other side of the world to ask *what I had meant to say in Beijing about the rights of women being human rights and human rights being the rights of women*. I asked the person who called in to close his eyes and think of all the rights and privileges he enjoys as a man, and then I told him to imagine a world where all women enjoyed those same rights and privileges. I know if we continue working, work which all of you have begun and which we have carried out jointly, that we can move our hemisphere toward making these principles a reality in this world so that in the future, a question like that will never be asked again.

As delivered

FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
REMARKS TO THE SIXTH CONFERENCE OF
WIVES OF HEADS OF STATE AND OF GOVERNMENTS OF THE AMERICAS
LA PAZ, BOLIVIA
DECEMBER 3, 1996

President and Mrs. Sanchez de Lozada, First Ladies and special envoys representing the nations of the Western Hemisphere, and distinguished guests:

It is a great pleasure for me to be in La Paz and to join you for this annual conference. I particularly want to thank Mrs. Sanchez de Lozada for her leadership on behalf of women -- especially her work to promote safe motherhood, education, and to reduce domestic violence -- and for extending to all of us a warm welcome this week.

I know that, as in the past, this gathering will provide new insights and fresh inspiration as we work to expand opportunities for women, children, and families in North, Central, South America and the Caribbean region. I am also pleased to note that Vice President Gore will be in Santa Cruz in a few days representing the United States government at what promises to be a significant hemispheric meeting on sustainable development.

This is my first trip to Bolivia, but I have long felt a special connection to this country. Little Rock, the capital of my home state of Arkansas, is a sister city of Santa Cruz in what is called the Eastern Bolivia-Arkansas partnership. This partnership has initiated cultural, professional and health exchanges that have benefitted the people in both of our countries. So I am especially delighted finally to be in Bolivia after all these years.

Many Bolivians have made their mark on my country. I am proud to say that President Clinton named a woman who was born and raised here in La Paz, Maria Otero, to be the Chair of the

Board of the Inter-American Foundation. That foundation funds grassroots development in the region, and Maria is with me today.

I'm also pleased to be here at a time of such hope and promise for women, children and families across the Americas and around the world. A few days ago, I returned from a trip with my husband to Australia, the Philippines and Thailand, and at each stop I had the chance to talk to diverse groups of women -- from government leaders to grassroots activists to teenage school girls. And I was reminded once again, no matter where we find ourselves in the world today, our aspirations and concerns are fundamentally the same.

Thanks in part to the agenda set at the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, as well as the conferences of this group in Miami, and Asuncion and elsewhere, the status of women is improving in many countries.

In the Philippines last week, I had the opportunity along with Mrs. Frei to speak to 15,000 women and girls in Manila. Some had traveled for days by boat and car to celebrate the Beijing Agenda and just as we are doing today, they came together to renew their commitment to women's rights -- and to ensure that every woman and girl has access to the tools of opportunity: health care, education, jobs and credit, legal protections and the right to participate fully in the political life of their countries.

In the 15 months since Beijing, we have seen advances on every continent. In country after country, governments, non-governmental organizations, businesses and corporations, and individual citizens are beginning to recognize that elevating the status of women and girls in society is essential to progress and prosperity. That is the same whether we are talking about the East, the West, the North or the South; there is a growing appreciation of women's contributions inside and outside of the home - and a greater understanding that everyone in society benefits when women are allowed to claim the political, economic, social, and civic power they are due.

The Western Hemisphere is no exception. In Panama, the family code has been reformed, giving women more say in alimony, child support and child custody cases. The country's new Law 27

on Intra-Family Violence criminalizes certain forms of domestic violence. In Colombia, men and women now have equal weight in determining divorce. In El Salvador and Peru, new institutions have been established to address issues relating to women's development. In Guatemala, a national university has created scholarships for indigenous women to study political science.

Jamaica's Gold Street Program, which addresses teen violence and adolescent pregnancy, has become a model that the United States is using to confront the same issues in the city of Baltimore. In Brazil, women are now entitled to free breast and uterine exams. And in Chile, the government has committed itself to tackling AIDS and adolescent pregnancies and to expanding educational opportunities for girls. And here in Bolivia, as part of the President's plans, the Plan de Todos, special efforts are being made to reach out to the indigenous population.

From the northernmost reaches of Canada to the southern tip of South America, women are pushing governments to lift the veil of secrecy that for too long has concealed the tragic crime of domestic violence. I mentioned the legal advances in Panama. Another ground-breaking domestic violence law was passed in Ecuador, creating Family Courts that are empowered to separate an abusive spouse from the home. In Costa Rica, police officers receive special training on how to handle domestic violence cases. In my own country we recently launched a national hotline for victims of domestic violence which has already received 50,000 calls.

Looking across our region, we also see progress on the goals that this group outlined at our previous meetings. Those goals to eliminate measles from the hemisphere, reduce maternal mortality, and promote education reform are making progress. Since 1995, our region has witnessed a 63 percent decline in measles. We have seen the Partnership for the Revitalization of Education in the Americas launch new efforts to expand educational opportunities in six countries. And while the tragic problem of maternal mortality continues to haunt us, we know that progress will come if we focus more energy and resources on this issue.

It is clear that pioneering efforts are underway across the Americas to improve conditions for women and girls. Earlier

today in La Paz, I visited with Ximena, Banco Sol, the only commercial bank in the world and the largest that specializes in microenterprise right here. I spoke to women whose lives had been transformed because they had received a modest loan to start selling vegetables in the market, to start making skirts. Not only had they become economically self-sufficient, they had begun to lift their families out of poverty and improve the economies of their communities. We met one woman in the market who is caring for her six orphan grandchildren because of the loans that she had received. I have seen the same encouraging results at FINCA, a micro-lending enterprise that I visited in Managua, Nicaragua. I've visited a comparable enterprise in Santiago and I have seen it in my own country.

In La Paz today I also visited new and expectant mothers at a primary health care center run by an NGO, PROSALUD. The 28 PROSALUD clinics offer prenatal care and family planning services that have resulted in safer pregnancies and deliveries and, in some cases, have saved lives.

This is but one piece of the nationwide effort here in Bolivia to promote safe motherhood and family planning so that women and girls are educated about their own health and their own reproductive options.

Although the rate is far too high, Bolivia's success over the past five years at reducing maternal mortality offers a model for the world of how one nation has responded to a serious health crisis and galvanized the government, non-governmental organizations, and the medical communities. I wish to commend the President and the Vice President for their leadership in this very important effort.

It is worth noting that Bolivia undertook this campaign not only as a way to reduce maternal mortality, but also to reduce the increasing rate of abortion. Without access to family planning, women often turn in desperation to illegal, unsafe abortion procedures that account for half of all maternal deaths in this country. Deaths from abortion complications are responsible for from 30 to 70 percent of maternal mortality in our hemisphere, depending on the country.

Here, in Brazil, and in other places around the globe, I have seen examples of how investments in family planning improve maternal health and the well-being of families as well as reduce the number of abortions. The United States has supported family planning efforts, including Bolivia's. However, as you may know, some members of the United States Congress have voted to limit American support for family planning initiatives. My husband's Administration remains committed to encouraging a continuation of these investments, which represent a sensible, cost-effective and long-range strategy for improving women's health and for lowering the rate of abortion. And for my part, I will certainly remember and share the powerful stories I have heard around the world to explain why these programs are critical.

Education is also critical. It is inextricably tied to how women and children achieve progress. Children of illiterate mothers are twice as likely to die as those with mothers who are educated. So our efforts across the Western Hemisphere to educate girls and mothers will have a profound and concrete effect on women's health. The better educated a girl or woman is, the healthier she is. The healthier she is, the healthier her family is. And all of society stands to gain.

While some may dismiss the achievements of this conference and the conferences before or of the Beijing Agenda as merely "women's issues" that have no place on the front-burner of global politics, I believe that you here in Bolivia, and certainly your President and Vice President understand how they are part of sustainable development and progress. They represent a balancing of power that is just as crucial to the endurance of democracy as issues like trade, diplomacy and national security. Democracy, after all, requires the full participation of all citizens, including women.

And today, we can take heart knowing that democracy has replaced dictatorship around the world and virtually throughout our own hemisphere. Building and sustaining democracy has always required a balance of power, a balance of public power, private economic power, and the power of civic society, those formal and informal networks that bring people together. It is the balance of power that Bolivia has incorporated into its Popular Participation Law, and by doing so, insured the further success of democracy. Whether we succeed at achieving the balance of

power is particularly important for women who despite the strides we have made, still find their voices silenced and their potential stymied in too many parts of the world. In country after country -- from the most advanced democracies to those newly emerging, from the most dynamic free market economies to those struggling in the face of rapid global change -- women are still striving to define and attain their rightful place in government, the economy, the civil society and throughout their lives.

Women are seeking balance in their lives and in their societies, and I am heartened that civic education is on the agenda of this conference. Teaching people about democratic values and the importance of their participation in the political process is critical to sustaining democracy. When we look at what is happening in our hemisphere, when I look at what is happening in my own country, I see that the voices and votes of women can make a difference. If all of us believe in the God-given potential of each human being, then all of us should do what we can in our own ways and our own roles to further those voices and that potential.

For all of the challenges that confront us on the eve of this new century I am optimistic about our future. I am optimistic about our hemisphere and about our capacity to meet those challenges. And certainly, if there is one vision that should guide us, it is that of the young people who rely on us to leave them a world that encourages their dreams, nurtures their talents and respects their choices. That is really why we are gathered today -- most of us in this auditorium have made most of the choices we will make that will determine the course of our lives. It is up to us to determine how we provide the same opportunities for all of our sons and daughters.

Building a better future for children, women, men, and families in the Western Hemisphere is not just the opportunity of government, it is the responsibility of all of us. And I thank you very much for being part of meeting that responsibility and challenge.

**FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
REMARKS TO THE FIFTH CONFERENCE OF
WIVES OF HEADS OF STATE AND OF GOVERNMENTS OF THE AMERICAS
ASUNCION, PARAGUAY
OCTOBER 16, 1995**

I am privileged to have the opportunity to represent my country, the United States, for the first time at this Fifth Conference of First Ladies from the Western Hemisphere. It is also a great honor for me to be here in Paraguay with all of you.

We have gathered together to discuss the futures of women and children in all of our countries. Whether we live in North, Central, or South America or the Caribbean region, we are united in our belief that women everywhere share common aspirations and concerns.

Yet, as we meet here in this beautiful hall this evening, we also know that a vast reservoir of human potential is now being wasted across the Americas.

No nation in our hemisphere can say that all of its children are fed, clothed, housed, schooled, and raised by loving parents. No nation in our hemisphere can say that all of its women are treated with dignity, respect, and given the chance to fulfill their God-given potentials. And no nation can say that each and every family within its borders is healthy, strong, and stable.

Our world, as we know, is far from perfect. But even though enormous challenges remain, we have come here hopeful about our future. Hopeful because, somewhere in our hemisphere right now, a baby in a local health clinic is being immunized against a serious disease. . . a little girl is going to school and is learning to read and write . . . a woman is taking out a small loan from a neighborhood bank that will enable her to start her own business in her home. We know that every problem we face in our hemisphere is being solved somewhere in our region at this very moment.

We are also hopeful because of the progress made at last year's Summit of the Americas in Miami, at the United Nations Conference on Social Development in Copenhagen earlier this year, and more recently at the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing. I think it is very fitting that we meet after those three historic gatherings, which drew world attention to the plight of women and children and, in so doing, to the plight of families as well.

Since Miami, we have seen cooperation grow among our nations, and our political leaders. The Summit not only recognized every nation's duty to invest in its people, but also the special role that girls and women play in the economic and social development of the Western Hemisphere.

That theme was reiterated again in Copenhagen, which focused on the alleviation of poverty as an essential factor in political, social and economic progress.

Many of us also attended last month's women's conference in Beijing, where it was again made clear that democracy and prosperity cannot be attained or sustained in countries that do not value women as full and equal partners in society.

The conferences in Miami, Copenhagen and Beijing showed the world that issues involving children and women are not secondary issues. They are keys to building democratic institutions, strengthening market economies, and achieving social justice.

They are also among the hardest issues we face.

That is why the agreement reached in Miami last year was an historic first for countries of this hemisphere. For the first time, there was universal recognition that no nation can compete in the global economy if half its population cannot read or write, cannot find a job, or cannot rise out of poverty.

And that is why it is also heartening that, despite assurances from skeptics that nothing would be accomplished in Beijing, more than 180 nations endorsed a platform for action that lays out specific ways to expand the rights and opportunities of women around the world.

This is particularly critical today, given the growing gap between the rich and the poor, the educated and the uneducated, the skilled and the unskilled.

Those among us who enjoy the opportunities of education, health care, jobs, credit, legal and political rights are flourishing in the new global economy. Those without such opportunities are lagging farther and farther behind. And more often than not, those lagging behind are women and poor children.

This trend, if it continues, threatens to undermine the very institutions we are seeking to uphold: strong families, strong economies, and strong democracies. All will be in jeopardy if women continue to be denied the opportunities they need to thrive and compete in the new century.

So, what must change?

First, values and attitudes.

In our everyday lives, we must begin to respect the dignity of each person, no matter where that person lives or what he or she looks like. To do that, we must be willing to overcome many assumptions, presumptions, prejudices and prejudgments.

Because, to truly respect a child means to respect every child in every family, boy or girl. To respect a child means to give that child the love, attention, and discipline he or she needs to grow up with confidence and competence. To respect a child means to nurture that child with the health care and schooling that he or she needs to get the right start in life.

Every time we dismiss the potential of a child because of skin color, parental income, or family background, we betray our own futures.

We must also appreciate the contributions of every woman, instead of pigeon-holing and categorizing women in ways that limit their potential. To truly respect a woman means to respect and protect her human rights; it means to respect the choices she makes for herself and her family; and it means to value the experience she brings to all facets of life.

Second, institutions must change, and so must the ways we go about our everyday business.

If programs and policies have outlived their usefulness, we should admit that they no longer solve the problems they were meant to solve. We must fix programs that don't work with reforms that are efficient and inexpensive. And we must insist that institutions -- whether government, schools, or health care systems -- overcome bureaucratic intransigence and put people first.

We must also take advantage of the many innovative programs that do exist throughout our hemisphere. Prior to arriving in Paraguay today, I was in Brasilia, where President and Mrs. Cardoso told me about Brazil's efforts to improve the quality of primary education.

I then traveled on to Salvador da Bahia, where an extraordinary effort is underway to channel the potential and energy of thousands of street children. One program I saw was a circus in which the performers were children, some as young as eight, who had been recruited off the streets where they lived.

They were not being trained for circus jobs; their performances were merely a vehicle for learning the value of discipline, teamwork, and hard work. Along the way, these children develop confidence, self-esteem, and pride in their accomplishments. Part of a program called Project Axe, they also receive schooling and vocational training, as well as counseling to reunite them with their families.

I asked one 15-year-old boy, who had been with the project since it began five years ago, whether it had made a difference in his life. If not for the project, he said, "I would be dead or in prison now."

Programs like this one, which receive support from the public and private sectors and some international organizations, can be replicated widely. But that requires us to share information,

exchange ideas, discuss honestly our successes and failures, and learn as much as we can from each other.

Government has a vital role in all of this. But government is only effective if it listens to the voices of the people it serves, instead of making decisions based on political convenience or whim. And government must be held accountable for meeting human needs.

At the same time, government cannot address every problem alone. We must not look on government as a panacea, but as an able partner of business, non-governmental organizations, and other private institutions committed to investing in the promise of every person, including those who are poor, disadvantaged, and politically powerless. And one of the best things government can do is to make it easier for outside groups, non-governmental groups, to do the work they are willing to do.

Finally, as societies, we must be willing to move beyond inertia to action. And all of us -- individuals and institutions -- must heed that call to action. We must start by taking responsibility within our own families and then spreading that responsibility to the communities in which we live.

Every segment of society has a stake in this issue. And every segment of society can affect positive change.

Schools, for example, can be more flexible in responding to the needs of their students, young and old.

A few days ago, in Santiago, Mrs. Frei took me to a school that embodies the Chilean commitment to building an educational system for the future. I saw boys and girls busy working on computers hooked up to the Internet.

I learned from the Minister of Education that schools may begin to keep their doors open on Saturdays and Sundays to accommodate the children of working parents who have no alternatives for child care, and for children who wish to acquire new skills for themselves.

I saw that Chile has not been content to stick with old methods that do not work. The government and people of that country are devising new ways of training teachers, involving parents and communities. All of this is happening now in many countries throughout the Americas and more can happen if we are willing to learn from each other's experiences.

Heeding the call to action also means that financial institutions must serve all people, even if they are poor, live in remote areas, or are women. How much more evidence do we need that women are a good credit risk? I have seen the proof myself at the Grameen Bank in Bangladesh, where the poorest of the poor in the world have transformed entire villages by taking out small loans for cows, rickshaws, and other items they use to earn an income.

I have even seen it in my own country, where poor women at a project called Mi Casa, in Denver, Colorado, have banded together to take out small loans to help themselves. And they told me very, very directly how difficult it is for women even in the United States to have access to credit. One woman said: "Too many great ideas die in the parking lots of banks."

But all over this hemisphere, women are overcoming these obstacles. In Nicaragua, which I visited at the beginning of my trip, I saw how hard President Chamorro has worked to strengthen democratic institutions and promote a market economy. And I met thirty women from a very poor barrio in Managua who run a bank in their neighborhood, borrowing small sums of money to start their own businesses, to start a bakery, to make mosquito netting, to be a seamstress.

Not only had these women organized themselves to improve their own circumstances, they were also improving the circumstances of their families and communities.

Furthermore, they have, like every bank I have ever visited, a high loan repayment rate. In that particular neighborhood bank, the repayment rate was 100 percent. And from what I know about banking, that would be the envy of many commercial lenders.

Individual men and women need to change attitudes and then act, just as every branch of society.

Businesses can initiate policies, such as flexible work schedules, child care, and the use of modern technology, that enable employees to perform well on the job and continue to fulfill their family obligations. Businesses also can value women by paying women equal salaries for equal work with their men employees.

The media can assume greater responsibility for the values it transmits by avoiding negative advertising and television programming that sensationalizes violence and glorifies the exploitation and degradation of women and children.

