

**FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
PEACE AND RECONCILIATION EVENT
SAN SALVADOR, EL SALVADOR
NOVEMBER 17, 1998**

- I am so pleased to be here, to have this opportunity to meet this remarkable group of women of El Salvador who have played such an extraordinary role not only in bringing a close to the war -- but in forging a future of peace and reconciliation.
- I've read about the suffering that many of you -- and so many of your fellow citizens -- have experienced during the conflict. Some of you have been captured and tortured; others have lost husbands and other family members in the war. Yet here you are -- leaders in your country -- Supreme court judges; high elected officials in your parties; cabinet ministers; lawyers; advocates on behalf of women and children. Your experiences and your accomplishments reflect both the tragedy and the hope of El Salvador.
- I know that last night -- there was a mass held not far from here commemorating the 9th anniversary of the slaying of the six Jesuits, their house keeper and her daughter. And while that event must bring back such painful memories of the past -- I would think it would also underscore for you how far you've come.
- I'm here to learn more about how you have accomplished this historic transition to peace since the Accords were signed six years ago, and hear you talk about the lessons that you have learned during this period.
- I want to congratulate you and all of the women of El Salvador for taking the lead in the peace process -- and now, in leading your country forward. We all know that for progress to continue, women must be fully engaged in the political life of their country -- at the grassroots -- and at the highest levels of government.
- You are all proof of how much progress is being made in your country -- where women play such a prominent role in all aspects of your society.

- I urge you to continue to promote that active political engagement of women across the political spectrum -- to ensure issues that we all care about -- from domestic violence, to job discrimination, to equal access to the legal system are debated and promoted.
- I've seen women in communities across the world who -- like yourselves -- have been the peacemakers. Women in nations of conflict who watched their husbands and brothers and fathers die -- yet came together to end the violence, demand justice, and begin the healing. You deserve the deepest gratitude of a thankful nation.
- I believe that all of you are part of a strong, global movement, in which women are coming to recognize our common interests, and the importance of becoming engaged in the political process. We've also learned that while we speak different languages, and hold different religious beliefs -- what we hold in common is far stronger than that which divides us.
- As we look forward to the 21st century -- perhaps the greatest challenge in your country and mine and every nation is how we bridge the differences that for too long have divided human kind. Attempting to address these differences, and creating conditions for equality will be, I believe, essential to making the 21st Century a more peaceful and prosperous and stable place.
- Thank you for inviting me here today -- to learn and to listen. So that more of us can know about your stories, your triumphs, and your challenges. I look forward to our discussion today.

FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
REMARKS BEFORE THE GUATEMALA CONGRESS
GUATEMALA CITY, GUATEMALA
NOVEMBER 19, 1998

President of the Congress Barrios, Vice President Flores, distinguished members of Congress, Ambassador Planty, and a special greeting to the 60 legislative assistants of CEDEL: It is for me a great honor to address this Congress -- the first in your history to lead a truly peaceful and democratic Guatemala.

As I prepared for this trip, I read some of the poetry of Humberto Ak'abal, [Oo-m-berto Aw-kah-ball] the internationally celebrated indigenous writer who educated himself, often bringing home books and reading by candlelight. He wrote of a land so beautiful that "if you climb up an ancient cypress tree and creep among its branches...you will see the earth is not so far from heaven."

I understood exactly what he meant as our plane approached Guatemala yesterday, and the mountains, volcanos and ravines almost seemed to reach up to meet us half way. And I felt that way again, just now as we made the beautiful drive from the cobblestone streets, colorful houses, and almost spiritual ruins of your ancient capital Antigua to your modern capital, here in the city of Guatemala.

On this drive over, I thought about a meeting I had yesterday with women political leaders from different ideologies. And though they may have stood on opposite sides of war for 36 years...they discussed similar hopes for Guatemala: education for every child, health care, jobs, a justice system that upholds the rule of law, a full recovery from the hurricane, a country that leaves no one behind.

People from all over the world who live in war-torn communities from Bosnia to Northern Ireland can look to Guatemala and know that, even after 36 years of war, you can let go of old hatreds. You can defy history and rewrite it. You can transform a nation – from a culture of violence to a culture of peace. From authoritarian practice to democratic principle. From exclusion to inclusion.

I want to congratulate this chamber, your President, whose vision of peace inspired this process, and all the people of Guatemala, for having the courage to start walking down this long road to peace, even when the path was rough, the mountains hard to climb.

And, on behalf of my husband and the American people, I want you to know that we will continue to stand with you as you implement the Peace Accords, ^{as you} strengthen democracy, encourage economic growth and a broad tax base, ^{as you} make social investments, protect human rights and rebuild after one of the worst storms in our hemisphere's history.

My sympathy and prayers have been with you since Hurricane Mitch first struck. And yesterday, I received a full briefing on what this tragedy has meant for Guatemala – the children who lost parents, the families who lost homes, the communities that lost roads and bridges, crops and infrastructure. And I will bring that information back to my country.

I want you to know that my husband has increased U.S. government disaster assistance in Central America to over \$300 million. And he is also halting all deportations to Guatemala, El Salvador, Nicaragua and Honduras until after New Year, while our government explores long-term solutions to your concerns.

I am also pleased to announce today an additional donation of 60 million pounds of wheat for Guatemala. In addition, the United States is increasing the amount of low interest loans provided for food to \$10 million. Former Peace Corps volunteers will help in the rebuilding process. And USAID and the Inter-American Development Bank are providing \$17 million to finance micro businesses in this region, many of which were devastated by the storm, so they can pay off their loans and get back on their feet.