At this conference, we will examine these issues, and we will focus specifically on what can be done to address the pressing health and education of women and children.

We will discuss initiatives to ensure the elimination of diseases that primarily affect women and children, reduce maternal mortality and provide comprehensive health care to women throughout their lifetimes, including family planning. We will talk about what every nation must do to ensure that girls are guaranteed the right to an education and that all citizens acquire the knowledge and skills they will all need in the new global economy.

And we will explore ways to end the problem of domestic violence, which has destroyed the lives of too many women and their families in every country represented here.

I would like to make one final point about our agenda. Because we are talking about the

issues that matter most in the lives of women and children does not mean we are not talking about the lives of men and boys.

When I was in Nicaragua, I noticed billboards along the side of the road. They showed the face of a crying child with the caption: "My father has left the home." The problem of the absent father is as tragic as the problem of the undervalued mother and wife. It is a problem that, in the United States, we are urgently trying to address.

If, as a hemisphere, we truly care about strong families, strong communities, and strong societies, we have to recognize that men and women can and must complement each other inside and outside of the home. We should not be at opposite poles; we should be partners in a common enterprise for the good of all of us, and particularly our children.

Because of the roles that the women here and many of you in this hall have, we know we can help initiate the changes that must take place if we ever want to realize the great potential of this hemisphere.

Like the women I have met all over this hemisphere in Canada, in my country, in Mexico, in Nicaragua, in Chile, in Brazil and here in Paraguay, we come together to pool our experiences and ideas to improve conditions for our individual families as well as our national family and the family of nations.

I was not present at the earlier conferences, but I want to thank and applaud all of the women who took part in those conferences and who have moved this agenda forward. I was privileged to host our meeting in Miami and I look forward to the work ahead of us. It is the most exciting and challenging work any of us can imagine or be engaged in. And it is work in which we can make a difference.

Thank you very much.

###

Clinton Presidential Records

Digital Records Marker

This is not a presidential record. This is used as an administrative marker by the William J. Clinton Presidential Library Staff.

This marker identifies the place of a tabbed divider. Given our digitization capabilities, we are sometimes unable to adequately scan such dividers. The title from the original document is indicated below.

IX

Divider Title: _____

Measles Elimination Briefing Paper

Background

At the December, 1996 Conference of the First Ladies of the Americas, Mrs. Hillary Rodham-Clinton, First Lady of the United States, endorsed the launching of the Pan American Health Organization's (PAHO) campaign to eliminate measles from the Americas by the year 2000. In September, 1994, the Pan American Sanitary Conference unanimously approved the Measles Eradication Plan of Action that targets eradication by the year 2000. One month later, during the Fifth Conference of Wives of Heads of State and Government of the Americas, and again at their gathering at the time of the Summit of the Americas in Miami, the First Ladies committed themselves to working closely with the Ministers of Health and international organizations to promote and provide follow-up to this goal. Toward this end, the First Ladies elaborated a Plan of Action that outlined critical steps in their own countries in support of measles eradication. These included: guaranteeing the purchase of vaccines and cold chain equipment; stimulating the participation of civil society; evaluating national progress in measles eradication; supporting the process of regional vaccination campaigns; and disseminating this commitment nationally and internationally.

Regional Initiative

As part of launching PAHO's Measles Elimination Plan of Action, Mrs. Clinton committed \$8 million dollars from USAID for the PAHO effort, over 5 years. The strategy for elimination includes: 1) a one-time *catch-up* vaccination campaign targeting children 1 to 14 years of age regardless of disease or vaccination history; 2) high measles immunization coverage (at least 95%) through routine vaccination of children 12 months of age (*keep up*); and 3) periodic complementary *follow-up* campaigns to reduce the accumulation of susceptible infants and children 1-4 years of age. The Region has seen a dramatic reduction in the number of cases reported annually using this strategy. Circulation of the virus remains in only four countries where there has not been *full* implementation of the strategy (Bolivia, Brazil, Haiti, and the Dominican Republic).

Results

By 1999, the majority of countries in the Americas were successfully controlling measles and preventing large outbreaks. In 1998, there was a 76% reduction of confirmed measles cases compared to 1997. Specific examples among the eight targeted countries in the USAID/PAHO Vaccine Initiative are quite encouraging. Nicaragua introduced the measles-mumps-rubella vaccine in 1998, and 63% of the municipalities achieved vaccination coverage over 90%. In response to the 1997 outbreaks in the Southern Cone countries, Nicaragua announced a national alert that entailed an intensification of surveillance activities, such as the search of contacts with confirmed cases and an active search of suspected measles cases. Another success story is in Guatemala where the last reported measles transmission occurred in 1995. Their government has mobilized other sectors of society to strengthen surveillance and social mobilization—fifty-one new institutions participated in support of immunization activities during 1998.

Challenges

While great progress has been made towards interrupting measles transmission in almost all countries of the Americas, the virus continues to circulate in some areas of the region. Despite the achievement of a record low level of measles cases in 1996, there was a resurgence due to the importation of the disease from Europe to Brazil. Subsequently, measles spread to several countries in the Americas and resulted in over 100 measles-related deaths in Brazil and Argentina in the past two years--most occurring among unvaccinated infants and preschool-aged children. A major contributing factor to the resurgence of measles in Brazil and Argentina was the failure to *fully* implement the measles eradication strategy. Sharp reductions have been experienced in 1999 and 2000.

Talking Points

- High population **density greatly facilitates measles virus circulation** between infected and susceptible individuals, especially where many children remain unvaccinated by routine health services.
- **Young adults, aged 20-34 years, are at relatively high risk** for measles. These persons were born too early to have received measles vaccines through routine services and too late to have developed immunity by exposure to the virus.
- Measles case surveillance in the Americas shows that **health care workers are at high risk for being a source** of virus transmission in health facilities.
- To decrease transmission, a **sensitive surveillance system** which detects measles virus circulation in *all* areas of a country must be used. The *timely detection* of a suspected measles outbreak is necessary to allow rapid implementation of control activities to decrease transmission.

Clinton Presidential Records Digital Records Marker

This is not a presidential record. This is used as an administrative marker by the William J. Clinton Presidential Library Staff.

This marker identifies the place of a tabbed divider. Given our digitization capabilities, we are sometimes unable to adequately scan such dividers. The title from the original document is indicated below.

B

Divider Title: _____

Integrated Management of Childhood Illness

Background

Each year, 12 million children die worldwide before they reach their fifth birthday. Approximately 565,000 of those deaths occur in Latin America and to a large extent are preventable. The majority of deaths are attributable to diarrhea, pneumonia, measles, malaria, and malnutrition, or a combination of these conditions. Estimates have projected that these same illnesses will remain the most important causes of child mortality continuing into the year 2020 without increasing attention to address them.

Building on past experience and lessons learned from disease-specific control programs, the World Health Organization (WHO), in collaboration with UNICEF, developed an integrated approach to the assessment, classification, treatment, and counseling of sick children and their caretakers. This approach is known as Integrated Management of Childhood Illness (IMCI) and forms the basis for new treatment guidelines at first-line health facilities. IMCI provides for integrated case management of the most common childhood illnesses (acute respiratory infections, diarrhea, malaria, measles, and malnutrition) which in the past were generally considered and treated separately. Research demonstrates that most ill children suffer from more than one condition and the integrated approach to their diagnosis and treatment ensures that all their symptoms receive treatment, therefore providing optimal care. More recently the IMCI approach has evolved into three components: 1) improvements in the case management skills of health staff through the provision of locally adapted guidelines on integrated management of childhood illness and activities to promote their use; 2) improvements in the health system required for effective management of childhood illness; and 3) improvements in family and community practices.

The IMCI Initiative

In response to the child survival challenge in Latin America and the Caribbean, USAID, the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) and the Basic Support for Institutionalizing Child Survival Project (BASICS) collaborated on the design of a five-year LAC Regional IMCI strategy. This strategy was planned to improve child health services, especially in the eight countries in the LAC region with the worst problems in child survival: Bolivia, Ecuador, Peru, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Haiti. The five-year initiative was authorized on March 5, 1997 for a total of \$2.8 million plus up to an additional \$2 million in potential add-ons from USAID country missions for related activities.

The LAC Initiative focuses on this integrated approach primarily to reduce child morbidity and mortality but also to promote greater efficiency. Inappropriate management of childhood illnesses wastes scarce resources. Although increased investment will be needed initially, ultimately additional resources will not be required because the IMCI approach is expected to result in cost savings. During a time of decentralization and sector reform in health throughout the region, this integrated approach seems to work well.

Results to Date

The LAC IMCI Initiative is aimed at achieving the World Summit for Children health goals, established for the region in 1990. PAHO has since proposed a goal and specific IMCI targets to reduce infant mortality rates in priority districts within the Initiatives' eight priority countries. This strategy was officially launched in 1999 with the First Ladies of Venezuela, the Dominican Republic and El Salvador present. Several countries have had national launching ceremonies with strong support from the First Ladies.

The first year of implementation (1997) concentrated on building country consensus and support for IMCI, and then improving health workers' skills through IMCI clinical training. Several technical products were developed and field tested. Seven of the eight USAID countries have adapted course materials to their own national maternal and child health norms. These same seven countries have organized over 160 national and local IMCI clinical courses, and trained more than 3,800 health workers. A counseling module, *Talking with Mothers/Caregivers*, was developed to teach health care providers how to improve communication techniques for listening to and giving health instructions to mothers and other child caregivers.

In collaboration with the World Health Organization and the World Bank a costing tool has been developed and was field-tested in Bolivia and Nicaragua. A short programming review tool has been developed to assist policy-makers to assess the accomplishments and needs of the program to improve planning for future programming.

A multi-country study was field tested in Bolivia and conducted in Peru to evaluate the impact of IMCI.

Honduras has conducted widespread training of its public health staff in IMCI.

Remaining Challenges

Guatemala is the only target country that has not officially started IMCI implementation, although the local PAHO office and the USAID Mission in Guatemala stand ready to support government efforts to complete the planning and implementation phases of IMCI.

The availability of an adequate supply of appropriate drugs remains a challenges, as does the complexity of expanding activities across the LAC Region. Supervision is also a problem as most health work forces have been reduced in recent years.

Decentralization provides both an opportunity and a challenge. While local officials are more attuned to the health needs at lower levels within the health system, there are many competing demands on their time and the resources at their disposal. At the same time, they are being charged with greater numbers of tasks and responsibilities.

Talking Points

- Each year, 12 million children die worldwide before they reach their fifth birthday. Approximately 565,000 of those deaths occur in Latin America and to a large extent are preventable. The majority of deaths are attributable to diarrhea, pneumonia, measles, malaria, and malnutrition, or a combination of these conditions.
- Building on past experience and lessons learned from disease-specific control programs, WHO, in collaboration with UNICEF, developed an integrated approach to the assessment, classification, treatment, and counseling of sick children and their caretakers.
- IMCI provides for integrated case management of the most common childhood illnesses (acute respiratory infections, diarrhea, malaria, measles, and malnutrition), which in the past were generally considered and treated separately.
- The LAC Initiative focuses on this integrated approach primarily to reduce child morbidity and mortality but also to promote greater efficiency and cost savings.
- The five year Initiative was authorized on March 5, 1997 for \$2.8 million plus up to an additional \$2 million in potential add-ons from USAID country missions for related activities
- The Initiative is aimed at achieving the World Summit for Children health goals, established for the region in 1990, to reduce infant mortality.
- To date, seven countries have organized over 160 national and local IMCI clinical courses and more than 3,800 health workers have been trained in IMCI in the seven target countries.
- The complexity of expanding activities across the LAC Region presents a challenge. Supervision is also a problem as most health work forces have been reduced in recent years.
- Decentralization provides both an opportunity and a challenge. While local officials are more attuned to the health needs at lower levels within the health system, there are many competing demands on their time and the resources at their disposal. At the same time, they are being charged with greater numbers of tasks and responsibilities.

Clinton Presidential Records Digital Records Marker

This is not a presidential record. This is used as an administrative marker by the William J. Clinton Presidential Library Staff.

This marker identifies the place of a tabbed divider. Given our digitization capabilities, we are sometimes unable to adequately scan such dividers. The title from the original document is indicated below.

C

Divider Title: _____

Maternal Mortality Update

Background

The chance of dying during pregnancy and childbirth in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) is 1 in 130 during a woman's reproductive lifetime. In the United States, a woman's chance of dying is 1 in 3,500. Qualitative and quantitative studies in the region indicate that maternal and newborn health services are under-utilized in LAC due to 1) cultural and/or physical barriers; 2) perceptions on the part of the community of the quality and appropriateness of services; 3) lack of awareness and understanding of problems occurring during pregnancy that require prompt action by providers; and 4) the influence of complex decision patterns of communities to take necessary and timely actions.

A recent report of the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) revealed that maternal mortality in the United States has not declined since 1982 and remains at 7.5 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births. One in 4 U.S. women suffer a serious complication during their delivery which translates into 2-3 deaths per day. The most disturbing fact is that Latin American women living in the U.S. are 1.6 times more likely to die than Caucasian women. A more alarming fact is that African American women are 4 times more likely to die as Caucasian women. These racial discrepancies reflect differences in socio-economic status and the ability to secure adequate insurance coverage that will afford these women access to quality services.

USAID Regional Initiative

To address the serious situation of maternal mortality and morbidity in the LAC region, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) is supporting a regional initiative which is committed to increasing the utilization and quality of "Essential Obstetrical Care" (EOC). This is accomplished through the following three avenues: 1) *building advocacy through policy dialogue*, 2) *improving the quality of services* and 3) *mobilizing community participation*. Because many women die from unpredicted complications needing prompt and emergent treatment, the focus of the USAID Initiative is to improve the delivery of basic EOC at the first level of care and comprehensive EOC at referral hospitals. In addition, the project includes elements which are oriented towards stimulating women to seek these services and assuring that the policy environment sustains the capacity for quality service delivery, while providing access to those in need.

Results

An example of USAID's success in improving access to quality services is found in Comayagua, Honduras. The José Maria Ochoa Health Clinic is converting from a health post into a full-blown safe-birthing health center. The impetus was sparked by the clinic staff and is coming about at almost no cost to the Honduran government. This self-improvement has the potential to relieve the severe overcrowding of Comayagua Hospital by up to one-third of its current patient load of routine births and to provide more mother-centered care to potentially 1500 rural Honduran mothers and children each year.

Another example is the Yerovi Mackuart Hospital in Salcedo, Ecuador. A team was formed in 1998 to improve reception and triage of obstetric patients. The team developed and implemented a design which involved: the repair of the emergency entrance for easy and safe access, reorganization of personnel to provide a 24-hour security guard, installation of a central telephone line to allow internal communication, posting of signs outside and inside the hospital to direct patients, and construction of stretchers to transport patients.

Workshops have been held in 11 countries to address priority issues in maternal mortality at the political level, to identify existing norms that need to be updated, to define needs in existing legislation, and to share experiences among countries in the process of legal modification.

On the domestic front, Congresswoman Pat Schroeder drafted a bill before she left office which now has widespread bipartisan support. The bill (HR 2316 Safe Motherhood Monitoring and Prevention Research Act) hopefully will be introduced into the House this month. The purpose of the bill is to strengthen CDC's ability to strengthen their surveillance systems to monitor maternal deaths and illnesses.

Challenges

Successful models of maternal health systems can be found throughout all of the Americas, however, the challenge is to scale these models up to national and regional levels so that quality health services are not limited to those families who know how and who can afford to seek appropriate care. LAC is distinct from other regions in the developing world because maternal health is a well-established agenda item of many offices of the first ladies and ministries of health. The message to prioritize humanized and safe maternal care needs to be understood and accepted by policy makers in ministries of finance who allocate funding for social services in their countries.

Talking Points

- The international donor community needs to continue synthesizing their efforts so as to build-upon each agency's particular strengths. Donors should prioritize the activities proposed by the recently formed Task Force on Maternal Mortality under the mandate of The Regional InterAgency Coordinating Committee (RICC).
- The majority of health ministries in LAC have formulated national strategic plans to reduce maternal mortality. Many of the countries need technical assistance to operationalize these strategies into clearly defined plans of action. Through the RICC Task Force, donors can help identify and direct appropriate technical assistance.
- Currently, only 23 States in the U.S. are participating in maternal death monitoring programs managed by the CDC. While demand to participate in these programs is quite high, CDC has insufficient funding and staffing to provide needed assistance to all 50 states. The efforts of Representatives Emerson, Lowey, Kelly, McKinney, Maloney, and Ros-Lehrien should be supported.

- Registering maternal deaths is an especially important problem in LAC countries. Every maternal death should be investigated to determine the cause of death and to develop recommendations for preventing future deaths. This is best accomplished through local Maternal Mortality Committees. Municipal governments have the responsibility to assure civil registration of vital statistics by incorporating the support of police departments, cemetery personnel, physicians, nurses, midwives, and traditional birth attendants.

Clinton Presidential Records Digital Records Marker

This is not a presidential record. This is used as an administrative marker by the William J. Clinton Presidential Library Staff.

This marker identifies the place of a tabbed divider. Given our digitization capabilities, we are sometimes unable to adequately scan such dividers. The title from the original document is indicated below.

D

Divider Title: _____

PARTNERSHIP FOR EDUCATIONAL REVITALIZATION IN THE AMERICAS (A RETROSPECTIVE 1994 - 2000)

- The Summit of the Americas held in Miami in December 1994 recognized the central role of human resource development in aspect of national development -- economic, political and social. The U.S. Government took on a leadership role on the Summit Education Initiative and following the Miami Summit recommendations, provided initial funding for a consultative forum to address education reform issues in the hemisphere.
- At the Fifth Conference of Spouses of Heads of State and Government of the Americas, held in Asuncion, Paraguay in October 1995. Mrs. Hillary Rodham Clinton, First Lady of the United States announced U.S. funding (\$6.0 million) for the Partnership for Educational Revitalization in the Americas (PERA) activity.
- In September of 1996, USAID approved a five-year cooperative agreement allocating \$6 million to help establish the Partnership for Educational Revitalization in the Americas. In Spanish, the partnership is: Programa para la Promoción de la Reforma Educativa en América Latina y el Caribe (PREAL).
- The Inter-American Dialogue (IAD) was selected and agreed to serve as secretariat of the Partnership. IAD is a non-governmental organization based in Washington, D.C. Over the years they have earned considerable respect for objective and scholarly exchanges on Western Hemispheric affairs.
- The PREAL Task Force on Education, Equity and Economic Competitiveness held their first meeting in Santiago, Chile on January 8-9, 1997. The Task Force is composed of corporate CEOs, prominent political leaders, and distinguished scholars from 12 countries. After a year-long effort (April 1998) the Task Force released a comprehensive report in three languages entitled *The Future at Stake* which made four key recommendations to improve the quality of education throughout the region. These recommendations have been widely distributed throughout the region to educators and policy makers.
- PREAL prepared a set of recommendations for consideration by the heads of state at the 1998 Summit of the Americas in Santiago. Education became the key theme for the Summit, with action items in nine areas.
- By 1998, PREAL had become the leading non-governmental voice on Latin American education policy, and a strong advocate for involving leaders from the private sector in the debate on education reform.
- PREAL has organized five sub-regional conferences on educational decentralization (Nicaragua-1996); standards and evaluation (Brazil-1996); finance (Colombia-1997); business-education partnerships (El Salvador-1998); and autonomous schools (Brazil 2000).

- Efforts to produce an annual Report Card on education in Latin America and to monitor progress toward education reform during the 1990s were undertaken in 1998 and progress continues to be made in the development of country monitoring systems.
- A bilingual PREAL homepage has been established on the Internet. All PREAL working papers published to date are available for downloading at the site (www.preal.cl).
- To date, PREAL has established a network of 20 expert centers working on education reform in 12 countries, and distributed 11 “state-of-the-art” working papers and 6 books on key issues in education reform.
- To date, PREAL has organized 38 national conferences on education reform issues such as Education Law in Nicaragua; Equity and Higher Education in Chile; and Business Participation in Education Reform in El Salvador.
- PREAL is currently strengthening its work in Central America (including Dominican Republic and Haiti) through expanded support for national advocacy groups and through the publication of a report (in early 2000) on education reform in Central America entitled, “Tomorrow is too Late,” developed by a blue-ribbon task force made up of key members of civil society.
- To effectively advocate for the development and implementation of sound education policy reform, PREAL has established a number of region-wide working groups to address critical educational issues. A list of the working groups is provided below:

Education Finance	Coordinated by Instituto Ser – Colombia
Teachers Unions	Coordinated by FLASCO - Argentina
Education Statistics	Coordinated by UNESCO - Chile
Politics of Education Reform	CIDI - Chile
Education Evaluation and Standards	Grade - Peru
- To date, PREAL has awarded 24 grants to education organizations and NGOs to conduct innovative and meaningful activities in the area of education policy reform. Organizations that have received grants from PREAL include:
 - Universidad Centroamericana – Nicaragua
 - Foro Educativo – Peru
 - FLASCO – Dominican Republic
 - Fundacao Getulio Vargas – Brazil
 - Asies – Guatemala
 - CIEN
 - CNEM – Mayan NGO
 - Grupo Basica
 - FEPADE – El Salvador
 - Corporacion PARTICIPA – Chile
 - FLASCO – Haiti

Clinton Presidential Records Digital Records Marker

This is not a presidential record. This is used as an administrative marker by the William J. Clinton Presidential Library Staff.

This marker identifies the place of a tabbed divider. Given our digitization capabilities, we are sometimes unable to adequately scan such dividers. The title from the original document is indicated below.

E

Divider Title: _____

United States-Chile Partnership for Technical Cooperation

Background

On April 16, 1998, Secretary of State Albright and Chilean Minister of Foreign Relations Insulza signed an MOU on International Development Cooperation. The MOU establishes a bilateral partnership to promote closer relations between our respective national, regional and local entities involved in international development. Under the MOU, the United States and Chile are to share information on ongoing activities and seek opportunities to undertake joint development programs that support the objectives agreed to during the Summit of the Americas in Santiago, Chile.

U.S.-Chile Development Scholarship Program

The MOU specifically provides for the creation of a "United States-Chile Development Scholarship Program" to support the development of human resources in Latin American and the Caribbean. This Scholarship Program is the first joint initiative that has been fully implemented under the MOU by USAID and the Agency for International Cooperation of Chile. The Program provides scholarships for individuals from the most needy developing countries throughout the hemisphere to attend training programs in Chile. The scholarships are granted for post-graduate and specialized studies that augment professional and technical capacity in the following priority development areas: 1) education; 2) social development and poverty alleviation; 3) economic integration; 4) democracy strengthening; and 5) natural resources management.

The Scholarship Program is open to government officials, members of non-governmental organizations and other organizations in civil society such as researchers or fellows from recognized Universities.

Since the program began in March 1999, 40 students from 13 countries have received scholarships for up to two years of study. The participating countries include Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama, the Dominican Republic, Haiti, Jamaica, Bolivia, Ecuador, Paraguay, and Peru. USAID and AGCI recently started the third year of the program that will begin with the 2001 academic year. The third class of scholarship recipients will be announced in January 2001.

Building Hemispheric Cooperation in International Development

The MOU provides a basis for broadening our bilateral cooperation by enabling other nations in the hemisphere to participate in development programs designed to carry out the Summit's objectives. The USG and GOC hope that the MOU will thus serve as a catalyst in getting the more developed nations to work as partners and extend the reach of our development assistance. Eight countries with international cooperation programs (Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Mexico, the United States, and Venezuela) have informally met to discuss collaborating on programs and projects in support of the Summit. Chile has offered to host a meeting of these countries to more fully discuss the possibilities for collaboration.

Clinton Presidential Records Digital Records Marker

This is not a presidential record. This is used as an administrative marker by the William J. Clinton Presidential Library Staff.

This marker identifies the place of a tabbed divider. Given our digitization capabilities, we are sometimes unable to adequately scan such dividers. The title from the original document is indicated below.

F

Divider Title: _____

USAID/LAC Justice and Human Rights Regional Program Interamerican Institute of Human Rights

The Inter-American Institute of Human Rights is an independent, international education and research institution created in 1980 through an agreement with the Inter-American Court of Human Rights (based in Costa Rica) and the Government of Costa Rica. IIDH promotes the extension of and respect for human rights in Latin America and the Caribbean through programs in civil society, public institutions, education and electoral assistance. IIDH provides training and technical assistance to individuals, international organizations, governments and NGOs to further the consolidation of democracy and promotion of human rights in the Americas.

The USG, through USAID has been a major contributor of IIDH since its inception. The current grant of \$4.7 million (signed in 1997 at the First Ladies Conference) will be completed in December 2000. A follow-on grant is expected.

Among the activities of IIDH in the last year:

EDUCATION

- The 18th Interdisciplinary Course of Human Rights was held July 31-August 11, 2000, drawing more than 120 participants from governments, international organizations, NGOs and universities in the region. The course is a flagship activity of IIDH, with more than 2000 graduates who are trained in human rights theory and practice to become “multipliers” for human rights promotion, protection and education in Latin America. This year’s theme, “Access to Justice,” included presentations on the Interamerican System of Human Rights, refugee rights, women’s rights, children’s rights, judicial reform in the Americas and others.

GENDER/CIVIL SOCIETY

- In 1999-2000, IIDH launched a new course in “Women’s Human Rights: Strengthening their International Promotion and Protection,” bringing together women attorneys in the region to teach them about the Inter-American System of Human Rights and how to bring forth cases to the Court and Commission. The course has been followed up with one-on-one assistance with participants (from the regional NGO CEJIL) to prepare actual cases that will ultimately contribute to inter-American jurisprudence on women’s rights.

PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS

- IIDH serves as executive secretariat of the Ibero-American Federation of Human Rights Ombudsmen and, as such, provides assistance to the sub-network of National Offices of Women’s Affairs. Support has continued to help the Women’s Affairs offices to coordinate strategies and encourage idea and information sharing to promote women’s rights.

Clinton Presidential Records

Digital Records Marker

This is not a presidential record. This is used as an administrative marker by the William J. Clinton Presidential Library Staff.

This marker identifies the place of a tabbed divider. Given our digitization capabilities, we are sometimes unable to adequately scan such dividers. The title from the original document is indicated below.

X

Divider Title: _____

Notional Schedule for Side Program for the U.S. Delegation

Tuesday, October 3	Late evening arrival in Lima
Wednesday, October 4	Site Visits and Panel Discussion
8:00 a.m. - 8:30 a.m.	Courtesy call with Ambassador
8:30 a.m.	Depart Embassy for Cono Sur
9:15 a.m.	Arrive at Site Visit #1 Visit to USAID Project "Democratic Education in Public Schools in Villa Maria de Triunfo"
10:15 a.m.	Depart for Central Lima
11:15 a.m.	Arrive at Site Visit #2 Visit to CEDRO Open House for Girls
12:15 p.m.	Depart for lunch
12:30 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.	Lunch at Hotel Sheraton or other downtown location Selected members of the Country Team
1:30 p.m.	Depart for Ambassador's residence
1:45 p.m.	Arrival at Ambassador's residence
2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.	Vital Voices Follow-up Panel Discussion Women's Political Participation Ambassador's Residence
4:00 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.	Reception at the Ambassador's Residence
4:40 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.	R&R
6:00 p.m.	Depart for Inauguration at the National Museum

Clinton Presidential Records Digital Records Marker

This is not a presidential record. This is used as an administrative marker by the William J. Clinton Presidential Library Staff.

This marker identifies the place of a tabbed divider. Given our digitization capabilities, we are sometimes unable to adequately scan such dividers. The title from the original document is indicated below.

B

Divider Title: _____

Site Visit to “Democratic Education and Student Participation in Public Schools”

You will visit a public school in a peri-urban area south of Lima. You will meet with a small group of students and teachers who will share with us their experiences as participants in the pilot activity “Democratic Education and Student Participation in Public Schools.” This activity is being sponsored by two local NGOs: the Centro de Investigación y Desarrollo de la Educación (CIDE) and the Asociación Educativa TAREA (TAREA).

Participants

- 6-8 primary and secondary students, members of the “mock municipality”
- 2-4 teachers
- CIDE/TAREA Program Managers (1 or 2 people)

Background

The “Democratic Education and Student Participation in Public Schools” activity began implementation in April 1999 in selected schools in Lima and Ayacucho. The main challenge the project faces is to change the authoritarian culture in Peruvian schools and promote student democratic skills for participation, teamwork, conflict resolution, and consciousness-raising on gender equity.

The Activity is being successfully implemented in 82 public schools and involves the active participation of school principals, teachers, students and the Ministry of Education. CIDE and TAREA are developing special methodologies and educational materials to help teachers and students put into practice the democratic values they are learning. At the primary level, CIDE is working closely with teachers and schools principals to promote several activities to help children learn about their rights and responsibilities through practicing teamwork, rotating roles, gender equity strategies and other pedagogical resources aimed at reinforcing a democratic culture in the schools.

At the secondary level, the main strategies being carried out by TAREA promote adolescent participation in schools through “espacios de escucha” among schoolmates and with teachers and school authorities. It is also promoting “mock municipalities,” which involve the practice of fundamental human rights such as political participation, the right to vote, and freedom of expression, among others. This activity also provides training in youth leadership. Finally, CIDE and TAREA are developing a proposal on democratic education for primary and secondary schools, which will be sent to the Ministry of Education for nationwide dissemination.

Background on USAID Project "Democratic Education and Student Participation in Public Schools"

Background

The Activity is aimed at developing a pilot program in selected public schools to promote the development of democratic skills, practices and knowledge in primary and secondary students.

The main challenge the project faces is to change the authoritarian culture in Peruvian schools and promote student democratic skills to improve self-esteem, participation, teamwork, conflict resolution and consciousness-raising on human rights issues, with an emphasis on gender equity.

Centro de Investigación y Desarrollo de la Educación (CIDE) and Asociación Educativa TAREA (TAREA) are implementing this project in 37 primary schools and 45 secondary schools in poor areas of Lima and Ayacucho (a city located in the sierra region). These activities involve the participation of approximately 80,000 students, in addition to teachers, school principals and Government of Peru officials from the Ministry of Education at both the national and local level. CIDE and TAREA are developing special methodologies, educational materials and training workshops to help students exercise their principal rights and responsibilities and to promote more a democratic environment in their schools. Special efforts are being developed to promote the participation of local institutions to help institutionalize the program.

Part of the implementation plan includes the development of a curriculum proposal on democratic education for primary and secondary schools, which is being successfully applied in the beneficiary schools. This proposal will be sent to the Ministry of Education for dissemination nationwide upon completion of the activity in December 2000.

Main Achievements

- A clear improvement in the human relationships among teachers and students, teachers and principals, principals and students and students to students, toward more equality and mutual respect.
- Children and adolescents are more aware of their rights and responsibilities and are improving their participation.
- 45 secondary schools have installed "mock municipalities" democratically elected by their fellow students and approximately 500 elected representatives are being trained as democratic leaders.

USAID Funding: \$ 413,224 (September 1998 to December 2000)

Implementing Agencies: Centro de Investigación y Desarrollo de la Educación (CIDE) and Asociación Educativa TAREA (TAREA).

Suggested Questions/Comments for Site Visit

For Primary School Students:

1. Can you tell me what you know about your rights and responsibilities?
2. Do you think that in school you have the opportunity to practice your rights and responsibilities?. Can you give me a small example? (Two or three children could talk about their experiences.)
3. Are girls and boys equals in your school? Can you give me an example?

For Secondary School Students:

1. Can you tell me a little bit about how the school leaders of the "mock municipality" were elected?
2. Do you believe you have democracy in your school? Can you give me a few examples of what you think demonstrates the democratic culture present in your school?

Suggested Remarks for Site Visit to Stella Maris School

- Congratulate school authorities, teachers and students for the great job they are doing and the significant time they are dedicating to learn and practice democratic values, and for their overall commitment to participating and implementing various strategies to ensure a more democratic culture in their school.
- Encourage all participants to use their new found skills inside and outside their school, and recommend that they involve their families and other local authorities in order to build a new democratic culture in their community.
- Let the school children know that they are citizens with the capacity to defend and protect their rights in their school, in their families and in their communities. And that now that they have had the opportunity to learn and practice democracy in their school, these practices will be a part of their lives forever and will help them become better citizens and leaders now and in the future.

Clinton Presidential Records Digital Records Marker

This is not a presidential record. This is used as an administrative marker by the William J. Clinton Presidential Library Staff.

This marker identifies the place of a tabbed divider. Given our digitization capabilities, we are sometimes unable to adequately scan such dividers. The title from the original document is indicated below.

C

Divider Title: _____

Site Visit to the CEDRO Open House for Street Girls

You will visit a center for street girls and girls at high risk in Lima operated by the Center for Education and Information on Drug Abuse Prevention (CEDRO). You will tour the site and meet program staff, as well as some of the girls who live there.

Participants

- Girls 7-17 who are living at the Cedro Open House
- CEDRO Open House Staff
- Eugenia de Huerta Mercado, Supervisor, Street Children Program. (She is Guatemalan and a former Ambassador.)

Background

This center is an “open house;” in other words, the residents are free to come and go as they wish. The girls come from a variety of backgrounds, and the majority of them have suffered abuse, often sexual, and often from family members. Many of them have run away and lived on the streets, while some still have some links to their families. The 25 girls now resident in the open house range in age from 7-17.

During the day, the girls participate in a number of educational and therapeutic activities. The center has a social worker and a supervisor to provide structure and direction in the girls’ daily activities. The goals of the project are to prevent child abuse and abandonment, to support children rejoining their families when possible, to give the girls training and educational opportunities, and to move towards self-financing with locally generated income.

Other USAID-sponsored programs with CEDRO

USAID has been supporting CEDRO for over 15 years in the rural jungle area of Peru, with programs designed to assist abandoned and neglected youth, as well as youth affected by drugs. Other USG organizations, such as the Narcotics Affairs Section (NAS) of the U.S. Embassy, also have strong working relationships with CEDRO. In Lima, CEDRO operates three open houses: two for boys, and the site you are visiting today for girls. CEDRO has received significant funding directly from the U.S. Congress as well, for its innovative work, and enjoys a great deal of credibility and respect for its work in reaching difficult target groups of street children.

Clinton Presidential Records Digital Records Marker

This is not a presidential record. This is used as an administrative marker by the William J. Clinton Presidential Library Staff.

This marker identifies the place of a tabbed divider. Given our digitization capabilities, we are sometimes unable to adequately scan such dividers. The title from the original document is indicated below.

D

Divider Title: _____

DRAFT

Vital Voices Follow-up - Panel Discussion on Women, Girls and Democracy

Vital Voices Follow-up - Panel Discussion on Women, Girls and Democracy

Moderator: Ana Maria Yañez - PROMUJER Executive Secretary (from Manela Ramos)

Women's Contribution to the Consolidation of Democracy

- View of rural women/local authority: member of a town council from a rural area
- View of women political leaders: one from the official and other from the opposition
- (Suggestions: Luz Salgado and Lourdes Flores Nano)

Vision of Democracy for Young Women: Possibilities and Expectations

- a young university leader

Program – October 4, 2000 – 2:00 p.m. – 4:00pm

Ambassador's Residence

Introduction: Ana Maria Yañez (5 minutes)

Three presentations by panelists (15 minutes each - 45 minutes total)

General Discussion: Questions/Comments from Audience and Panelists (1 hour)

Closing: Ambassador Hamilton (5 minutes)

Approximately 80 people will be invited to this event.

4:00 p.m. – 4:15 p.m. - USAID Signing of PROMUJER Activity

- approx. \$400,000
- Consortium of four NGOs lead by Manuela Ramos
- Message: Promotion of the contribution of women's participation to democracy
- Press

4:15 p.m. – 5:15 p.m. - Coffee Reception at the Ambassador's Residence

Clinton Presidential Records

Digital Records Marker

This is not a presidential record. This is used as an administrative marker by the William J. Clinton Presidential Library Staff.

This marker identifies the place of a tabbed divider. Given our digitization capabilities, we are sometimes unable to adequately scan such dividers. The title from the original document is indicated below.

XI

Divider Title: _____

Clinton Presidential Records Digital Records Marker

This is not a presidential record. This is used as an administrative marker by the William J. Clinton Presidential Library Staff.