The food, clothing, and medicine arriving here comes not just from our government, but from people in every corner of my country. Many of those living in the U.S. trace their roots to Guatemala. And we are all bound by the relationships among our religious communities, personal ties, friendships and families. All Americans have been inspired by how you have come together to repair and rebuild your nation.

At the height of the storm, I heard about Guatemalans working who risked their personal safety to rescue and comfort people who had just lost every material possession. And in the moving video of the storm that your government showed me yesterday, it was clear that every person of every background came together in this time of tragedy.

I can't help but think how that same courage, unbreakable spirit and trust in each other have sustained you in your fight for peace. On the way here, I heard a wonderful story about two communities that had been on opposite sides of the civil war. For decades they didn't speak -- separated by much more than the ravine between them.

But then something changed. One community wanted their children to be able to attend the other's school, which was the envy of the area. And, the second community, in turn, needed the first to reach the nearest market.

Both of them realized that their lives and livelihoods depended on each other...that they, like all of us, shared a common destiny. So, with help from the local government and USAID, they rolled up their sleeves and built a bridge, both literally and figuratively, between them.

What they created that day was the birth of a partnership to improve the lives of citizens of both communities. And even after the hurricane, what they created that day is still standing strong.

Perhaps that's because it was built not just with metal and cement, but on a foundation of peace, that so many others struggled and sacrificed for so long to lay down.

We think of the leaders of civil society, the private sector, the military who rejected the autogolpe [auto Goal-pay], defended the Constitution and preserved democracy.

And we think of individuals. We think of Rosalina Tuyuc [two-Youk]. After her husband and father disappeared, she drew attention to the plight of women widowed by violence and left unable to support their children. Or of Amilcar Mendez, [a-Mil-car]who despite being beaten, terrorized, and threatened, refused to yield in his fight for equality and justice.

Today the work of these two pioneers continues, not from the streets, but from this new Congress. It is sometimes hard to see progress from the inside as you live and breathe it. But just think of what you've accomplished in less than two years. Nearly 3,000 ex-combatants of the civil war have rejoined society. Victims of war are being resettled. The military is assuming its rightful role, helping out heroically during the Hurricane, saving lives and providing relief.

And from different political parties, and with different pasts, you had the courage to make the hard choices, to pass Constitutional Reforms, and help fulfill the promise of the Peace Accords. Now, the decision is in the peoples' hands. There may be differences over individual words and provisions. And it won't be easy. Nothing worth doing ever is. But one thing is clear: These reforms represent the future of Guatemala.

But you who write and pass laws understand better than anyone, that peace is not what's on paper, but what's in our hearts. Not only the passing of laws one day. But their fulfillment by people every day. Not the absence of war. But, rather the presence of justice and freedom and dignity for all.

As the Popul Vuh [Poh-pull Voo] says, "May they rise up, may they rise up, may not even one or two groups be left behind." Your Peace Accords call for everyone to rise up, for no one to be left behind.

And by example, you have the opportunity to teach the world about the power of inclusion. If individuals are respected as members of families, communities, and countries. If they have a say and a stake in their nation's future. If women and men, Mayans and Ladinos, young and old, rural and urban, former guerillas and former soldiers have the opportunities and responsibilities of citizenship: That is the difference between a peace that is promised and a peace that is fulfilled in Northern Ireland, in Bosnia, and, yes, in Guatemala.

It's easy for me to say these words. I come here today as someone who did not have to live through almost four decades of war. I did not lose my parents or brothers to a conflict I was too young to understand. I didn't have to worry whether my daughter or husband would make it home safely. Or if there'd ever be a time that we would live in peace. And so I come here with admiration for all you've been through to end your conflict. And for all you will do to fulfill the promise of peace for every Guatemalan woman and man, girl and boy.

Over the next few years, you can show the world that to fulfill the promise of peace we must give all people tools of opportunity. That means translating words into actions, promises into results. I was given a piece of paper the other day with the words “Cycle of Misery” printed across it.

At the top of the chart are the 75 percent of rural women in Guatemala who are illiterate. They are likely to have more children. To receive less pre-natal care and less family planning. They are more likely to die in childbirth. Their children are far more likely to die before their first birthday. If they survive they are more likely to be malnourished – and to grow up to be illiterate...thereby beginning the cycle all over again.

So I want to congratulate you for including, as part of the Peace Accords, a commitment to increase spending for education and health care by 50 percent in order to break this cycle of misery once and for all.

At a hospital in Antigua yesterday, I met a group of trained indigenous midwives. Spread out on the floor with colorful blankets, they performed a skit they use to teach fundamental lessons about safe child birth. And they went around the room, telling one compelling story after another about how this training is helping them save the lives of pregnant women and their babies.

← At a gathering of microcredit organizations in Costa Rica, I met a woman from Guatemala. With the help of a small loan, she went from being a mango seller on the streets to owning a market stall and eventually running a small business with 15 employees. And she went from someone who started out on the streets at the age of 12 to someone who now has the resources to send her own children to college. WUS—

Commitment + strength

But, the most powerful weapon a society has to achieve peace and progress is education – especially of women and girls. There have been many studies done by multinational institutions – such as the World Bank and IMF – about the most important investments countries can make to raise their standard of living.

Before the studies were done, some may have thought the answers would turn out to be stronger banks, better roads, or more integrated markets. But the answer every time was investments in educating girls and women.

Because when you educate a child, you educate a citizen.
When you educate a woman, you educate a family.

*read
more*

Yesterday, at the beautiful Colonial Museum, where the oldest university in Central America once stood, I heard how you are meeting your goal to help one million more Guatemalans read and write by the year 2000. That truly will break the cycle of misery. ^{Cue arm} I met a 13 year old girl, who can now go to school because of a scholarship. A Mayan woman who can now read and write because of a literacy program. A young man, who is getting his master's degree in bilingual education, because of a scholarship. And I announced a new U.S. program to help you meet this critical goal.