This marker identifies the place of a tabbed divider. Given our digitization capabilities, we are sometimes unable to adequately scan such dividers. The title from the original document is indicated below.

A

Divider Title: _____

Statement of the Forum of Adolescents of the Americas

June 29 2000

Lima, Peru

In the face of the different problems experienced by our countries, we, the American adolescents, hereby wish to make a statement. We, therefore, participate in the Forum of Adolescents of the Americas, currently being held in the City of Lima, Peru, from June 26 to 29, 2000, with the participation of 26 countries of America represented by delegates of each nation.

The Forum was aimed at seeking solutions and answers to problems and concerns expressed by each participant on the basis of personal experiences, through a participative methodology based on discussions and debates.

Adolescents are especially interested in contributing towards the transformation of America; they want an America with more justice, where they may have a greater participation and play a more significant role. To this effect, during the Forum, a more direct approach was promoted amongst all the adolescents for the discussion of areas of interest and subjects such as identity, adolescent life plan, leadership, social networks and the right to participate.

The following points are the result of the systematic work undertaken, in which a set of ideas and opinions of adolescents, the voice of the new world, have been compiled.

We hope that the authorities will take into account and listen to the reflections we present today. We are convinced that our continent may achieve a greater level of development, through a process of change motivated by the initiative and contributions of adolescents.

Our commitment is transparent and with all our heart we want to state that we need to build a continent that is worthy and dignified for all the adolescent population of the Americas.

“Tomorrow must be today, let us join forces now.”

Identity Profile of the Adolescent of the Americas

Adolescents are certain that it would be impossible to develop and know the Americas if we do not previously know ourselves, if we do not previously establish a clear identity, something that will identify us all as a whole.

We require a true identity, equal to all and, for this and other reasons, we have prepared the following proposals:

Proposals of Adolescents on the Identity of the Adolescent of the Americas

1. We adolescents propose that the international day of the adolescent be declared and/or instated, in view that we do not have a day to identify us as adolescents.
2. We want to be identified for what we really are, adolescents that form part of the solution and not part of the problem, and therefore we propose that laws and decrees be issued to punish discrimination, both physical and verbal, against adolescents.
3. We propose that adolescents be taken into account for decision-making, in view that we are an important and representative group of our nations and therefore, our voice deserves to and must be heard.

Adolescent Life Plan

Adolescents face a number of problems due to lack of planning. Life planning enables the projection we may have of our own destiny, channeling our goals according to what is truly important to us, such as a positive vision of our realities.

In adolescence, this planning is necessary to reach our objectives, and forms part of the mission that accompanies our development. The adolescent is at a difficult stage, undergoing important changes in his/her life, and these difficulties may lead him/her to incur a series of social problems (drug addiction, delinquency, gangs, etc.).

Hence, our goal as leaders is to contribute towards converting a crisis into an opportunity and thereby propose effective alternatives for the solution of these burdening problems currently experienced by adolescents.

Proposals

1. Promote communication within the family through awareness campaigns in which subjects of direct interest to adolescents are discussed and where the problems affecting us are included together with alternatives for their solutions. To achieve this, we require constant development of different meetings such as forums, parent schools, debates, use of the media, leadership networks, etc.
2. Foster the participation of adolescents in decision-making processes concerning adolescent problems, as they are the only ones that truly know their reality.
3. Update the scientific-technological and contextual materials used for educating adolescents, thereby generating adequate interest towards study and the development of a critical attitude, which are key to our personal and social formation as adolescents.

Social Networks

Social Networks are organized groups, interrelated and interconnected which meet to fulfill common objectives. As ascertained by the adolescents participating in the Forum, there is a consensus that it is necessary to expand the existing venues of participation (networks) to meet the basic needs of adolescents without discrimination of creed, race, color, economic condition, amongst others.

We, the adolescents of the Americas, feel that it is our duty to undertake the formation of groups of adolescents in our countries to deal with crucial issues, such as leadership, self-esteem, participation, life plan, and human rights.

Proposals

1. We propose that adolescents be provided with the necessary support for the creation and upkeep of a continental network, with no discrimination whatsoever, that will benefit the majority of adolescents of the continent.
2. We request that each government of the countries that constitute the continental network provide the necessary funding required for the presented and approved projects.
3. We propose that governmental secretariats be created in order to have organized information on the number of existing adolescent organizations in the country. Said secretariats must safeguard the right for freedom of organization, avoiding all types of repression for those what are organized into groups and thereby, meet their requirements.

Right to Participate

Every adolescent has the right to express his opinion freely and to be heard. Not all adolescents have the same opportunities nowadays of having access to spaces of participation in their countries, due to different reasons. We are certain that we, adolescents, may be trusted to conduct and carry out activities, and this may be already confirmed in the region by the achievements of the different organizations we participate in. We only need to have the opportunity.

Proposals

1. We propose that the Governments of the Americas should increase the interest and emphasis provided to education, a sector which is the starting point for the promotion of an active and effective adolescent participation in the different spaces being developed.
2. We propose that national and international regulation systems be effectively respected and upheld, in order that adolescent participation in the decision-making process be incorporated.
3. We believe that it is important to increase the budget allocations aimed at promoting an integral development of the adolescent population, especially in the rural areas of our countries.

4. We consider that greater support should be given to organizations that promote the distribution of scholarships, and contribute to strengthen and develop the skills and capacities of adolescents.
5. We believe that greater adolescent participation may be achieved in the different spheres of development through national and international awards that will give priority to those adolescents who live in conditions of vulnerability.

Leadership

Having proposed and reflected upon the following issues:

- Identity, which is a feature that distinguishes adolescents from others;
- Life Plan, which is what leads us to the fulfillment of our goals;
- Social Networks, that is, the venues where adolescents may effectively exercise their right to participate;

We, the adolescents of the Americas, may conclude that leadership constitutes the mechanism by which we may achieve these objectives.

We may define leadership as that quality by which the adolescent has the capacity to manage and represent other groups. This is promoted on the basis of self leadership, a continuous process of self improvement in which the person likes and accepts him/herself (self esteem), learns how to make decisions and execute them.

A leader is a person who motivates and influences other adolescents for the creation and organization of groups, guiding and facilitating solutions to the different problems in different areas, such as politics and social, economic and cultural issues, amongst others.

In order to achieve this objective we believe it is necessary to foster the conditions necessary to identify the adolescent leaders of the different sectors of each country, as well as to upgrade their skills and capacities so that they may replicate their achievements and successful experiences.

For this reason, the adolescents of the Americas invite the authorities and principal governors/rulers of each country to assume a commitment with the statement we are making herein. Each contribution is the reflection of our needs, of the present and future vision that we aim to achieve.

We must modify the paradigm that defines the adolescent as a problem, as someone who lacks ideals and goals, into another where the adolescent plays a key role with respect to changes, as someone who faces challenges and assumes responsibilities with courage, energy, and strength.

Because, in short, the adolescents are the voice of the new world.

Clinton Presidential Records Digital Records Marker

This is not a presidential record. This is used as an administrative marker by the William J. Clinton Presidential Library Staff.

This marker identifies the place of a tabbed divider. Given our digitization capabilities, we are sometimes unable to adequately scan such dividers. The title from the original document is indicated below.

B

Divider Title: _____

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED**PERU - POLITICAL OVERVIEW****BACKGROUND**

President Alberto Fujimori announced on September 16 his decision to call new national elections, in which he would not run, and to deactivate the National Intelligence Service (SIN). This action followed months of international and domestic efforts to promote democratic reform in Peru in the wake of deeply flawed elections. It also came in the wake of a scandal implicating intelligence adviser and Fujimori cohort Vladimiro Montesinos in corruption. The deactivation of the SIN amounted to a de facto ousting of Montesinos, who was widely suspected of undermining the judiciary, the Congress, and the media to concentrate power in the executive branch. Montesinos left Peru on September 24 to seek political asylum in Panama; that request is under review. Panama's decision to receive Montesinos was supported by the OAS, with support from the USG and other governments in the hemisphere. Montesinos' departure, along with Fujimori's decision to step down when a new president is inaugurated in July 2001, opens the way for democratic reform to move forward in Peru.

Observers from the Organization of American States (OAS) found Peru's national elections this spring to be not free and fair. The Fujimori administration used its control over the media, the judiciary, the Congress, and the security and intelligence forces to disadvantage the political opposition. A first round of voting on April 9 narrowly led to a runoff between President Fujimori and challenger Alejandro Toledo, following international criticism of initial GOP figures giving Fujimori a majority win. On May 28, the GOP held a runoff vote despite OAS recommendations for a delay until conditions for a fair contest were in place. Toledo boycotted the runoff in protest and OAS and other international observers withdrew their monitors. 51% of votes cast in the unmonitored runoff were for Fujimori; 49% were cast for Toledo or deliberately spoiled in protest.

The June OAS General Assembly in Windsor, Canada passed a resolution tasking a special mission to Peru to develop recommendations to strengthen democracy. OAS Secretary General Gaviria and Canadian Foreign Minister Axworthy traveled to Peru and suggested measures on electoral and judicial reform, steps to strengthen freedom of expression and protection of human rights, and actions to restructure security and intelligence services. Former Dominican Foreign Minister Eduardo Latorre was selected to head a permanent OAS mission in Lima, overseeing a national dialogue among government, opposition, and civil society on these reforms. Participants have agreed to March 2001 as a target date for completion of reforms and talks are ongoing.

TALKING POINTS

- We welcome President Fujimori's call for new elections. This is a positive step towards strengthening democracy in Peru. We support the OAS-sponsored national dialogue as the venue to develop and implement reforms to ensure free and fair elections.

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED

28

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED**PERU - ECONOMIC OVERVIEW**

Peru has made significant progress toward economic, social, and political stability in the last decade but faces prospects of economic weakening until the current political uncertainty is resolved. Previously marked by terrorism, hyperinflation, and government intervention in the economy, Peru under President Fujimori in the 1990s took the steps necessary to bring these problems under control. Peru experienced strong overall growth from 1993 until 1998, when the adverse effects of "El Nino" and the global financial crisis caused a slowdown in growth. In 1999, the economy began to recover, with GDP growth at 3.8 percent in 1999, an increase over the 1998 figure of 0.3 percent. Fishing, agriculture, and mining sectors comprise an important part of Peru's economy and are displaying growth, although manufacturing and construction sectors continue to stagnate. This recovery, however, is threatened by weakened investor confidence in the wake of deeply flawed national elections, international calls for democratic reform, and uncertainty over the political future in Peru over the next year.

President Fujimori's surprise announcement that he will leave office in response to a bribery scandal is considered by most analysts a long-term plus for Peru's economic outlook, but it will have a negative economic impact in the near term. The Government had recently unveiled a well-received plan to improve fiscal stability, strengthen and restructure the private sector, complete privatization projects, and generate investment. The uncertainty over who will head the Peruvian government over the next year has resulted in a downturn in Peruvian markets, with economists downgrading growth estimates for the country and investment agencies lowering ratings on Peruvian debt. Despite the best efforts of the GOP economic team to keep Peru's reform efforts on track, the GOP and Peruvian legislature can be expected to grow increasingly distracted as new elections approach.

Analysts expect that until the transition period is complete in July 2001 and a new government, with new economic policies, is in place, investment in Peru will remain low. The GOP's targets of raising investment from 19 percent to 25 percent of GDP and reaching 6 percent annual GDP growth may be unrealistic. Additional goals of 4 percent inflation and a 2 percent fiscal deficit will also be difficult to achieve, particularly if tax revenues come up short. The downgrade in Peru's sovereign debt rating, unless reversed, will mean financing the fiscal gap will be more costly than expected. Thus, while in the long term, a successful democratic transition will be a plus for Peru's economy, short to medium term prospects appear negative.

Peru's social indicators are among the least advanced in Latin America. Despite government efforts, half the population lives in poverty and 14.7 percent live in extreme poverty. Unemployment was estimated at 9.5 percent at the end of 1999, with underemployment over 45 percent. Malnutrition among school-age children is widespread and adult illiteracy in rural areas of extreme poverty is estimated at more than 20 percent. While rates of child mortality have declined significantly in recent years and contraceptive prevalence increased, the maternal mortality rate, estimated at 265 deaths per 100,000 live births, is among the worst in the hemisphere. The number of reported cases of AIDS continues to climb, with a total of 8,220 known cases of AIDS as of March 1999.

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED

B
3

B
4

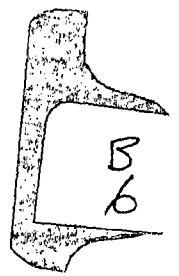


B

S



HRC Speeches



FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
REMARKS FOR THE FIRST LADIES' SYMPOSIUM ON
CHILDREN OF THE AMERICAS
MIAMI, FLORIDA
DECEMBER 10, 1994

Welcome to all of my colleagues and friends from across the Americas, and to all of our distinguished guests.

It is an honor and privilege for me to host this wonderful symposium here in Miami. Let me begin by expressing my gratitude to the First Ladies of Latin America, the Caribbean, and Canada for your help and guidance in preparing for this session. Your extraordinary efforts in previous First Ladies' meetings in Colombia, Costa Rica, and most recently in St. Lucia, have provided a foundation for all of our work -- today and into the future.

I hope that in the course of our gathering here, and in the weeks and months ahead, we will learn much from each other and find new inspiration to address the needs of children, families, and women across our hemisphere.

Today, we live in an age of great promise -- and great peril -- for the 130 million children of the Americas. Great promise because our children are our lifeline to prosperity and democracy in the decades ahead. And we all take pleasure in knowing that there are millions of happy, healthy children across the Americas whose futures are filled with hope.

But there are perils too, because from the Queen Elizabeth Islands to Tierra del Fuego, our children are shouldering burdens rarely encountered by older generations.

Children suffering from hunger, poverty, homelessness, inadequate health care, disease, illiteracy, violence, and abuse are not confined to a single nation or a single continent. The cries of desperate children are sadly heard in every nation represented here. And it is the plight of those children that brings us together today, not just as the spouses of heads of state or as representatives of our governments, but as mothers, sisters, daughters, grandmothers, aunts, neighbors and friends who believe that every child in every country deserves a fair chance in life.

The political leaders convening at this historic summit have set forth an agenda to promote prosperity and democracy throughout the hemisphere through trade initiatives, sustainable development, and more effective government.

Today, summit leaders are outlining goals to ensure the economic, social and physical well-being of children, which Dr. Alleyne will outline later in greater detail:

① The proposed Summit Plan of Action calls for universal access to education so that all children, regardless of economic or social status, racial or ethnic origin, or gender, will receive the basic tools necessary to become full members of society. The goal of requiring children to attend and complete primary school is also under discussion. If this goal is achieved, it will help eradicate child labor and give children a greater hope of acquiring the skills and knowledge needed in a modern global economy.

Beyond the important issue of school attendance, the Summit initiative on education also addresses the nutritional needs of children so they can learn more effectively.

The proposed Summit Plan of Action calls for equitable access to basic health services, which will be particularly beneficial to children, who are most vulnerable to illnesses and unhealthy living conditions.

Specific programs being recommended will address child, infant, and maternal mortality rates, as well as increasing immunization efforts to eradicate childhood diseases, such as measles, that still afflict too many children. We need only look to the disappearance of new polio cases in the Western hemisphere to know the success of these immunization programs.

We all know that the role of caregiver is crucial to the development of healthy and secure children. And we all know that the primary caregivers in society most often are women. The Summit proposal to strengthen the role of women will increase opportunities for women to participate in all spheres of life -- political, social, and economic.

Empowering women with economic self-reliance, access to quality health care and education is not only a valuable step forward in itself. It's an important step forward for children.

While we recognize that our political leaders are responsible for devising policies and programs to meet these important goals, we also know that, as First Ladies, we have a significant role to play.

Just as advocacy organizations, social institutions, and dedicated individuals are critical to progress, we, too, can help push the agenda forward in our respective countries.

When it comes to children's issues, women have a special calling. And that's why we have a duty to raise our voices for

the voiceless -- our children, the youngest and most vulnerable among us.

This week I've had particular reason to think about the difference one woman alone can make on behalf of children, even against extraordinary odds. My friend, Elizabeth Glaeser, died last weekend after losing a long battle with AIDS.

Elizabeth contracted HIV through a blood transfusion while hemorrhaging during the delivery of her first child, Ariel. Unbeknownst to her, her daughter, and then a son born later, also contracted the virus.

When Elizabeth learned that she and her children had been infected with HIV, she dedicated herself to raising awareness about AIDS. From a small office in Los Angeles, she created the Pediatric AIDS Foundation, which has raised over \$30 million since its founding in 1988.

Elizabeth often said she was motivated and strengthened by the memory of her daughter, who died four years ago at the age of seven. Her son, now 10, lives with HIV every day.

If Elizabeth could continue to contribute so much on behalf of children throughout her own illness, I know we can make our own contributions too. Of course, we will not all be involved in the same ways, or even on precisely the same issues. I know, for example, that AIDS is not as prevalent in many of your countries as it is in mine. That's why each of us must find a venue appropriate to our own situation as First Lady or government representative. But whatever role we choose represents a rare opportunity to make a difference in the lives of tens of millions of children -- and in the future of all of the Americas.

There is an urgency to our mission. More than half of our population in this hemisphere is under age 23. Ushering children into the world is, of course, the province of families. But building safe and nurturing communities for them to grow up in . . . making sure they have access to schools that teach them to read and write . . . protecting them from avoidable diseases . . . training them for productive adulthoods. . . and honoring their rights in the face of violence and abuse -- these are our collective responsibilities.

This concept was eloquently expressed in a pastoral letter issued in the United States several years ago by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops. In that letter, entitled *Putting Children and Families First*, the bishops said:

"No government can love a child, and no policy can substitute for a family's care. But, government can either support or undermine families. There has been an unfortunate,

unnecessary and unreal polarization in [the] discussion [of] how best to help families. The undeniable fact is that our children's future is shaped both by the values of their parents and the policies of our nation."

As adults, we must take responsibility for our children so that they can learn to take responsibility for themselves. And we must insist that society's most vital institutions -- family, school, and church -- create the conditions necessary for our children to fulfill all their God-given potential.

To be sure, our challenges differ from country to country, and our recipes for progress may require different ingredients. The purpose of this gathering is not to prescribe one solution, but to share ideas and opinions and learn from each other's experiences.

Here in the United States, for example, we are not doing enough to ensure that women receive adequate pre- and post-natal health care, particularly poor women and teenagers. In 1992, 22 percent of pregnant women in this country received no pre-natal care.

As the rest of the world knows all too well, my nation faces significant challenges in stopping an epidemic of gun violence that daily claims the lives of children in our cities and towns. Today, homicide is the leading cause of death for African American youth in the United States and violence is the second leading cause of death for youngsters between the ages of 10 and 14.

Combined with violence is an equally disturbing scourge of narcotics use among our young people. Illegal drugs are readily available in too many communities in the United States, and even in some of our schools. Studies show that as many as seven million children abuse alcohol and drugs to some extent

At the same time, we are making progress on behalf of some of our children -- progress that is visible right here in Miami. Just yesterday I had the opportunity to visit Jackson Memorial Hospital and Drew Elementary School -- two institutions that have achieved remarkable successes in disadvantaged communities.

Jackson Memorial Medical Center, which is affiliated with the University of Miami, has the difficult task of caring for some of the poorest and neediest residents of this city. The newborn intensive care unit that I visited yesterday serves the highest risk population in Dade County -- but the hospital has achieved the lowest infant mortality rates in the state.

The hospital also has devised innovative ways of serving its community. A mobile van brings doctors and nurses to those who

might otherwise go without necessary treatment and care.

Drew Elementary School is located in a predominantly African-American neighborhood. Community leaders devised a cultural exchange program in which students from Drew and a predominantly Hispanic school called Seminole Elementary come together for a variety of activities that promote tolerance and understanding. To enhance communication across cultures, students at Drew take Spanish from the second grade on.

The positive educational climate at Drew is reflected in the student attendance rate: 95 percent of the school's students come to class every day.

Drew has succeeded because parents, teachers, the school principal and community leaders have worked hard to create an environment where children feel safe, secure, and confident that they will thrive. The adults have taken responsibility; and the children are learning to take responsibility as well.

In every one of our nations, dedicated, energetic, and caring people are battling on the front lines to solve some of society's most vexing problems. The purpose of this gathering is to educate each other about our challenges and our successes -- and to make our efforts more cooperative by sharing the knowledge and experience each of us holds within us.

When we return to our capitals, I hope we will not be guided solely by documents, policy papers, and official pronouncements, but also by the desire in our hearts to see that all children have the gift of hope in their lives.

In the words of Gabriela Mistral [Mee-strall], the visionary Chilean educator, poet, and Nobel prize winner for literature:
"Let me be more maternal than a mother; able to love and defend with all of a mother's fervor the child that is not flesh of my flesh."

As she once said: "Many things we need can wait. The child cannot . . . To him, we cannot say tomorrow. His name is today."

Thank you for coming to Miami, and for joining together in this important cause.

And now, let us go from words to deeds.

[Introduce UNICEF video]

###

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

October 16, 1995

**REMARKS BY FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
AT THE FIFTH CONFERENCE OF WIVES OF HEADS OF STATE AND OF
GOVERNMENTS OF THE AMERICAS
ASUNCION, PARAGUAY**

MRS. CLINTON: I am privileged to have the opportunity to represent my country, the United States, for the first time at this Fifth Conference of First Ladies from the Western Hemisphere. It is also a great honor for me to be here in Paraguay with all of you.

We have gathered together to discuss the futures of women and children in all of our countries. Whether we live in North, Central, or South America or the Caribbean region, we are united in our belief that women everywhere share common aspirations and concerns.

Yet, as we meet here in this beautiful hall this evening, we also know that a vast reservoir of human potential is now being wasted across the Americas.

No nation in our hemisphere can say that all of its children are fed, clothed, housed, schooled, and raised by loving parents. No nation in our hemisphere can say that all of its women are treated with dignity, respect, and given the chance to fulfill their God-given potentials. And no nation can say that each and every family within its borders is healthy, strong, and stable.

Our world, as we know, is far from perfect. But even though enormous challenges remain, we have come here hopeful about our future. Hopeful because, somewhere in our hemisphere right now, a baby in a local health clinic is being immunized against a serious disease. . . a little girl is going to school and is learning to read and write . . . a woman is taking out a small loan from a neighborhood bank that will enable her to start her own business in her home. We know that every problem we face in our hemisphere is being solved somewhere in our region at this very moment.

We are also hopeful because of the progress made at last year's Summit of the Americas in Miami, at the United Nations Conference on Social Development in Copenhagen earlier this year, and more recently at the United Nations Fourth World Conference on

Women in Beijing. I think it is very fitting that we meet after those three historic gatherings, which drew world attention to the plight of women and children and, in so doing, to the plight of families as well.

Since Miami, we have seen cooperation grow among our nations, and our political leaders. The Summit not only recognized every nation's duty to invest in its people, but also the special role that girls and women play in the economic and social development of the Western Hemisphere.

That theme was reiterated again in Copenhagen, which focused on the alleviation of poverty as an essential factor in political, social and economic progress.

Many of us also attended last month's women's conference in Beijing, where it was again made clear that democracy and prosperity cannot be attained or sustained in countries that do not value women as full and equal partners in society.

The conferences in Miami, Copenhagen and Beijing showed the world that issues involving children and women are not secondary issues. They are keys to building democratic institutions, strengthening market economies, and achieving social justice.

They are also among the hardest issues we face.

That is why the agreement reached in Miami last year was an historic first for countries of this hemisphere. For the first time, there was universal recognition that no nation can compete in the global economy if half its population cannot read or write, cannot find a job, or cannot rise out of poverty.

And that is why it is also heartening that, despite assurances from skeptics that nothing would be accomplished in Beijing, more than 180 nations endorsed a platform for action that lays out specific ways to expand the rights and opportunities of women around the world.

This is particularly critical today, given the growing gap between the rich and the poor, the educated and the uneducated, the skilled and the unskilled.

Those among us who enjoy the opportunities of education, health care, jobs, credit, legal and political rights are flourishing in the new global economy. Those without such opportunities are lagging farther and farther behind. And more often than not, those lagging behind are women and poor children.

This trend, if it continues, threatens to undermine the very institutions we are seeking to uphold: strong families, strong economies, and strong democracies. All will be in jeopardy if women

continue to be denied the opportunities they need to thrive compete in the new century.

So, what must change?

First, values and attitudes.

In our everyday lives, we must begin to respect the dignity of each person, no matter where that person lives or what he or she looks like. To do that, we must be willing to overcome many assumptions, presumptions, prejudices and prejudgments.

Because, to truly respect a child means to respect every child in every family, boy or girl. To respect a child means to give that child the love, attention, and discipline he or she needs to grow up with confidence and competence. To respect a child means to nurture that child with the health care and schooling that he or she needs to get the right start in life.

Every time we dismiss the potential of a child because of skin color, parental income, or family background, we betray our own futures.

We must also appreciate the contributions of every woman, instead of pigeon-holing and categorizing women in ways that limit their potential. To truly respect a woman means to respect and protect her human rights; it means to respect the choices she makes for herself and her family; and it means to value the experience she brings to all facets of life.

Second, institutions must change, and so must the ways we go about our everyday business.

If programs and policies have outlived their usefulness, we should admit that they no longer solve the problems they were meant to solve. We must fix programs that don't work with reforms that are efficient and inexpensive. And we must insist that institutions -- whether government, schools, or health care systems -- overcome bureaucratic intransigence and put people first.

We must also take advantage of the many innovative programs that do exist throughout our hemisphere. Prior to arriving in Paraguay today, I was in Brasilia, where President and Mrs. Cardoso told me about Brazil's efforts to improve the quality of primary education.

I then traveled on to Salvador da Bahia, where an extraordinary effort is underway to channel the potential and energy of thousands of street children. One program I saw was a circus in which the performers were children, some as young as eight, who had been recruited off the streets where they lived.

They were not being trained for circus jobs; their performances were merely a vehicle for learning the value of discipline, teamwork, and hard work. Along the way, these children develop confidence, self-esteem, and pride in their accomplishments. Part of a program called Project Axe, they also receive schooling and vocational training, as well as counseling to reunite them with their families.

I asked one 15-year-old boy, who had been with the project since it began five years ago, whether it had made a difference in his life. If not for the project, he said, "I would be dead or in prison now."

Programs like this one, which receive support from the public and private sectors and some international organizations, can be replicated widely. But that requires us to share information, exchange ideas, discuss honestly our successes and failures, and learn as much as we can from each other.

Government has a vital role in all of this. But government is only effective if it listens to the voices of the people it serves, instead of making decisions based on political convenience or whim. And government must be held accountable for meeting human needs.

At the same time, government cannot address every problem alone. We must not look on government as a panacea, but as an able partner of business, non-governmental organizations, and other private institutions committed to investing in the promise of every person, including those who are poor, disadvantaged, and politically powerless. And one of the best things government can do is to make it easier for outside groups, non-governmental groups, to do the work they are willing to do.

Finally, as societies, we must be willing to move beyond inertia to action. And all of us -- individuals and institutions -- must heed that call to action. We must start by taking responsibility within our own families and then spreading that responsibility to the communities in which we live.

Every segment of society has a stake in this issue. And every segment of society can affect positive change.

Schools, for example, can be more flexible in responding to the needs of their students, young and old.

A few days ago, in Santiago, Mrs. Frei took me to a school that embodies the Chilean commitment to building an educational system for the future. I saw boys and girls busy working on computers hooked up to the Internet.

I learned from the Minister of Education that schools may begin to keep their doors open on Saturdays and Sundays to

accommodate the children of working parents who have no alternatives for child care, and for children who wish to acquire new skills for themselves.

I saw that Chile has not been content to stick with old methods that do not work. The government and people of that country are devising new ways of training teachers, involving parents and communities. All of this is happening now in many countries throughout the Americas and more can happen if we are willing to learn from each other's experiences.

Heeding the call to action also means that financial institutions must serve all people, even if they are poor, live in remote areas, or are women. How much more evidence do we need that women are a good credit risk? I have seen the proof myself at the Grameen Bank in Bangladesh, where the poorest of the poor in the world have transformed entire villages by taking out small loans for cows, rickshaws, and other items they use to earn an income.

I have even seen it in my own country, where poor women at a project called Mi Casa, in Denver, Colorado, have banded together to take out small loans to help themselves. And they told me very, very directly how difficult it is for women even in the United States to have access to credit. One woman said: "Too many great ideas die in the parking lots of banks."

But all over this hemisphere, women are overcoming these obstacles. In Nicaragua, which I visited at the beginning of my trip, I saw how hard President Chamorro has worked to strengthen democratic institutions and promote a market economy. And I met thirty women from a very poor barrio in Managua who run a bank in their neighborhood, borrowing small sums of money to start their own businesses, to start a bakery, to make mosquito netting, to be a seamstress.

Not only had these women organized themselves to improve their own circumstances, they were also improving the circumstances of their families and communities.

Furthermore, they have, like every bank I have ever visited, a high loan repayment rate. In that particular neighborhood bank, the repayment rate was 100 percent. And from what I know about banking, that would be the envy of many commercial lenders.

Individual men and women need to change attitudes and then act, just as every branch of society.

Businesses can initiate policies, such as flexible work schedules, child care, and the use of modern technology, that enable employees to perform well on the job and continue to fulfill their family obligations. Businesses also can value women by paying women equal salaries for

equal work with their men employees.

The media can assume greater responsibility for the values it transmits by avoiding negative advertising and television programming that sensationalizes violence and glorifies the exploitation and degradation of women and children.

At this conference, we will examine these issues, and we will focus specifically on what can be done to address the pressing health and education of women and children.

We will discuss initiatives to ensure the elimination of diseases that primarily affect women and children, reduce maternal mortality and provide comprehensive health care to women throughout their lifetimes, including family planning. We will talk about what every nation must do to ensure that girls are guaranteed the right to an education and that all citizens acquire the knowledge and skills they will all need in the new global economy.

And we will explore ways to end the problem of domestic violence, which has destroyed the lives of too many women and their families in every country represented here.

I would like to make one final point about our agenda. Because we are talking about the issues that matter most in the lives of women and children does not mean we are not talking about the lives of men and boys.

When I was in Nicaragua, I noticed billboards along the side of the road. They showed the face of a crying child with the caption: "My father has left the home." The problem of the absent father is as tragic as the problem of the undervalued mother and wife. It is a problem that, in the United States, we are urgently trying to address.

If, as a hemisphere, we truly care about strong families, strong communities, and strong societies, we have to recognize that men and women can and must complement each other inside and outside of the home. We should not be at opposite poles; we should be partners in a common enterprise for the good of all of us, and particularly our children.

Because of the roles that the women here and many of you in this hall have, we know we can help initiate the changes that must take place if we ever want to realize the great potential of this hemisphere.

Like the women I have met all over this hemisphere in Canada, in my country, in Mexico, in Nicaragua, in Chile, in Brazil and here in Paraguay, we come together to pool our experiences and

ideas to improve conditions for our individual families as well as our national family and the family of nations.

I was not present at the earlier conferences, but I want to thank and applaud all of the women who took part in those conferences and who have moved this agenda forward. I was privileged to host our meeting in Miami and I look forward to the work ahead of us. It is the most exciting and challenging work any of us can imagine or be engaged in. And it is work in which we can make a difference.

Thank you very much.

###

FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
WORKING SESSION ON CHILDREN'S HEALTH AND EDUCATION
ASUNCION, PARAGUAY
OCTOBER 17, 1995

Thank you, Mrs. Wasmosy. I think I speak for all of us in thanking you for such an inspiring opening to our gathering last evening.

As we begin our working session on children's health and education, I want to reiterate what I said last night. During this conference, we will learn from each other and find new inspiration as we work on behalf of women and children throughout the hemisphere

At the Summit of the Americas, our leaders committed our nations to ongoing collaboration and open economic and democratic development. The Summit recognized the central role of investing in human resources in all dimensions of social, democratic, political and economic development. This historic Summit set forth an agenda to promote prosperity and democracy throughout the region by implementing trade initiatives, sustainable development and more effective government. The declaration our leaders signed included specific commitments in the areas of health and education.

At the same time, we came together for a one-day symposium to review the status of health and education of children in the Hemisphere, shared ideas of how we were addressing the major issues facing our children, and reached a general understanding of future challenges. We recognized that we have common needs in the region but we also recognized that progress has been made. We agreed that investment in human capital is vital to the broader goal of eradicating poverty and discrimination.

As a follow-up to the Summit, Mrs. Wasmosy and I sent each of you a letter earlier this year in which we proposed a three-point agenda to advance the health and education goals adopted by the leaders at the Summit of the Americas.

Elimination of Measles

The first initiative we proposed is the elimination of measles in the Americas by the year 2000.

I was very proud to be invited by Dr. George Alleyne, director of the Pan American Health Organization, to launch the measles elimination campaign in the Americas. Many of you have joined in launching measles initiatives in your own countries. And today we will join Mrs. Wasmosy as she begins a measles campaign here in Paraguay.

A regional plan of action that outlines the strategies and technical components to achieve elimination of measles has been prepared and funding is being sought to complement support already received. While some countries are still waiting for international support, they have already demonstrated their commitment to that effort. This has translated into further control of the disease, which was at its lowest level ever in the period between 1994 and 1995.

The United States has been a proud partner of past efforts to eliminate major childhood diseases in the hemisphere. Through the United States Agency for International Development, the United States plans to enter into a grant with PAHO to advance hemispheric health care priorities. Although the United States, like many other countries, is operating under severe budget constraints, our government is hoping to allocate \$8 million under this new agreement. The funding would go directly to the Regional Expanded Program on Immunization, which includes support for the measles elimination campaign in our region.

Reduction of maternal mortality

The second critical initiative that we proposed for follow-up was the reduction of maternal mortality in the Americas, an issue we cannot separate from the well-being of our children.

One hundred million women cannot obtain or are not using family

services because they are poor, uneducated or lack access to care. Twenty million of these women will seek unsafe abortions -- some will die, some will be disabled for life. A growing number of unwanted pregnancies are occurring among young women, barely beyond childhood themselves.

Most of these maternal deaths could have been prevented with basic primary, reproductive and emergency obstetric health care. In some cases, there are 175,000 motherless children for every one million families. Many of these children don't survive. Of those who do, many are recruited into a life of exploitation on the streets of our world's cities, subjected daily to abuse, indignity, disease, and the specter of early death.

There must be a renewed commitment to improving maternal health. The World Health Organization launched in 1987 a Safe Motherhood Initiative to halve maternal mortality by the year 2000. In Miami, the leaders of our hemisphere committed their governments to this same goal. To reach these important goals, more attention must be paid to emergency medical care, as well as primary pre-natal care. Providing emergency obstetric care is a relatively cheap way of saving lives -- and along with family planning services is among the most cost-effective interventions in even the poorest of countries.

There has been progress, but many deficiencies exist. Maternal mortality rates in the Americas are still unacceptably high and progress in meeting the set targets has been extremely slow. We have the technologies and the national plans in place to end the conditions under which women continue to die from preventable diseases. There is no justification for the wide differences that we find country by country in the hemisphere in maternal mortality indicators. We need to encourage each other to give the necessary priority to reduce the disparities and assign necessary resources to implement national plans for maternal mortality reduction.

Education Reform

The third area we called to your attention in our letter is investing in

girls education in the context of improving overall quality of education. Nothing is more important to the region's future economic and social development than the education of its children. One of the Summit goals is to achieve a primary education completion rate of 100% and a secondary enrollment rate by the year 2010.

Over the past three decades, Latin America and the Caribbean have had a remarkable record of achievement in human development. A great distance still exists between our current knowledge and the quality of education services provided.

Because of the critical nature of education, an initiative was created at the Summit of the Americas to provide an ongoing consultative forum for governments, nongovernmental organizations, the business community, and international organizations of the Hemisphere to share experiences in education reform and showcase innovations in the hemisphere.

Today, I am pleased to formally launch the Partnership for Education Revitalization in the Americas (PERA) by pledging a commitment by the United States of 3.7 million dollars over 5 years which constitutes initial funding. As called for by the Plan of Action of the Summit of the Americas, PERA was created as a sustainable hemispheric partnership to promote the adoption and implementation of effective education policies. This initiative will institutionalize across the hemisphere the capacity to support and facilitate collaborative efforts to improve basic education opportunities for all children, including special emphasis on increased access to girls and women in those countries where this is still an issue.