In the aftermath of war, too often women are the ones left behind, forced to raise their children alone. Too often women and children make up the vast majority of refugees. Too often women are the victims of war. And so too must they be the architects of peace.

I want to recognize in the audience today Guatemalan women leaders who formed one of the most impressive delegations to attend the Vital Voices conference recently in Montevideo. [And I want to thank all of you here for creating a National Women's Forum dedicated to ensuring that women are full participants in the social, political, and economic future of Guatemala.]

Fulfilling the promise of peace also depends upon all citizens making their voices heard at the ballot box and the soap box, in the board rooms and the classrooms, at the national government and the local government -- at every level of the political process.

And with citizenship, comes not just rights, but responsibilities. One responsibility all of us have is pay our fair share for the common good of our nations. I know you are working to enforce a fairer, broader, and more adequate tax system. It's a challenge every nation faces. And I know it's particularly important for you right now, as you strive to make critical social investments.

You also have the opportunity to teach the world that fulfilling the promise of peace means strengthening the rule of law and ensuring justice and security for all citizens. None of us will ever forget what Bishop Gerardi did to defend the human rights of all people and support the power of reconciliation to heal a nation. His murder offends all we stand for as human beings. And I am hopeful that the Guatemalan authorities will succeed in bringing all those responsible to justice.

There is no greater tribute to Bishop Gerardi than to see justice done in his case and impunity rejected throughout the country. Because of your reforms, people who enter the criminal justice system will now have the right to confront witnesses, the right to plea bargain, to have oral arguments, and be represented by counsel. The process you've begun cannot be allowed to fail.

Because when the rule of law fails, when the justice system elicits not comfort, but fear, our entire society fails. Justice is basic to everything else. Democracy depends on it. Economic progress depends on it. The fulfillment of peace depends on it.

Part of what we've seen in places where political conflict has ended, is that violence reemerges in other forms like street crime and domestic violence that continue to terrorize people. In another country I visited recently, I saw an image that will probably stay with me forever. At a domestic violence program, there were knives and weapons of all shapes and sizes arranged and hung along the wall. And there were descriptions under each weapon of how they were used. Not for cooking. Not as souvenirs. They were weapons used to hurt, perhaps kill, the women and children in their owner's life.

sheet vider

Domestic violence, like political violence, is not a family matter to be brushed aside. It's a crime that must be punished with the full force of the law.

Finally, you can teach the world that fulfilling the promise of peace means reconciling those on both sides of the conflict, and reconciling the past with the future so we can move forward together.

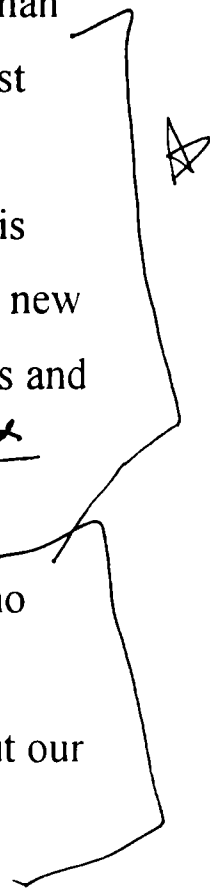
In country after country that ^{have} made the transition from violence to peace, reaching the future depends upon a full, complete and honest recounting of the past. No one knows the difficulty and pain that opening up old wounds may produce; but few doubt how crucial it is to national healing. I think of the courage of the individuals who have told their story and of those who have tried to answer their questions.

*Chel Anderson
S. Adams
Rosmar*

Soon, the Historical Clarification Commission will issue its report. My country has supported the work of the Commission. And I was delighted to learn that the Guatemalan government has made a commitment to insure that this report does not just sit on a shelf, gathering dust. Recently, your Foreign Minister told a gathering in Brussels that when the report comes out, your President wants to use it to spark a national dialogue and launch a major education campaign.

I will never forget listening to a young Guatemalan woman tell her story at the Vital Voices conference in Montevideo last month. Like many Guatemalans, she was forced to flee her country during the war. But, like so many Guatemalans, she is now coming back. She wants to make her contribution to the new Guatemala by organizing young people to heal their own lives and rebuild their nation.

psychic wound



We know a country with no memory is a country with no history. Whether it's the evil of slavery in my country or the ravages of war in another, it is up to us to teach children about our past in their classrooms and living rooms.

Our children carry a nation's memories. They are the ones who will pass down the pictures of the Mayan ruins I'm visiting in Tikal later this afternoon and of the Colonial times I saw in Antigua. And it is the children who will help finish the long journey of peace their parents and grandparents so courageously began.

I saw the faces of those children yesterday. There were five young Mayan girls, all recipients of scholarships, who I had met earlier in Washington at a USAID education conference. Without the scholarships, these girls might have been destined to live a life without reading and writing, a life without education or hope. But when they spoke to me yesterday, their eyes lit up as they talked about all they were learning in school and the progress they were making there.

Your country's celebrated poet Otto-Rene Castillo [re-Nay kas-Tee-yo] wrote, "Yes, I am always singing, always struggling, so that the world may exchange its sadness for a simple cascade of joy, for a spark of love, for a rose of sweet words and sweet eyes."

It was because the people of Guatemala never stopped singing and struggling for 36 years, that you have exchanged sadness for joy, war for peace, division for reconciliation.

And it was because the people of Guatemala never stopped singing and struggling for 36 years, that every day, those five little girls can put on their school clothes, pick up their book bags, and walk out the door confident that they can travel as far as their dreams will take them...in a new peaceful Guatemala, where no one is left behind.