Through PERA, countries will increase their knowledge of policy alternatives and successful practices for improving educational quality, efficiency and equity throughout the region leading to improved policies on human resources. It will create a broad membership representative of the key stakeholders in policy formulation and implementation and build a consensus on critical educational policy issues.

We have a unique opportunity to impact on the Summit targets. Because of our roles in our societies, we are in a privileged position to bring attention to these issues and help build upon approaches that are working. We can forge partnerships among governmental and nongovernmental organizations all aimed at meeting the same goals.

As delivered

FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
REMARKS TO THE SIXTH CONFERENCE OF
WIVES OF HEADS OF STATE AND OF GOVERNMENTS OF THE AMERICAS
LA PAZ, BOLIVIA
DECEMBER 3, 1996

President and Mrs. Sanchez de Lozada, First Ladies and special envoys representing the nations of the Western Hemisphere, and distinguished guests:

It is a great pleasure for me to be in La Paz and to join you for this annual conference. I particularly want to thank Mrs. Sanchez de Lozada for her leadership on behalf of women -- especially her work to promote safe motherhood, education, and to reduce domestic violence -- and for extending to all of us a warm welcome this week.

I know that, as in the past, this gathering will provide new insights and fresh inspiration as we work to expand opportunities for women, children, and families in North, Central, South America and the Caribbean region. I am also pleased to note that Vice President Gore will be in Santa Cruz in a few days representing the United States government at what promises to be a significant hemispheric meeting on sustainable development.

This is my first trip to Bolivia, but I have long felt a special connection to this country. Little Rock, the capital of my home state of Arkansas, is a sister city of Santa Cruz in what is called the Eastern Bolivia-Arkansas partnership. This partnership has initiated cultural, professional and health exchanges that have benefitted the people in both of our countries. So I am especially delighted finally to be in Bolivia after all these years.

Many Bolivians have made their mark on my country. I am proud to say that President Clinton named a woman who was born and raised here in La Paz, Maria Otero, to be the Chair of the

Board of the Inter-American Foundation. That foundation funds grassroots development in the region, and Maria is with me today.

I'm also pleased to be here at a time of such hope and promise for women, children and families across the Americas and around the world. A few days ago, I returned from a trip with my husband to Australia, the Philippines and Thailand, and at each stop I had the chance to talk to diverse groups of women -- from government leaders to grassroots activists to teenage school girls. And I was reminded once again, no matter where we find ourselves in the world today, our aspirations and concerns are fundamentally the same.

Thanks in part to the agenda set at the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, as well as the conferences of this group in Miami, and Asuncion and elsewhere, the status of women is improving in many countries.

In the Philippines last week, I had the opportunity along with Mrs. Frei to speak to 15,000 women and girls in Manila. Some had traveled for days by boat and car to celebrate the Beijing Agenda and just as we are doing today, they came together to renew their commitment to women's rights -- and to ensure that every woman and girl has access to the tools of opportunity: health care, education, jobs and credit, legal protections and the right to participate fully in the political life of their countries.

In the 15 months since Beijing, we have seen advances on every continent. In country after country, governments, non-governmental organizations, businesses and corporations, and individual citizens are beginning to recognize that elevating the status of women and girls in society is essential to progress and prosperity. That is the same whether we are talking about the East, the West, the North or the South; there is a growing appreciation of women's contributions inside and outside of the home - and a greater understanding that everyone in society benefits when women are allowed to claim the political, economic, social, and civic power they are due.

The Western Hemisphere is no exception. In Panama, the family code has been reformed, giving women more say in alimony, child support and child custody cases. The country's new Law 27

on Intra-Family Violence criminalizes certain forms of domestic violence. In Colombia, men and women now have equal weight in determining divorce. In El Salvador and Peru, new institutions have been established to address issues relating to women's development. In Guatemala, a national university has created scholarships for indigenous women to study political science.

Jamaica's Gold Street Program, which addresses teen violence and adolescent pregnancy, has become a model that the United States is using to confront the same issues in the city of Baltimore. In Brazil, women are now entitled to free breast and uterine exams. And in Chile, the government has committed itself to tackling AIDS and adolescent pregnancies and to expanding educational opportunities for girls. And here in Bolivia, as part of the President's plans, the Plan de Todos, special efforts are being made to reach out to the indigenous population. || *

From the northernmost reaches of Canada to the southern tip of South America, women are pushing governments to lift the veil of secrecy that for too long has concealed the tragic crime of domestic violence. I mentioned the legal advances in Panama. Another ground-breaking domestic violence law was passed in Ecuador, creating Family Courts that are empowered to separate an abusive spouse from the home. In Costa Rica, police officers receive special training on how to handle domestic violence cases. In my own country we recently launched a national hotline for victims of domestic violence which has already received 50,000 calls.

Looking across our region, we also see progress on the goals that this group outlined at our previous meetings. Those goals to eliminate measles from the hemisphere, reduce maternal mortality, and promote education reform are making progress. Since 1995, our region has witnessed a 63 percent decline in measles. We have seen the Partnership for the Revitalization of Education in the Americas launch new efforts to expand educational opportunities in six countries. And while the tragic problem of maternal mortality continues to haunt us, we know that progress will come if we focus more energy and resources on this issue.

It is clear that pioneering efforts are underway across the Americas to improve conditions for women and girls. Earlier

today in La Paz, I visited with Ximena, Banco Sol, the only commercial bank in the world and the largest that specializes in microenterprise right here. I spoke to women whose lives had been transformed because they had received a modest loan to start selling vegetables in the market, to start making skirts. Not only had they become economically self-sufficient, they had begun to lift their families out of poverty and improve the economies of their communities. We met one woman in the market who is caring for her six orphan grandchildren because of the loans that she had received. I have seen the same encouraging results at FINCA, a micro-lending enterprise that I visited in Managua, Nicaragua. I've visited a comparable enterprise in Santiago and I have seen it in my own country.

In La Paz today I also visited new and expectant mothers at a primary health care center run by an NGO, PROSALUD. The 28 PROSALUD clinics offer prenatal care and family planning services that have resulted in safer pregnancies and deliveries and, in some cases, have saved lives.

This is but one piece of the nationwide effort here in Bolivia to promote safe motherhood and family planning so that women and girls are educated about their own health and their own reproductive options.

Although the rate is far too high, Bolivia's success over the past five years at reducing maternal mortality offers a model for the world of how one nation has responded to a serious health crisis and galvanized the government, non-governmental organizations, and the medical communities. I wish to commend the President and the Vice President for their leadership in this very important effort.

It is worth noting that Bolivia undertook this campaign not only as a way to reduce maternal mortality, but also to reduce the increasing rate of abortion. Without access to family planning, women often turn in desperation to illegal, unsafe abortion procedures that account for half of all maternal deaths in this country. Deaths from abortion complications are responsible for from 30 to 70 percent of maternal mortality in our hemisphere, depending on the country.

Here, in Brazil, and in other places around the globe, I have seen examples of how investments in family planning improve maternal health and the well-being of families as well as reduce the number of abortions. The United States has supported family planning efforts, including Bolivia's. However, as you may know, some members of the United States Congress have voted to limit American support for family planning initiatives. My husband's Administration remains committed to encouraging a continuation of these investments, which represent a sensible, cost-effective and long-range strategy for improving women's health and for lowering the rate of abortion. And for my part, I will certainly remember and share the powerful stories I have heard around the world to explain why these programs are critical.

Education is also critical. It is inextricably tied to how women and children achieve progress. Children of illiterate mothers are twice as likely to die as those with mothers who are educated. So our efforts across the Western Hemisphere to educate girls and mothers will have a profound and concrete effect on women's health. The better educated a girl or woman is, the healthier she is. The healthier she is, the healthier her family is. And all of society stands to gain.

While some may dismiss the achievements of this conference and the conferences before or of the Beijing Agenda as merely "women's issues" that have no place on the front-burner of global politics, I believe that you here in Bolivia, and certainly your President and Vice President understand how they are part of sustainable development and progress. They represent a balancing of power that is just as crucial to the endurance of democracy as issues like trade, diplomacy and national security. Democracy, after all, requires the full participation of all citizens, including women.

And today, we can take heart knowing that democracy has replaced dictatorship around the world and virtually throughout our own hemisphere. Building and sustaining democracy has always required a balance of power, a balance of public power, private economic power, and the power of civic society, those formal and informal networks that bring people together. It is the balance of power that Bolivia has incorporated into its Popular Participation Law, and by doing so, insured the further success of democracy. Whether we succeed at achieving the balance of

power is particularly important for women who despite the strides we have made, still find their voices silenced and their potential stymied in too many parts of the world. In country after country -- from the most advanced democracies to those newly emerging, from the most dynamic free market economies to those struggling in the face of rapid global change -- women are still striving to define and attain their rightful place in government, the economy, the civil society and throughout their lives.

Women are seeking balance in their lives and in their societies, and I am heartened that civic education is on the agenda of this conference. Teaching people about democratic values and the importance of their participation in the political process is critical to sustaining democracy. When we look at what is happening in our hemisphere, when I look at what is happening in my own country, I see that the voices and votes of women can make a difference. If all of us believe in the God-given potential of each human being, then all of us should do what we can in our own ways and our own roles to further those voices and that potential.

For all of the challenges that confront us on the eve of this new century I am optimistic about our future. I am optimistic about our hemisphere and about our capacity to meet those challenges. And certainly, if there is one vision that should guide us, it is that of the young people who rely on us to leave them a world that encourages their dreams, nurtures their talents and respects their choices. That is really why we are gathered today -- most of us in this auditorium have made most of the choices we will make that will determine the course of our lives. It is up to us to determine how we provide the same opportunities for all of our sons and daughters.

Building a better future for children, women, men, and families in the Western Hemisphere is not just the opportunity of government, it is the responsibility of all of us. And I thank you very much for being part of meeting that responsibility and challenge.

As delivered

**FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
REMARKS FOR THE PLENARY OF THE SIXTH CONFERENCE OF
FIRST LADIES OF HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENTS OF THE AMERICAS
DECEMBER 4, 1996**

I know we all join in expressing our appreciation to everyone who has had anything to do in putting on this Conference and the inaugural ceremony and reception last night. Over the next several days, this conference will work on an ambitious agenda that builds on our work in Paraguay last year and focuses on challenges facing women and children of the Americas on the eve of a new century.

This year's conference allows us the opportunity to measure the progress achieved since Miami and to focus on concrete ways to advance this agenda for sustainable development.

Let me report on three areas of concern that were discussed in Miami and Asuncion: the elimination of measles from our hemisphere, education reform, and reducing the rate of maternal mortality.

First, we can all be encouraged by the Pan American Health Organization's report on measles, which shows a 63 per cent reduction of confirmed cases of measles since 1995 and a 99 per cent decrease since 1990. These statistics are evidence of how close we are coming to the goal of eliminating measles from the Western hemisphere by the year 2000. Such progress was possible as we have already heard because of the efforts of many of the people in this room to raise awareness in your own countries and to launch regional Pan American Health Organization campaigns across the hemisphere.

A year ago, I pledged that the United States government would support these efforts. On June 27, the United States Agency for International Development signed an \$8 million regional grant with PAHO to help achieve the measles elimination goal. Over the next several years, USAID's missions around the Hemisphere will make their own contributions to the measles campaign.

Our second concern was to promote education reform so that by 2010 every school-age child in our hemisphere would have completed a primary education.

While we all recognize that education is a gateway to our individual and collective progress and prosperity, our region continues to lag far behind countries with comparable GDPs in the percentage of children who complete primary school. In the Western Hemisphere, barely half of the children entering primary school complete the sixth grade. Girls from indigenous and minority communities, including in my own country, are least likely to secure the education they need.

And we must be a voice for change on this critical issue.

Last year I spoke about PERA, the new Partnership for Education Revitalization in the Americas. Based on commitments made by our nations in Miami, PERA will create networks that allow for the exchange of information on programs and policies that have been successful in expanding educational opportunities. I am pleased that the United States' contribution of \$3.7 million over five years launched this initiative. The United States has now made an additional commitment to nearly double that contribution over the next five years.

Other steps are underway. The Inter-American Dialogue, perhaps the premier private center of analysis and exchange on hemispheric affairs, has agreed to serve as the PERA secretariat. Their members include some of the hemisphere's most prominent citizens. With us today is Peter Hakim, President of the InterAmerican Dialogue. He will be available during the education working group sessions to answer questions and explain further how this partnership will work.

Mr. Hakim and the Dialogue will work closely with the Government of Mexico, which volunteered as part of the follow-up to the Miami Summit to coordinate initiatives on education.

National education teams already are promoting educational reform efforts in six countries--Brazil, Colombia, the Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Peru and Nicaragua. Two others, Venezuela and Ecuador, recently joined this group. PERA will focus on issues of decentralization, school finance, quality and equity and will be available to support education reform teams throughout the region.

There are encouraging signs of progress: New and exciting bilingual programs in Guatemala and Bolivia; the EDUCO programs in El Salvador and the Dominican Republic; preschool programs in Costa Rica and Jamaica. PERA will compile the best and most successful cases of education reform so that we can learn from each other's experiences.

Promoting education reform is critical to strengthening democratic institutions and values throughout the Americas. Democracy cannot thrive or survive without educated citizens; and in a fast-paced, highly competitive global economy, an educated populace is vital to every nation and every region's economic growth. That is why the commitment to universal primary education made in Miami is so important.

Let me also add that girls must be part of any education equation. Girls must not be left on the margins, consigned to lives of poverty and ignorance. It does them no good. It does their families no good. It does their nations no good. Educating girls is the best single investment we can make if we care about building strong democracies with vibrant free market economies.

I am also heartened that civic education is on the agenda of this conference. Teaching people -- especially women and girls -- about democratic values and the importance of their participation in

the political process is critical to sustaining democracy across our hemisphere and giving women a voice in determining their own future.

The Civitas Panamericana Conference held in Argentina in September brought together members of government, the media, civic organizations and the private sector -- all of whom share a responsibility for conveying the tenets and values of democracy to the larger public. Encouraging women to get involved in the political life of their countries will strengthen civic culture and move us closer to our democratic ideals.

Finally, we face a serious challenge of reducing maternal mortality in the Americas.

More than 23,000 women will die this year in our hemisphere from causes related to pregnancy. Five women die every hour. Since we have been in this room, between 10 and 15 women have died. The numbers are unacceptable. Without access to voluntary family planning, women too often turn in desperation to illegal, unsafe abortions that can result in death.

Voluntary family planning enables women to make informed decisions about their own health and their reproductive options. As Bolivia has ably demonstrated, educating women about their own health -- about the benefits of spacing births, breastfeeding, good nutrition, prenatal and post partum visits and safe deliveries -- not only reduces maternal mortality and strengthens families, it also decreases the number of abortions.

Emergency obstetric care, now lacking in too many places in our hemisphere, is also vital. The United States, through USAID, will sign in a few moments a \$2.25 million regional grant to the American Health Organization specifically aimed at improving emergency obstetric care. This grant is part of the Maternal Mortality Reduction Initiative that was adopted in Miami at the Summit of the Americas. The Mother Care project and the Quality Assurance project will provide additional support to nongovernmental organizations and to governments in Latin America and the Caribbean to improve responses to obstetric emergencies and the quality of care at community clinics as well as to teach the public about the need for prenatal and postnatal treatment and safe delivery.

These are among the initiatives and accomplishments that the people in this room can be proud of. We have worked hard and the work is beginning to pay off in improved conditions for women, children and families of our region. I am confident that if this work continues and if all of us are committed to raising our voices on behalf of the importance of improving the lives of women and girls in the Hemisphere, that we will continue to achieve positive results. I am also confident that if the media continues to cover these issues, as it has begun to do around our region, that the public will understand the mission that this conference represents and will join with all of us in making sure that the initiatives that we have adopted will be carried out.

Thank you all for your commitment and for the work and for the achievement that have already been accomplished. Thank you very much.

THE FOLLOWING IS THE UNOFFICIAL TRANSCRIPT OF THE REMARKS FOR THE SEVENTH CONFERENCE OF SPOUSES OF HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT OF THE AMERICAS AS DELIVERED BY FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON, PANAMA CITY, OCTOBER 9, 1997.

Good morning. Mrs. Perez Balladares, First Ladies, your Majesty, representatives of the nations of the Western Hemisphere, and Distinguished Guests: I am honored to be part of this Seventh Conference of the Wives of Heads of State and Governments of the Americas and to join you for a third year at this important meeting.

I would like first to thank the government and the people of Panama, especially our hostess for organizing this conference and for welcoming us with the hospitality we have come to associate with your country. My country, the United States, and Panama enjoy a rich and enduring friendship -- one that will grow only stronger in the new millennium. For even as our century-old partnership at the canal comes to a historic moment of transition, we will always be bound by mutual respect and a shared commitment to securing the blessings of democracy for all of our people.

I think it is fitting that we gather in Panama for our annual conference. Panama is truly the crossroads of the Americas -- a nation that literally brings our hemisphere together. The diversity of this country -- ecological, cultural and ethnic -- is a microcosm of all the Americas.

We have come together here from across our hemisphere in hopes of building a better world and better lives for all women, children and families. In many ways, our task is more difficult and more complex than that of the canal builders a century ago. Instead of mountains, we seek to move hearts, to change old attitudes, to banish hunger and disease and ignorance, to educate all our children -- and very importantly-- to empower the women of this hemisphere to participate fully in the life of our nations.

We are pursuing our goals at a moment in history that is full of hope, a time ripe for social change of the most positive kind. Across the Americas, military dictatorships have given way to freely-elected democracies. For the first time in decades, or perhaps the first time ever, we have millions of people enjoying the right to choose their own leaders, to form their own opinions based on information gathered by a free press, to speak frankly and to meet in support or opposition to a cause.

Yet, we all know that every democracy, whether newly formed or centuries old, is fragile. The process of building and tending a democracy is never-ending. Democracy can only take root when its principles are internalized in the hearts and minds of all people. And democracy can only thrive when no one fears the consequences of standing up or speaking out for justice. And democracy can only achieve its fullest potential when women are not barred by law, by ignorance, by tradition or custom, or by intimidation from making their voices heard at the ballot box, and from pursuing their most cherished dreams.

That is why I believe this portion of our conference, aptly called "rights and participation," is so important. Empowering more women to seek and claim their rights as citizens and as human beings is the only way we can ensure that our democracies -- old and new -- survive and thrive into the 21st century.

I am told that the word "empowerment" does not translate very well. But I am sure that every woman in this room knows its meaning well. "Empowerment" means the right to participate in the political and economic life of our countries. "Empowerment" means being able to lead lives free of sexual and domestic violence. Empowerment means access to justice under law, to education, to health care, to credit and property ownership.

In short, empowering women means making sure they are treated as full citizens in their countries. No nation can hope to succeed in our global economy if half of its people lack the opportunity and the right to make the most of their God-given potential. And as we can all attest, in too many countries, my own as well, too many rights are denied and too many doors of opportunity remain tightly closed.

Too many women live in fear of violence at the hands of family members. For them, their home provides no refuge, the law no protection, and public opinion no sympathy. Domestic and sexual violence against women remains one of the most serious and under-reported human rights violations in our region. We must all work to instill new attitudes and new protections against this human rights violation -- domestic violence. As Secretary of State Madeleine Albright -- my country's first female foreign minister -- has said, domestic violence can never be excused as cultural. It is criminal.

Too many women, especially those who are poor and less educated, are unaware of their legal rights in the workplace, of their rights to own and inherit property, of their rights to vote and choose their leaders. While these laws may exist on the books, they have never come alive for too many women.

Too many women and children are trapped in an endless cycle of poverty -- a cycle perpetuated by inadequate health care, poor or no access to family planning and limited education.

But let us not forget that we already know many of the solutions to these problems. We already know what works to change and improve lives. Next week, I will be privileged to travel to Venezuela and Brazil and Argentina with my husband. There, I will be visiting microcredit programs, family planning and education programs -- ones that I, and many of you, have worked to support here in the hemisphere and all around the world. These efforts have long, successful records of empowering women to lift their children, their families, their communities, and themselves out of poverty.

There is also encouraging news to report on the three priorities that were established following our meeting at the Miami Summit of the Americas in 1994 -- the elimination of measles in the Americas by the year 2000, the reduction of maternal mortality, and education reform -- all of which we have heard about this morning. Last year, not a single case of measles was reported in 27 countries of the Americas. And while we may have experienced a setback with an outbreak of the disease in Brazil, as well as in my own country, we must stay on track to meet the goal by the end of the century. Every country in the hemisphere has joined with PAHO in efforts to improve prenatal and obstetrical care and reduce maternal mortality, and many of the women in this room have contributed greatly to that effort. We have brought institutions and individuals together through the Partnership for Educational Revitalization in the Americas to boost public primary education. In Honduras, El Salvador and many other countries, more children are staying in school longer and graduating from primary school. And we have helped to elevate education reform and revitalization to the top of our respective countries' national agendas, where it belongs.

But the topic we are focusing on now -- the promotion and expansion of women's legal and political rights is perhaps the most difficult challenge we face. Slowly, but surely, we are witnessing legal reforms to raise the status of women in the home and in society. In Costa Rica, women have pushed through a law against domestic violence and worked to incorporate domestic abuse issues in police training. Many countries now have human rights ombudsmen with special offices dedicated to protecting the rights of women. In El Salvador, legislators have modernized rape laws, forcing perpetrators to face prosecution. They've also passed laws forcing politicians to prove that they have paid child support before running for office. A very good model. Here in Panama, legislators have reformed the Family Code to better regulate such matters as alimony, child support and child custody. Throughout Latin America, we see new laws encouraging more women to run for office. In my own country, we have introduced Comprehensive Violence Against Women plans that provide counseling for victims, training for police officers, and prosecution of offenders in all of our 50 states. These are some of the ideas we need to share with each other so that women throughout our hemisphere can experience the same improvements in their lives.

None of this progress would have happened if women themselves had not spoken out, demanded change and forced governments to respond to their needs. We must encourage more women to make their voices heard, to join together in both grassroots and national organizations to press political changes beneficial to all women, and to encourage women to take their

responsibility as citizens seriously to vote in local and national elections, and send more women into public office.

Only women ourselves can make democracy work for us and for our families. It is a message that is coming alive in countries all around the world. Last summer at a conference in Vienna, I was privileged to meet with a group of women from the newly-democratic countries of the former Soviet Union. They had just begun to recognize the power of independent citizen action to address challenges as diverse as the trafficking of women for prostitution and the improvement of health care. And they had gathered to share ideas, to renew and strengthen their faith in democratic values and freedoms. This kind of convening of many, many women might be beneficial for our hemisphere as well. To bring together women who are working on the front lines for the kinds of changes that will lead to the improvements we advocate. As our countries continue to expand our political, economic and strategic alliances, the women of this hemisphere can lead the way in building an alliance of democratic values that will strengthen our democracies into the next millennium.

In May, Secretary Albright and I visited the Inter-American Institute for Human Rights in Costa Rica. The organization was founded to defend and foster respect for human rights at a time when repressive regimes controlled the lives of many of the peoples of the Americas. Over the last decade, it has helped guide those countries along the difficult path toward democracy by advising leaders, educating citizens, and monitoring critical transitional elections. Today, the Institute's new mission is to help the new constitutional governments, their police forces, their citizens and children to understand and live by the principles of democracy -- to create a true human rights culture in the Americas. Secretary Albright and I met with women activists and officials who told us that even though the governments had changed, the task of safeguarding and deepening respect for human rights remained as challenging as ever. A few years ago, the Institute began a Gender and Human Rights Program designed to educate women about their rights and promote the principle that women's rights are indeed human rights. Later this morning, there will be a ceremony announcing a \$4.8 million USAID grant to help the Institute continue with this important work, focused on women's rights.

Like the Institute, our work as individuals and as First Ladies of the Americas is far from done. We must continue struggling to make democracy mean justice for everyone, to encourage and empower all women to take their rightful place at the table and the government, in the corporation, and in every institution of society to use their talents to start businesses and pay back loans, to use their voices and votes to elect presidents and build peace. And we should not rest until we have repealed the laws, swept away the webs of tradition, stared down the forces of intimidation that stifle the potential of women and children and that keep nations from being truly democratic and free.

Last year, I participated in a call-in radio show for the Voice-Of-America. One male caller, who called not from our hemisphere, but from across the ocean, asked me very earnestly what I had meant when I said at the Beijing Conference on Women that, "Women's rights are

human rights and human rights are women's rights." I asked the caller to close his eyes and think of all the rights and privileges he enjoyed as a man. Then I asked him to imagine a world where every woman enjoyed those very same rights and privileges.

I know that if we continue the work that has been started by all of you and that we have done together, we can move our hemisphere closer to making that world a reality so that question in the future cannot even be asked. Thank you very much.

you are the only person who has started it under
the name of the United Nations. I am not a member of the United Nations.
I am not a member of the United Nations. I am not a member of the United Nations.

First Ladies' Conference
Remarks by First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton
Santiago, Chile
September 30, 1998

Good morning. Mrs. Frei, thank you, once again, for bringing us together and organizing this conference. I know from the reports that I have received that it has been a remarkable and very successful conference. I'm delighted to be here with all of you – First Ladies and special envoys of the hemisphere, distinguished guests, members of the U.S. delegation – including Aida Alvarez, the Director of the Small Business Administration and a member of my husband's Cabinet. It is also a special pleasure to be back in Chile – and to be part of the gracious hospitality that it has always extended to anyone fortunate enough to be able to come to Santiago. It is particularly fitting that we would meet here in Santiago – the site of the Second Summit of the Americas last spring. Many of you were there as well, and many of you helped, along with your husbands and other government officials, to be sure that the priorities included women and children. And this conference seeks to reinforce those priorities that were set at the Summit.

Before I begin my remarks, I would like to say to our friends in the Caribbean how our thoughts and prayers have been with all of you as you deal with the terrible aftermath of Hurricane Georges. I was delayed in coming to the conference because I had to go to Puerto Rico on a relief mission. And I saw for myself the great damage that was done there. But I am well aware that the damage in other parts of the Caribbean was much more extensive. And we will all be working to help those countries and people rebuild their lives.

This is the fourth Conference of First Ladies of the Americas I've had the honor to attend. And I'm pleased to see both many familiar faces as well as many new ones. I'm always reminded at these conferences that no matter what country we're from, or what language we speak, we share many common concerns and common hopes for the future, particularly for improving the lives of women and children.

A belief in the power of women to make a difference in their own lives and in their societies was at the heart of the United Nations Fourth World conference on Women in Beijing, which a number of you attended. I know you'll remember that women from every corner of the globe came together to draw attention to the challenges facing women and children. What that conference made undeniable clear – and what we all know from experience and history – is that democracy and prosperity cannot be attained – or sustained – in countries that do not value women as full and equal partners in society.

The wave of energy and optimism released in Beijing in 1995 has begun to transform lives everywhere. Governments are being held to the commitments they made, and grassroots action is igniting reform in every corner of the globe. I have seen such changes and reforms myself, from Senegal to South Africa, from America to Australia, from Eastern Europe to China. And I have been particularly pleased to see and learn about the progress being made here in our own hemisphere in the Americas.

This morning, for example, throughout the Americas, more girls are sitting at desks in classrooms; more mothers are visiting health care clinics and having their babies immunized, and seeking other health care which they need. More women are running their own businesses, and gaining greater economic independence. More children are growing up healthier and stronger. More women are now protected against violence in their own homes – than ever before in our history.

I along with all of you have also seen democracy taking hold throughout our hemisphere. And women have played significant roles in these hard-fought victories on behalf of empowerment and democracy. You've heard from many distinguished speakers over the past two days, and you understand the progress we have made, but also you realize that we still have great obstacles to overcome, in order to ensure that every citizen, especially women, are able to participate fully in the political lives of their nations. One of the greatest barriers in our path to equality is that women still do not hold enough positions of authority,

and leadership, and power. Women's participation in decision making lags behind our gains in education, our contributions to the workforce, our participation in grassroots activities. Yet all around us we can see the positive impact that occurs when women leaders are given responsibility for helping to improve the lives of their fellow citizens.

There are so many examples throughout our hemisphere. A woman mayor in a small town in Peru, who has promoted projects to protect children's rights, and created occupational workshops to encourage women to increase their family incomes without having to leave their home. A woman senator in the Dominican Republic, whose courageous voice helped pass a strong law against domestic violence in 1997. A young woman from Colombia, who ran for mayor on a peace platform in one of the most violent areas of her country, and is now helping to heal the divisions that were caused by violence.

Those are just a few of the examples. Each of us could give many, many, more. And we all know about the extraordinary leadership that our two women presidents, Janet Jagan and Violeta Chamorro, have given to the hopes and aspirations to women in their countries.

And so we stand at a moment of great opportunity for women in leadership positions. And we are realizing across our globe that unless women's voices are heard, unless they are encouraged to be full participants and citizens, unless they are given the tools to take responsibility for their own lives; unless some are brave enough to run for political office and hold leadership positions, we will never see the fruits of democracy spread as widely and deeply as they should be.

Luckily, many leaders in countries throughout our hemisphere and throughout the globe are recognizing how the empowerment of women is critical to a vibrant democracy – as critical, I would argue, as many issues that are often in the headlines, such as trade and diplomacy and national security. Because it is what happens inside a country, where we inculcate the beliefs in democracy and a commitment to equality, that will keep a country strong and stable, despite whatever the external crises might bring.

As a result, governments across our hemisphere have begun to unlock the doors that were once closed of decision making and leadership. Today a growing number of countries require a minimal level of women's participation in local and national elections. Others have created agencies to promote women and family public policies. Some programs are now looking for ways to increase the pool of qualified women to compete for leadership positions, and others are using all kinds of means of helping women be effective leaders once they are elected or appointed.

The impact of these new laws – combined with greater political will – is even now being felt at every level of government. And I must admit that many countries have gone much farther than my own to boost the percentage of women representatives and leaders.

By 1996, all but two countries in Latin America had at least one woman Cabinet member. In Colombia now, over a third of the Cabinet positions are 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 a new law, women's representation in the Lower House of congress is 28% -- the eighth highest in the entire world. The number of women mayors is also growing, and throughout the hemisphere more women are serving as judges, agency heads, and in other leadership positions.

Such progress represents not only new laws, but also important social changes and changes in attitudes. Since more women are getting an education, and joining the workforce, more women have the internal self-confidence to feel that they can fulfill roles in their governments. We also know the deeply held attitudes against women's participation in public life are changing, slowly but surely.

I am pleased that my country will be working with all of you to further this progress. After this session I'll be joining with Mrs. Frei in a signing ceremony of two programs – funded by USAID – that will support initiatives across the Americas to nurture strong local leadership – especially of women – and will help countries more effectively pursue the goals of the Summit of the Americas, through joint training programs here in Chile. These partnerships – as well as a major donation by Merck

pharmaceutical company, which will donate 5,000 medical guides in Spanish and help educate rural women about their health, are proof that the commitments made at the Summit of the Americas and reiterated here at this conference are being taken seriously.

Even as we celebrate these steps forward – and the remarkable accomplishments of women who have gained these positions of power and influence such as yourselves – we know we have far to go. When women are elected they often still are on the outskirts of legislative or executive power. They are not adequately represented in party leadership positions. And while women make up one third of the formal labor force in this region – they make up, of course, a much larger percentage of the informal labor force in the region – they are not adequately represented in unions or in business.

We all know building a better future for men, women, and children is not just the responsibility of governments – it is the responsibility of all of us. I hope that the results of this conference will lead to more action in each of our countries to be sure that women are encouraged to make sure their voices are heard. I will travel to Montevideo today to participate in the “Vital Voices” conference that will bring women representatives of grass roots organizations from throughout the Americas together to build networks, learn lessons, and lift up their voices and power, to make sure that the priorities that are being set at this conference will actually become a reality.

Today our work is more urgent than ever before. We live in an increasingly interdependent world, where our economies and our security – our very futures – are tied with one another. It is a time of unparalleled opportunity – but also of great risk. Those among us in this room, in this beautiful place, in this beautiful city, enjoy the opportunities of education, health care, jobs, credit, and political rights. And we, therefore, are flourishing in this new global economy. Those without such opportunities – too often women and children – are lagging further and further behind.

It is up to all of us to eliminate those inequities – and bridge the gaps that will enable every woman to feel she has a stake in her future and a responsibility to help her society and nation flourish.

Thank you very much.

[Read our Privacy Policy](#)

Ninth Conference of the Spouses of Heads of State and Government of the Americas
Remarks by First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton

Ottawa, Canada
September 30, 1999

MRS. ALINE CHRÉTIEN: And now, it is my great pleasure to introduce our next speaker, Mrs. Hillary Rodham Clinton. (Applause)

MRS. HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON: Thank you very much. I am delighted to join all of you again for this Ninth Conference of the Spouses of Heads of State and Government of the Americas.

Since we were last together, our hemisphere, particularly Central America and the Caribbean, have suffered greatly from the triple threat of the hurricanes Mitch, George and Floyd. And I know that all of us have been particularly concerned about helping our friends and neighbors in those areas that were so devastated to recover and move forward with the plans that—we know so well from the reports we have received—that they are undertaking on behalf of further progress in their countries.

I am very pleased to be back in Ottawa, a place that my husband and I have very fond memories of from our last visit here nearly five years ago.

I particularly remember ice skating with Aline on the Rideau Canal. And my piece of advice is: do not ice skate with Aline, who is a graceful, beautiful ice skater. But she does everything that way, and over the years I have come to admire and respect and have great affection for her and the way she discharges her duties. I appreciate very much the support and leadership that she has given to this endeavor and the excellent job that she has done in putting together this conference.

I also want to thank the government and people of Canada for supporting this conference, and particularly for inviting non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to this meeting. So many of us have seen firsthand the work that NGOs do in our countries and throughout our hemisphere. We have seen the patient grassroots activism; we have seen the partnerships that are created among the public, the private and the NGO sectors.

Much of the progress we are discussing today, and hoping for for tomorrow, would not have been possible were it not for those partnerships and the particular role that NGOs play. So I welcome the NGOs, and I hope that they will be a continuing presence in the conference and the meetings as we go forward.

These conferences have certainly proven their worth over the years. They have been an important meeting place to bring people together, to trade ideas, to share stories, and to resolve to work more cooperatively to meet common goals that will benefit all of the people of the Americas.

Five years ago, at the Summit of the Americas in Miami, our nations pledged to work together to meet our common challenges and to look towards the future as one hemisphere. As the leaders met, we convened a parallel conference to examine how the Summit agenda could address the challenges facing the women and children of our regions. Before we left Miami, we pledged to make the concerns of children and families a priority in our home countries and a focus for cooperation throughout the Americas.

We have continued our work at meetings in Paraguay and Bolivia, Panama, and last year in Chile. We have heard the follow-up report from Mrs. Labelle and the representatives from UNICEF, from Mrs. Wilkinson from the World Bank. And we have heard so many of the

representatives and first ladies, as well, discuss what has been accomplished because of these meetings.

Today we need to renew our pledge to continue our work and cooperation. Over the past five years we have made steady progress on the goals that we set, including the three that were set in Miami. Today, because we pledged to reduce maternal mortalities, health ministries throughout the hemisphere are extending prenatal care to more women, upgrading delivery rooms, and fighting centuries-old ignorance about pregnancy.

Because we set a goal of eliminating measles by the year 2000, measles cases have fallen 76 per cent in our regions, and all across the Americas children in the most remote villages are getting their first immunization against that deadly disease.

Because we called attention to education reform, the Partnership for Educational Revitalization in the Americas was formed, and finance ministers, who once only looked at GDP numbers, are now looking at school graduation rates and searching for new ways to give all children chances to learn.

We have made a lot of progress, but with the 21st century just weeks away, I know that all of us hope to do more. Every two seconds another child is born somewhere in the Americas. Each of these precious children is a child of tremendous potential, potential that can be unlocked in the first years of life or locked away for a lifetime. How we empower these children and their parents, how we provide for their education and health care will not only shape their lives, but also shape the lives of our nations and our regions.