President Kennedy once said, "On this earth, God's work is our own." The people in the Congress, in the government, in this country are certainly doing God's work. Blessed are the peacemakers. Our nation and world thanks you. God Bless you...and God Bless Guatemala.

Thank you very much.

FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON

EDUCATION REFORM EVENT

COLONIAL MUSEUM

ANTIGUA, GUATEMALA

NOVEMBER 18, 1998

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS: First Lady Arzu; Ambassador Planty; Arabella Castro, minister of Education; Mrs. Otilia Lux [LOOSH] de Coti (indigenous woman educator and founding member of the Girls Education Association); Guillermina Herrera, dean of the University Rafael Landivar; Floridalma Meza (director of National Literacy Council); Gretchen Dykstra (board member, Save the Children); -- and most important -- the young people here today.

First, I want to say how pleased I am to be here at this Colonial Museum -- the site of the first university in all of Central America -- founded in the 16th Century.

And today, the people of Guatemala see education as the surest way to fulfill the promise of peace. The Peace Accords called for broad-based education reform, guarantees of equal access, and commitments to quality. And there is no more powerful reason to fulfill that promise than the children who are with us today -- Guatemala's future leaders.

I was so pleased to see the five girls who met me upon my arrival. I had met them in Washington at the International Girl's Education Conference -- and I was so impressed with their spirit and intelligence back then. And as they took me around to the exhibition booths just now -- I was amazed at how much they've grown and matured since I last saw them. So this event holds special meaning for me today.

The challenge before you is daunting -- as we have already heard. Too many Guatemalan children fail to advance in reading or math; not enough graduate; and there are major inequities among those who live in rural, indigenous communities. Despite the fact that over half of all Guatemalan school aged children are indigenous -- only 8% have access to schooling in their mother tongue. Such disparities in education can only prolong the economic and social divisions of this country -- at a time when you should be reaping the benefits of peace and reconciliation.

Today -- we speak the universal language of opportunity. The chance for every citizen -- young and old; urban and rural; rich and poor; -- to gain the skills necessary to thrive in a democratic, market-based economy of the 21st Century. Backed by the Peace Accords -- the government and the people of Guatemala have made education reform a top priority. And I'm here today to re-affirm my country's strong commitment to be your partner in that important mission.

I'm proud to announce a series of partnerships between our two countries that will strengthen your education reform in three different ways. First, we are providing \$9.1 million in USAID funds to support integrated community literacy programs. These funds will finance a partnership among Save the Children, the University of Massachusetts, the Alliance for Youth Community Development, and Guatemala's National Committee on Literacy. This money will help boost Guatemala's low literacy rate -- the lowest in all of Latin America. It is estimated that nearly 75% of indigenous people are illiterate.

No country entering the competition of the global economy in the 21st century can afford to condemn so many of its citizens to the margins of society. And no democracy can afford to leave so many behind. This program will permit 250,000 out of school youth and adults to learn to read and write.

I will be going in a few minutes to a hospital where we will speak of high infant and maternal mortality statistics here in Guatemala. There is much that access to quality health services can do to lower those statistics. But the single most powerful force to ensure mothers survive childbirth; that infants live beyond their first birthday, and that children have adequate nutrition -- is giving women the skills to read and write.

Second, USAID is providing \$2 million for leadership scholarships for indigenous students, again in partnership with the Rafael Landivar University and the bilingual education community. And today, we heard from a recipient of one of those scholarships -- and how it has changed her life. We must continue to work as hard as we can to close the gap of opportunity and skills among the indigenous people.

And third -- we are adding \$800,000 to expand girls education in Guatemala -- in partnership with your minister of education and the National Council for Mayan Education.

Increasingly, governments around the world are recognizing that investments in the education of women and girls is the single most important investment they can make to improve the lives of all citizens, and to strengthen their nation's economy. And I'm pleased that our governments are partners in opening up these new educational opportunities.

As Guatemala moves forward in this process of reconciliation and peace -- it has a unique opportunity to ensure all its citizens can move forward together, and share equally in the benefits of peace and greater prosperity. Education remains the key to your future. And I commend you for continuing to make progress in this most vital area.

And now, I would like to invite the signers to come up for the signing ceremony.

**FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
VITAL VOICES CONFERENCE
MONTEVIDEO, URUGUAY
OCTOBER 2, 1998**

It is a great honor and privilege 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 just heard represent the extraordinary intelligence, enthusiasm and diversity of the people who have come together for this historic conference.

I want to thank you, Mrs. Sanguinetti -- for your warm hospitality. This is my first visit to your beautiful country, and you and the President have made me feel so at home even in these few short days. I also want to express my great appreciation to the Conference's co-sponsor, the Inter-American Development Bank -- and its president, Enrique Iglesias [Ih-GLAY-see-us]. He has done so much to place the women of this hemisphere at the very center of the bank's development policies -- and I've had the pleasure of working with him to promote micro credit and to battle against domestic violence -- which he rightly recognizes is not only a crime -- but an obstacle to economic growth. I also want to recognize Myra (MY-RAH) Buvinic (BU-VIN-ICH), who has been such a powerful and effective advocate at the IDB for women, and who has collaborated so closely on this Vital Voices conference.

And special thanks to Theresa Loar -- who headed our US government team -- and who continues to make "vital voices" an effective foreign policy tool.

This Vital Voices conference brings together women leaders from all the democracies of the western hemisphere. Leaders in business; non governmental organizations; and trade unions; from small villages and bustling cities; mayors and cabinet officials. Many who suffered under brutal dictatorships; but were in the forefront of the struggles to end repression, protect human rights, and restore democracy.

Now we face new challenges. How do we ensure that democracy and free market economies produce better lives for all people, especially the poor and 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 society and its institutions?

Our countries may be at different stages of political and economic development, but we are all searching for answers to questions such as these. And we share a belief: 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; that human rights are women's rights; and that women's rights are human rights.

At this conference - in workshops, over coffee, and in the hallways -- you've been talking with each other about how to achieve progress in three broad areas: First by expanding women's political participation in public life. Second, by strengthening the rule of law; and third, by promoting women's access to economic opportunity.

We've all come here to share strategies that work; to make action plans; and to forge partnerships in each of these three areas.

Today, we see the fruits of your labors in opening the doors of political participation.

Throughout the Americas, we have gained the peace and stability that so many have sought for so long. While some countries have long established democracies -- others have just recently moved from repressive, authoritarian government to free and democratic societies. And as a result, women and girls are beginning to expand their opportunities. and to move ahead as equal partners in the economic, social, and political lives of their countries.

But the gains we have made in political participation could not have happened without women -- some of them here, some known, many unknown -- who have lifted up their voices when others were silent; who have organized in their workplaces -- often at great risk to themselves; and who have taken on the responsibilities of leadership, and the challenges of elected office.

Their voices inspire us.

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 of the Plaza de Mayo in Argentina, who refused to bend under the brutality of the generals -- and who kept her eyes on the plight of her nation's grand children.

These women -- and so many others among you -- have helped open doors, and improved conditions for women across the continent. These stories reflect the enormous potential of women to make a difference.

Today, more than at any other time in history, we must not only raise our own voices -- but empower others to raise theirs as well. It's time not only to gain the tools of opportunity ourselves -- but to make them available to all citizens across the hemisphere. It's time to take stock of where we are -- but more importantly, to work together and take the next steps toward full equality.

I know that Vital Voices is building upon the work done by and for women -- including the Women's Leadership Conference of the Americas' impressive report on the condition of women in the Americas today.

This report confirms what we've always known -- that while many governments, organizations, and individual citizens acknowledge the importance of women's political participation in informal ways -- women are still blocked from formalizing that role in positions of government leadership or elected office. Women make up half of the electorate or more in most countries of our hemisphere -- yet our representation in government and elected office rarely exceeds 10%. And when women are elected -- they often work at the outskirts of the centers of power.

Yesterday, I met with the women's political network here in Montevideo. And I want to thank Gloria Robaina [Row-bah-EE-nuh] for introducing me to this remarkable group of women leaders. They broke through the traditional barriers of party and ideology, to pursue a common agenda for women's rights and opportunities. "We grew to realize" said one of the network founders -- "that what unites us is far more important than what differentiates us." That lesson needs to be replicated in every country represented here today. The women of Uruguay have shown the way to find common ground in our commitment to justice, equality, and women's rights.

Today -- because of women like you -- the once closed doors of decision making and elected leadership are being pried open. More and more of your countries now require a minimum 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 seeking to increase the pool of qualified women to compete for leadership positions -- while others help women exercise effective leadership once they are elected or promoted.

These changes are having an impressive impact. By 1996 -- all but two countries in Latin America had at least one cabinet member; in Colombia, 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 the results of a new law -- women's representation in the lower house of congress is 28% -- the eighth highest in the world.

If those nations can assure women that level of women's participation -- then the United States -- and every country here -- can do the same.

Strengthening the rule of law is the second major challenge that we face together here. There may be general agreement that women deserve equal rights under the law -- but too often, there are no laws to protect

those rights, and too often, when there are laws, they are not enforced. If you're a poor woman -- you are even less likely to gain access to the justice system, and more likely to have your legal rights ignored or abused.

We have learned that when the rule of law becomes effective; when judges are independent; when due process is respected; when impunity no longer exists -- then the rights of all citizens are strengthened -- especially women. And when women are prosecutors, and when women are judges, then they insure these issues become recognized as fundamental to the rights of all citizens.

And their voices 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.

The work that many of you have done as leaders both inside and outside your governments is making a difference. More and more governments are creating or improving laws that protect and support women. Governments also are reforming their penal codes and passing anti discrimination legislation. But some of the most dramatic progress is being made in the area of domestic violence. Twelve Latin American countries have adopted new laws making domestic violence a crime. Enforcement has been stepped up; prison sentences extended. There are

now special police stations for women; shelters and counseling centers; and training courses for law enforcement officials and judges.

Yesterday, I met with professionals here in Montevideo who are working with victims and perpetrators of domestic violence.

We can no longer accept domestic violence as cultural; we must condemn it for the crime that it is.

Our actions to strengthen the rule of law are essential if we are to achieve the Summit of the Americas' goal of full equality by the year 2002. There are those who say that is an ambitious goal. I say that we must accept nothing less.

Opening up economic opportunities for women is our third priority. That means equal access to education and health care.

While women contribute enormously to the economic growth of their countries -- both inside and outside the home, work inside the home is not even counted in a country's GNP -- and wage discrimination at the workplace is the norm. Women in Latin America receive salaries far below men's -- and my country is not much better. And women who work in the informal sector -- as so many do -- have no formal benefits -- and even less security. Working women have never had the rights and opportunities and benefits that men have traditionally held. If we can't right those inequities -- we not only diminish the extraordinary contributions women make to their families and communities. We block the ongoing progress and vibrancy of the economies of their nations as well.

I've often said that if all the women of the world stopped working for an hour, all the world's economies would collapse!

Today -- micro enterprise loans are expanding with support from international and bilateral donors and non governmental organizations. USAID and IDB programs already are reaching well over a million women in the hemisphere. And commercial banks need to join these efforts to provide loans to women to enable them to become financially self sufficient, and to gain the confidence to participate more fully in the economic and political life of their countries.

Their voices inspire us.

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 -- after having been elected president of her village bank group -- said "courage is half of life."