The theme today, "A Healthy Start: Investing in Children Ages 0 to 6," is one of the most important themes we could choose. Now there are some who might argue that other meetings where the headlines are trade or security or other matters that finance ministers and presidents and prime ministers discuss are more important. But I think if we take a look at what will really matter in the 21st century—preparing our children, investing in and educating our children, making sure they have the health care they need—will determine every other issue we could possibly discuss.

So, therefore, raising awareness about early childhood development is a critical matter. It is one that many of us have worked on for many years. For more than 25 years as an attorney and advocate for children, I have tried to make clear that what we do for a young child today matters far more than what happens later. Because we can prevent problems and save money if we invest early instead of waiting for problems or crisis to occur.

It is such an important issue that in 1997, my husband and I held the first ever White House Conference on Early Learning and Childhood Development. We were looking for strategies that would enable our children—all of our children—to have a healthy start.

Now we were building on work that has been done in the United States before, work such as Head Start, which is a critical program that has enabled thousands and thousands of young children to enter school better prepared. We have seen similar programs throughout the hemisphere, and I know how dedicated so many of you are to ensuring that these kinds of preschool, early learning programs are available as universally as possible.

We also know that a childhood free of disease and illness is basic to a healthy start in life. Every year, 12 million children under the age of five worldwide lose their lives to infectious diseases. Here in the hemisphere, it is 565,000 young children—and these diseases are largely preventable.

Through USAID, the United States has sponsored innovative efforts to combat disease throughout the hemisphere, but what we are finding today is a new challenge. Too often, the antibiotics used to treat disease in young children have been used inappropriately, and too

many children, even in the very earliest years of life, have developed resistance to the medicines that could save their lives.

So I am pleased to announce today a new \$2 million USAID grant that, with the Pan American Health Organization, will enable public health experts to determine just how antibiotics are being misused and to train doctors and pharmacists in the correct way to administer prescription drugs.

Through this grant, we hope that the medicines we have developed will be able to do the job they are supposed to do, and that is particularly important in two of the major killers of young children: diarrhea and respiratory infections.

As we look at the important challenges of health and education, I know that each one of us could, as we have already heard from our distinguished colleagues, provide many examples of what is working throughout our hemisphere.

What we have learned through these conferences is that good ideas can happen anywhere, and I have seen them everywhere in my travels. But too often, if we did not have conferences such as this, we would not know what was working in Chile or El Salvador or anywhere else in the hemisphere.

So I believe that this coming together is one of the important ways we can put our children first. We were successful in Miami, and then later at the Summit of the Americas in Santiago, in persuading our governments to pay more attention to the needs of children and women. But I believe that that is an issue that must be addressed constantly. We have to continually remind ourselves and remind our governments that they must put children first.

So on behalf of the 100 million young children of our regions, I certainly thank all of you for being part of this ongoing effort of the first ladies here, in this hemisphere, to bring attention to our problems and honestly discuss them.

I don't know how many conferences in the hemisphere would have leading citizens, such as the women around this table, stand before an open audience and talk about everything from incest to drug abuse to child abuse to domestic violence. But it is that kind of frankness and openness that will enable us to fully understand the problems we face and then work towards solutions.

So thank you very much for continuing to build on this. And working together, I know, we can make progress on behalf of the children who need that progress so much.

Thank you very much. (Applause)

[Read our Privacy Policy](#)

TALKING IT OVER**BY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON****RELEASE: WEEKEND, OCTOBER 14-15, 1995**

One thing I've learned since becoming First Lady is that wherever I go, Eleanor Roosevelt has surely been there before me.

I've been to farms in Iowa and factories in Michigan where Mrs. Roosevelt paid a visit a half century ago. I've been to schools and colleges named for Mrs. Roosevelt and walked the halls of hospitals she toured before I was born.

Even when I go to other countries, Mrs. Roosevelt has doubtless been there first. When my daughter and I went to Pakistan and India last spring, we discovered that Eleanor Roosevelt had traveled there in 1952, and even had written a book about her trip.

Now I'm in South America, following in Mrs. Roosevelt's footsteps yet again. She came here several times and visited several countries, sharing her vision of justice and compassion with all who would listen. The United States, she believed, had a vested interest in helping any neighbor in our hemisphere that sought to build a democratic way of life.

"Our obligation to the world is primarily our obligation to our own future," she once said. "Obviously, we cannot develop beyond a certain point unless other nations develop, too."

Traveling now through South America, I find myself thinking often about Mrs. Roosevelt — who was born 111 years ago last Wednesday. And I'm convinced that if she were still alive today, nothing would thrill her more than coming to watch children perform at the Circus School in Brazil.

It's a place I'm visiting on this trip where runaway children learn the principles of discipline and teamwork, and build self-confidence through acrobatics and trapeze training. Not only do these children show a renewed interest in education and improved attendance in school, they perform before sellout crowds every weekend.

Mrs. Roosevelt also would be right at home chatting with the poor women I met at a neighborhood center in Santiago, Chile, or listening to women in Managua, Nicaragua, talk about the sewing businesses they started with \$100 loans from the local bank and support from the U.S. government.

HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON 10/14-15/95**Page 2**

Wherever she went, Mrs. Roosevelt celebrated the richness of the human experience. She appreciated every person's potential to do something great with very little. Perhaps that is why people all over the world, including here in South America, remember her with such admiration and fondness.

She was, in the words of historian Doris Kearns Goodwin, "a woman for all times and all people."

I know I will think about Mrs. Roosevelt again during the last leg of my trip. In Paraguay. There, I'll be participating in a conference of First Ladies from the Western Hemisphere. We'll be talking about ways to improve the health and education of children and families throughout the Americas.

It's a conversation that began last December in Miami when we met during a summit the President hosted for all the democratic nations of North and South America,

We have much at stake when it comes to building relations with our neighbors to the south. Many men and women in our country trace their roots to Latin America. And people living in those countries are among the biggest consumers of American goods and services.

Just last week, we hosted the President of Mexico for a state visit at the White House. As you may recall, our government offered loans and loan guarantees to Mexico to help that nation's economy stay afloat earlier this year. Already Mexico has paid back a significant portion of the loans ahead of schedule.

On a personal note, I am looking forward to spending time over the next few days with women from North and South America who are willing to devote their energy and ideas to nurturing the next generation. I think it's a wonderful way to celebrate Mrs. Roosevelt's birthday. After all, it was her example in both words and deeds that showed us how to bridge national boundaries and cultural traditions to achieve our common goals.

Talking to these First Ladies of today, I know I will be thinking of my inspiring predecessor.

Thank you, Mrs. Roosevelt.

And happy birthday.

COPYRIGHT 1995 CREATORS SYNDICATE, INC.

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

Creator's Syndicate 310-337-7003 12/3/98 11:05 PM 123

**TALKING IT OVER
BY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

The pregnant woman wore an alpaca shawl over her blouse and full skirt, the traditional Indian dress in Bolivia. She looked about 35 and was attending a prenatal class at a health clinic I visited this week in the Bolivian capital, La Paz. She was nursing a 3-month-old baby and expecting her eighth child, who she hoped would be her last.

I was in Bolivia to attend the Sixth Conference of Wives of Heads of State and Government of the Americas. Women from countries throughout the Western Hemisphere got together to talk about strategies to eliminate measles, promote education reform and improve maternal health in our region.

Bolivia, a country of majestic beauty in the heart of South America, was an auspicious location for such a discussion. More women die in Bolivia during pregnancy and childbirth than in any other country in South America. But in the face of this human tragedy, Bolivia has become a model of how one nation can respond to the crisis of maternal mortality by galvanizing the government, non-governmental organizations and the medical establishment to launch a nationwide family-planning campaign.

In a country where half of all expecting mothers go through pregnancy and childbirth alone -- without medical attention of any kind -- Bolivia's aggressive effort to educate women about their own health and their options for childbearing is resulting in safer pregnancies, stronger families and fewer abortions. Without access to family planning, women in Bolivia -- and in many developing nations -- often turn in desperation to illegal, unsafe abortions that can end in death or serious injury. Deaths from abortion complications account for half of all maternal deaths in Bolivia.

As Bolivia has ably demonstrated, voluntary family planning teaches women about the benefits of spacing children several years apart, breast-feeding, good nutrition, prenatal and postpartum visits and safe deliveries. It also decreases the number of abortions.

Bolivia's success at preventing mothers from dying and lowering abortion rates has been possible, in part, because of help from the United States and other countries. The U.S. Agency for International Development has provided financial and technical assistance to help Bolivia establish a network of primary health care clinics.

The clinic I visited in La Paz is one that the United States helped start. Called PROSALUD (which, loosely translated, means "for the good of health" in Spanish), the clinic has doctors and nurses who offer round-the-clock prenatal, obstetric and pediatric services, as well as counseling about family planning in a poor neighborhood of 15,000 people. In the first six months of this year, the clinic staff provided 2,200 medical consultations, delivered 200 babies, registered 700 new family-planning users and immunized 2,500 children.

There are obvious benefits of such a program to Bolivian women, children and families, but health and family-planning services also help alleviate poverty and contribute to the economic stability of a democratic ally in our hemisphere. Yet opponents of foreign assistance and particularly of family planning in Congress are trying to eviscerate U.S. funding for programs like the one I saw at PROSALUD. Some argue that the United States has no national interest in the health and well-being of other countries' citizens. Others mistakenly suggest that family planning is being used to encourage -- rather than decrease -- abortions. In fact, our government has prohibited funding of any overseas project that promotes abortion since 1973.

Ignoring this, Congress last year approved draconian cuts in family-planning assistance amounting to a 35 percent reduction in funds. To add insult to injury, the cuts were accompanied by new restrictions that delayed delivery of aid for the first nine months of the fiscal year.

Similar harsh cuts and delays are included in the current budget, meaning that many organizations could again be denied assistance for months and then receive it only in monthly installments.

According to a recent analysis by five population organizations, the funding cuts alone will result in an increase of 1.6 million abortions, more than 8,000 maternal deaths, and 134,000 infant deaths in developing countries.

Family-planning campaigns at work in Bolivia and elsewhere represent sensible, cost-effective and long-term strategies for improving women's health, strengthening families and lowering the rate of abortion. My husband's administration remains committed to the continuation of these investments. And I will do everything I can to ensure that U.S. support for these initiatives continues. If you share my concern, I hope you will add your voice to mine and give all women everywhere the same opportunities for their lives we take for granted in ours.

COPYRIGHT 1996 CREATORS SYNDICATE, INC.

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

December 3, 1996

TALKING IT OVER**BY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON****FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Bill and I spent a week in Mexico for our honeymoon. Like most American tourists, we reveled in Mexico's rich history, lively culture, warm people and great food. (And like many Mexicans, we also honeymooned with our parents.)

We were particularly excited about returning to Mexico last week, this time for an official state visit that also took us to summits of Central American leaders in Costa Rica and Caribbean leaders in Barbados. Each stop reminded us how much this vast region has changed in the last two decades and how its future is inextricably tied to our own.

We are connected to our Latin American neighbors by both geography and history: The United States now claims the fifth largest Hispanic population in the world. But we are also bound together by technology, trade and the forces of global economic integration. And we share many of the same concerns, from drugs, crime and environmental decay to strengthening democracy throughout the region.

For decades, Central America was torn apart by civil wars, bloody coups, repression and poverty. With the historic signing of the peace accords in Guatemala in December 1996, the region is finally free of war and conflict. Democracy now exists in every country in Central America. Political and economic reforms are leading to new hope for lasting peace and increasing prosperity from the Pacific Ocean to the Caribbean.

From the moment I landed in Merida on Mexico's Yucatan Peninsula to the day we left Bridgetown, Barbados, eight days later, I could see that many men and women are responsible for brightening the prospects for our hemisphere's future. The people of Merida welcomed me with a program of music and folkloric dance staged before one of the oldest churches in Mexico. Choruses sang in Spanish and Mayan, the language of the ancient culture that produced great pyramids like those I visited the next day at Uxmal.

I met with several hundred women from across the country, many direct descendants of the Mayans, Aztecs and other indigenous people of MesoAmerica. Thanks to small loans they have received through microcredit projects, they have been able to earn a living for themselves and their families selling goods as varied as ceramics, honey, coffee, hammocks and clothing.

These women, who might otherwise have been left on the outskirts of opportunity, have discovered their potential to take control of their lives and their futures, not through a handout but through their own hard work. At the same time, they are helping preserve their indigenous heritage, giving people the world over a chance to enjoy the products they create and becoming better integrated into the society and economy of Mexico.

I saw the same tremendous entrepreneurial spirit in Costa Rica at a forum sponsored by the U.S. Agency for International Development and the InterAmerican Development Bank. One woman had started a thriving business in rare orchids; another makes clothing for children; and one man described how he and his father used small loans to become organic farmers.

Most memorable, however, was an Indian woman from Guatemala who proudly told a large crowd that she had started out selling mangoes on the street when she was 12. With microloans, she expanded her line of goods and now employs others. Her profits enabled her to send her children to school, including a son to the University of North Carolina.

Economic participation, which microenterprise ensures for countless poor men and women around the world, is a human right essential to the success of any democracy. But so too are all human rights, which have often been violated in Latin America, sometimes with the encouragement or indifference of my own country. To highlight the U.S. commitment to human rights, Secretary of State Madeleine Albright and I visited the Institute for Human Rights in Costa Rica, which has dedicated itself to ensuring political and legal rights.

Throughout the region, men and women have risked -- and lost -- their lives to fight for freedom and social justice. Fortunately, their work and sacrifice contributed to Central America's movement away from the repressive regimes and human rights abuses of years past. Still, the transition to democracy remains incomplete -- particularly when it comes to the rights of women. Seated around a simple table at the Institute, women from Guatemala, Nicaragua and El Salvador reported about the obstacles they face, ranging from violence in and out of their homes to a lack of laws protecting them.

From Central America, we traveled to the Caribbean, a region from which many Americans trace their roots -- and to which many Americans return for vacations. Countries there have been particularly hard hit by changes in the global economy. At a regional microenterprise forum, I announced a grant that, as part of the President's initiative to help the region, will expand Caribbean microcredit projects.

Luckily, the trip was not all business and meetings. Bill and I were able to spend one wonderful day relaxing on Barbados, which reminded us of our honeymoon. We slept, read, sunned and swam. He graduated from crutches to cane. And we came back refreshed and more convinced of the importance of strengthening our ties with our friends and neighbors in this hemisphere.

COPYRIGHT 1997 CREATORS SYNDICATE, INC.

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

May 13, 1997

TALKING IT OVER

BY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Last week, I went to Panama, and this week, I am accompanying Bill on his state visits to Venezuela, Brazil and Argentina. Since I firmly believe relationships between the United States and Latin America are critical to the entire hemisphere's future peace, I wish every American could be on these trips with us.

Then, Americans could see for themselves how what happens thousands of miles south of our border affects our lives at home. Venezuela, for example, is our biggest supplier of oil -- and home to some of the best players in major league baseball. Brazil, with more than 160 million people, is a multiracial democracy struggling with some of the same problems we face. Argentina has joined with us in U.N. peacekeeping operations around the world -- from Haiti to Bosnia.

And Panamanians and Americans are working to define our partnership after the Panama Canal reverts to Panama on Dec. 31, 1999. The United States is the principal beneficiary of the goods that travel through the canal, which allows ships to cross between the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans without sailing around the tip of South America. In fact, at the Miraflores Locks, canal officials permitted me to open a set of locks for a 3,000-ton South Korean container ship on its way from Savannah, Ga., to Long Beach, Calif.

Over a century ago, building the canal was essential to improving opportunities for people all over the Americas. As daunting as that task was, we face what may be an even harder challenge today. Instead of mountains, we seek to move hearts, to change old attitudes, to banish hunger and disease, to educate all our children and to empower the women of our hemisphere to participate fully in the life of our nations.

Empowering women to make the most of their God-given promise was one of the main themes of the Seventh Annual Conference of Spouses of Heads of State and Governments of the Americas I attended in Panama City. Each year since the 1994 Summit of the Americas in Miami, we have tried to shine a spotlight on -- and take action to address -- some of the most important issues facing women and children in our hemisphere: primary education, eradicating measles, maternal mortality, family planning and women's political participation.

A few years ago, Faustina Nunez and her friends acted on their dream to make the most of their abilities. They started a business growing plants and seedlings to sell in the cities of Panama and to the government's reforestation programs. Their neighbors laughed at the idea. "They said that our nursery was going to fail, that this was something

the men did, not women," she told me and Panama's First Lady, Dora Perez-Ballardares, when we visited the 5-acre nursery in Chica, a small hilltop village at the edge of the tropical forest.

But Faustina and her partners, who called themselves the Association for Gender, Nature and Progress, were not discouraged. Within two years, the women had sold enough orchids, medicinal plants and seedlings to expand their business. They had provided seedlings to reclaim 48 acres of the deforested Altos de Campana National Park. And most importantly for them, where before they had worked for free on their husbands' vegetable farms, they were now able to contribute to the family finances, to bring in extra income to buy books and school clothes for their children.

"We grew and grew, and our community was able to see that we were playing an important role," Faustina said. "We were a society of strong-willed women, and we were not going to step back."

Part of the work Faustina and her partners are accomplishing is helping reforest the land around the grand Panama Canal. When I flew over the canal in a U.S. Army helicopter, I saw one of the world's engineering marvels and a tribute both to technological innovation and human fortitude. But I also saw some of the damage man has caused to Panama's rich tropical forest in the canal watershed.

Acres of thick, green forest tapered off into barren land dotted by tall yellow grasses, naked trees and fields abandoned by poor farmers who had moved on to clear more land. Over the past 40 years, slash-and-burn agriculture has reduced Panama's forests by half, causing soil erosion and depleting much of the fresh water supply the canal depends on to function smoothly.

Faustina, her partners and other women are part of a joint effort by Panama and the United States to turn this situation around. Our cooperation isn't limited to this. Americans and Panamanians are also working on a multinational counter-narcotics center that would monitor, track and stop drugs coming north. Just as men of imagination, talent and perseverance sought to connect the oceans in an earlier time, today, men and women of goodwill and vision are working together, within and across borders, to solve today's problems.

COPYRIGHT 1997 CREATORS SYNDICATE, INC.

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

October 14, 1997