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

Just recently, the women maquila workers in Nicaragua

successfully lobbied for a new code of ethics -- which ensures equal pay, regular medical examinations, training programs, and social security benefits.

And here at this conference, we are building on their progress, and producing real partnerships that will strengthen democracies and improve the lives of women throughout the hemisphere. Today, I'm pleased to announce that our 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. That agency is also increasing its loans to micro enterprises across the Americas to \$120 million over the next three years -- with over two thirds of those loans going to women.

Our Small Business Administration -- which has done so much to promote micro-enterprise in the United States -- has created an on line Women's business Center -- offering training and support and research for women to start and expand their businesses. Today -- SBA is unveiling the Spanish version of this website -- so that millions of women across this hemisphere -- and around the world -- can also access this information. You can log on right outside this conference room, and see how valuable that new service can be to you.

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 your 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 this conference. Tomorrow, you will have the opportunity to shape these messages that will be broadcast throughout the hemisphere.

Another important partnership is taking place. IBM Uruguay will provide computer and Internet training sessions for women in this

country to help them access new opportunities in the information age. They will also work with their counterparts throughout the Americas to expand this program.

Tomorrow you will have an opportunity for hands on media and political training workshops sponsored by USAID, with Partners of the Americas and League of Women Voters, and USIA through Women's Campaign International. And I know your diverse delegations will take these ideas and strategies and new partnerships home. And that you will work together to use them to elevate the priorities of women in every one of your countries. And that you will make this network of vital voices an ongoing hemispheric initiative.

And I promise that our government will continue to partner with you in this critical effort.

This is a time of unparalleled opportunity -- but also great risk. Women around the world are striving to find their rightful place in society. If we continue to ensure women's voices are heard in the city halls and boardrooms and at the highest circles of political power; if we continue to give women the opportunity to take responsibility for their own lives; if we continue to remind the world -- over and over again -- that these are not women's issues -- but societies concerns -- then surely, we will see the fruits of democracy and prosperity spread more widely and deeply than ever before. But as an early Uruguayan women leader, Dr. Paulina Luisi, once 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."

FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE CONFERENCE
SAN SALVADOR, EL SALVADOR
NOVEMBER 17, 1998

It's a great pleasure to have this opportunity to visit El Salvador for the first time. I'm so pleased to once again see my friend and your nation's First Lady, Elizabeth Calderon Sol. This morning, she took me to a center for domestic violence -- where I met a victim of abuse whose husband beat her, saying "You are nothing." Yet today, she told her life has meaning -- and she has hope in her future -- thanks to the services she received at this center.

And I've just come from a meeting with some remarkable women leaders from across El Salvador's political and economic spectrum. Some of these women bear the terrible physical scars of torture. They all share the emotional scars of a war that touched all Salvadoran families. Now those wounds are healing, as these women -- and so many others -- lead the efforts to redefine and build El Salvador's democratic future.

Listening to these women today has given me a far deeper appreciation of the extraordinary strides all of you have made since the signing of the Peace Accords six years ago. I came to El Salvador to be a witness myself to this historic transition from war to peace, and from violence to reconciliation.

Today -- my thoughts are also with you as you face a different kind of challenge -- the devastation caused by this century's worst storm. I stopped briefly in Honduras and Nicaragua yesterday -- to announce new United States disaster relief efforts for the region, and to express personally the deepest concerns of the President and the American people for the people of Central America during this very difficult time. Last evening, I announced additional disaster relief for the people of El Salvador to help you recover and rebuild.

I also wanted to tell you about the outpouring of food, clothing, medicine and support not just from the United States government but from people and communities across America. It is a reflection of the deep and permanent friendship between our two countries. So many of those living in the United States trace their roots to El Salvador -- and they are now contributing to our growth and prosperity. There are also close bonds between the religious communities of America and El Salvador -- fueled by a mutual passion for justice and peace.

As I hear about how the people of El Salvador have come together from all walks of life -- to support each other in the aftermath of this storm-- I can't help but think that same courage and unbreakable spirit sustained you as you walked down that long and difficult road to peace.

In the six years since the signing of the Peace Accords -- you have made remarkable progress. You have reshaped your military and modernized the police to serve the people. You have helped reintegrate the combatants into civilian life; distributed land to those on both sides; resettled the victims of war; and begun to rebuild the infrastructures of your communities. You created a truth commission **that provided** an accounting of the human rights violations of the past. And you've made remarkable progress in strengthening the rule of law -- electing a new Supreme Court -- and reforming your judicial system. For the first time in El Salvador -- there's a new juvenile code and a new criminal code -- providing legal protections for women and children. And today, the law says that every individual is presumed innocent until proven guilty.

Perhaps the most profound change is that Salvadorans who once fought on opposite sides of the battle field are now debating their differences from opposite sides of the aisle in the legislature -- and citizens are using ballots instead of guns to express their disagreements. Your efforts here are giving hope to so many around the world -- in Ireland, and Bosnia, and other areas of conflict -- that divisions can be healed; that peace can be won; that forgiveness and compassion can be more powerful than bitterness and anger.

I'm proud that my country has worked closely with the people of El Salvador during this historic transition to democracy. It is a role that I've seen the United States undertake in struggling democracies around the world -- working with both government and civil society organizations. And it's a role that to me most deeply reflects our own commitment to the principles of justice and freedom.

In preparing for this trip, I've heard amazing stories of how Salvadorans have foregone the hatreds and differences of the past -- and come together in the spirit of cooperation.

A former army colonel and an ex-guerilla fighter working side by side to rebuild schools, roads and wells in a former region of conflict. They embraced on the side of the road, marveling how a few years earlier, they had been trying to kill each other, and were now engaged in a common effort to improve their community.

The mayors of six small towns in one war-torn region -- from different political parties -- who overcame their initial instincts to split limited resources among each town. They decided to put cooperation over conflict -- combining their funds to build a road linking the two most needy and remote villages. And as a result, those war-ravaged ghost towns have been transformed into flourishing communities. Bombed out buildings are the foundations for new homes -- and silent, deserted streets are now filled with the voices of children.

Today, I listened to Lorena Pena, a leading women from the FMLN and now a member of El Salvador's legislature -- who was the sole survivor of her brothers and sisters who died during the war. She told us how she didn't think she could sit down at the same table with her adversaries. Yet she recognized -- as so many did -- that the nation faced problems that everyone had to come together to solve.

And I listened to Ana Guadalupe Martinez -- who said she cried when she signed the paper to demobilize the weapons of war. She believed those weapons were her protection -- but she was able to overcome her fears -- and be a vital part of the peace process.

Yet as strong as the spirit of reconciliation is today -- I recognize that the memories of your violent past are never far beneath the surface. Last night you marked the 9th anniversary of the murder of the six Jesuits, their house keeper and her daughter. That cold blooded act -- and the murder of so many of El Salvador's religious leaders -- dramatized for Americans how brutal this war had become, and that it was time to find a way to end it. And we will always remember the four American nuns who were killed here, martyrs to their mission of peace.

I can only imagine the pain that such memories must still bring the families of the victims and all the citizens of this country. Yet such memories must also be powerful reminders of how far you've come -- and how determined you are that you will never, ever, go back.

The progress that all of you have made here in El Salvador is very real. So are the challenge you face ahead, as you turn your extraordinary energy and spirit to the tasks of the future -- building a strong economy, expanding the tools of opportunity, protecting human rights, and deepening the roots of democracy.

Women have always been the primary victims of war. Today, you have put down the guns of war. Yet crime continues to block your dreams of peace and **security**. And women are once again the victims. I want to talk to you today about one aspect of that crime -- the violence that too many women in your country and in my country suffer every day -- in their homes -- at the hands of their husbands, partners, or fathers. Domestic violence is now recognized as the most pervasive human rights violation in the world. Here in El Salvador, one in six women have been sexually assaulted, and the number of domestic abuse complaints at one agency topped 10,000 last year. Between 25% and 50% of women throughout Latin America have reportedly been victims of domestic violence.

The problem is all pervasive -- yet very difficult to see. Every country on earth shares a dark secret. Too often, the women we see shopping at the markets, working at their jobs, or caring for their children by day go home at night and live in fear. Not fear of an invading army or a natural disaster or even a stranger in an alley -- but fear of the very people, family members, whom they are supposed to depend upon for help and comfort. This is the trust-destroying terror that attends every step of a victim of violence.

For these women, home provides inadequate refuge; the law little protection; and public opinion, even less sympathy. That's why we must say over and over again, in the strongest possible voice: we do not believe that violence against women is "simply cultural" -- we believe it is simply criminal.

The devastating effects of domestic violence on women are enormous. The physical injury, mental illness, and terrible loss of confidence limits the capacities of women to fulfill their God-given potential. We are also learning about the direct economic costs of domestic violence in terms of job loss, decreased productivity in the workplace, and absenteeism.

According to the World Bank, one work day in every five lost by women for health reasons is the result of problems associated with domestic violence.

Studies by the Inter-American Development Bank -- which has done pioneering work in this area -- show how domestic violence is a key factor in a country's ability to sustain economic growth. Some of you may have attended a conference on domestic violence that the IDB convened in Washington, DC last year. There's also a powerful connection between domestic violence and the unending cycle of women in poverty.

The effects of violence on children -- our next generation of leaders -- are devastating as well. We know that children from families in which women are victims of domestic abuse are three times more likely to require medical care -- and have a much harder time at school. Children of abusive fathers not only repeat the behavior of their own children -- but commit violent acts in the larger society as well.

Here in El Salvador, the children who were the most vulnerable victims of the war continue to suffer from physical and mental abuse. Over half of El Salvador's street children had a family member killed during the war -- or seen their homes destroyed. Yet even more of them have experienced violence at home.

The costs of domestic violence -- in shattered lives, diminished dreams, and weakened economies -- is devastating. Yet here in El Salvador -- you have proven once again that you can come together to solve the most difficult problems. I know that your First Lady is playing a significant role in combating domestic violence.

When I met her at the White House last year -- this was the subject most uppermost in her mind. And I remember she went over to our Justice Department -- to learn more about what our country was doing to combat domestic violence.

I'm proud that the United States -- through USAID -- has worked with you in your efforts to end domestic violence and expand the rights of El Salvador's citizens. And we will continue to do so, as you strengthen the rule of law, ensure the new legal codes are understood and applied fairly, open up new opportunities for citizens, and make democracy work -- at the local level.

Today, I visited the offices of the Salvadoran Institute of Women's Development (ISDEMU) where Mrs. Calderon has been a moving force. I met women who work on the national hotline -- which is such an important resource for victims of domestic violence. ISDEMU is a model of public/private partnership -- leading El Salvador's efforts to combat domestic violence through a combination of legal, social, and economic supports for women. Perhaps the most powerful moment of my visit there was to look at an exhibit hanging on the wall of the weapons that have been used to batter and violate women -- knives, machetes, and wooden clubs. And to hear how they taught the people who came to the Center that when a one year old child is beaten with a wooden spoon -- that too is violence that must be stopped.

Through a series of historic legal reforms, women and their families have gained greater rights-- including the right to free legal counsel and child support. And for the first time in your history -- domestic violence is finally being called what it is -- a criminal offense.

The impact of your efforts on women's lives cannot be overstated. I've heard the story of Maria, a 32-year old mother of two who suffered years of violence, afraid to act out of fear of reprisals against her children. But thanks to a public outreach campaign, she asked for help, and was immediately given protective services. She has since obtained a divorce, received counseling; and been given ownership of her family home. And today -- I listened to an abusive husband -- who is learning how to deal with his anger -- and stop his violent behavior.

I'm pleased that the First Lady is hosting this forum on domestic violence -- to put the nation's spotlight on this terrible problem, and to build on the remarkable progress already being made here. By sharing ideas, forging strategies, and learning from each other about what has worked to bring down the rate of domestic violence in your communities, you can help women end the silence -- and the torment -- forever.

What many of you have done in your towns and communities has already saved lives. What you will do together can save many more.

We have learned so much. Whether it was at the UN Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing three years ago -- or the Vital Voices Conference just a few weeks ago in Montevideo, including representatives from your own country -- we have learned what we can accomplish when we come together to raise our voices, forge a common future, and hold our governments accountable for taking concrete steps to advance the status of women.

We've also learned that if we are to create a world in which women and children can live without fear of violence -- then we must do more than change the laws, as important as those legal reforms are. We must do more than break the silence, as important as it is to raise our voices on behalf of those who are silenced by fear. We must also ensure that women have the tools of opportunity they need to be full and equal partners in their societies.

For women to live free of violence -- they must have access to education. It's the single most powerful tool to raise the status of women and girls -- and should be the birthright of every citizen -- of every nation.

For women to live free of violence -- they must have access to credit. I've seen the lives of women in Central American and around the world be transformed as a result of a small micro-credit loan, as they become more economically independent, and gain confidence to play a greater role in the economic and political life of their countries.

For women to live free of violence -- they must have access to health care for themselves and their children -- including family planning.

For women to live free of violence -- we must recognize -- once and for all -- that no nation can move forward unless every citizen is valued and treated with dignity, and given the opportunity to fully contribute to his or her society's political and economic life.

This region of the world is undergoing a profound economic, democratic, and social renewal. As a result, millions of people now enjoy the right to freely elect their own leaders; engage actively in political life; speak freely, and meet in support or opposition to a cause. Yet you still face major challenges that keep your dreams of a secure and peaceful nation from being fulfilled. There is much work still to be done to bring down crime -- including domestic violence; continue judicial reforms; deepen grass roots democracy; and lift your families out of the cycle of poverty.

And now, you must come together again, from the national halls of government to town halls, across all parties and ages, men and women, to rebuild from the devastation of Hurricane Mitch.

I am more convinced than ever -- given the courage and determination of your people -- that you will do just that. I'm here today to underscore my own country's unswerving commitment to support your efforts not only to rebuild your communities in the aftermath of the hurricane -- but to advance the cause of peace and prosperity that you have sacrificed so much -- and so long -- to achieve.

As the world celebrates the 50th anniversary of the UN Declaration of Human Rights, I am reminded of the words of one of America's greatest peace makers who played an historic role in bringing the people of our country together in a time of violence and division. A few blocks from here -- the words of Robert F. Kennedy are embedded in stone. "Some people see things as they are, and say, why? I dream of things that never were, and say, why not?"

The people of El Salvador have a right to dream of a future of peace, justice, and human dignity. And they have a right to see that dream become a reality in the 21st Century.

Thank you.

**Remarks of First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton at FOSREF
Port-au-Prince, Republic of Haiti
November 22, 1998**

I am very pleased to be here with Mrs. Geri Préval. She and I have become friends over the years as we have worked together in meetings on many of these important issues.

I am particularly pleased to have my own opportunity to visit FOSREF. I have heard about your work for a number of years and I am pleased to see it for myself. I want to thank Tim Wirth, because he was the first person who brought it to my attention. At that time, I also learned about the Call for Action, which has made such an important contribution to creating a strategy to deal with Haiti's population issues, sexually-transmitted diseases, maternal mortality and other pressing reproductive health issues.

It is very exciting for me to hear these young people speak for themselves. I want to thank Annick, and David, and Regine and Ronald for speaking not only for themselves individually but for many, many other Haitian youths. Sometimes, adults don't listen; we should follow the advice: listen to learn, learn to listen. Because if we listen to our young people, they will tell us that they want opportunities to be responsible, they want structures in which they can grow, they want to know what the right things to do are, and they need adults and programs like FOSREF to help them. So I am particularly pleased to have a chance to hear from you, and I want to thank everyone who participated in the sketch. I thought it was very effective, and there were some good actors in that sketch. There is a future for some of you, I think.

Dr. Moise, your leadership, here in FOSREF, is extraordinary and we hope that your model will spread throughout Haiti, that it will reach more and more young people, and that the young ambassadors of responsible behavior will be able to travel far and wide to talk with more young men and women.

I am very honored to be able to accompany three very distinguished Americans here today. These distinguished Americans represent American foundations that are very interested in Haiti and particularly in the youth of Haiti. I want to thank Mr. William Gates and the Gates Foundation for their very generous contribution. I want to thank Ellen Marshall for the important work that the UN Foundation is doing here in Haiti. And I want to thank my friend Vicky and the Summit Foundation for her deep concern about youth everywhere and for her contribution that she announced today.

The United States government will continue to support the work that takes place here, because we know that this is one of the very best programs anywhere in the world. And I want to repeat that, because I want all Haitians to know that this is not just a good program for Haiti, this is a good program for the entire world. And I hope you are proud of what you have achieved here.

USAID has supported FOSREF since its very beginning, 10 years ago. And this year, USAID

will provide \$780,000 of additional support for its work in family planning and maternal and adolescent health. I am also pleased to announce today that we will be delivering 10 bicycles to you, so that the young people who are traveling around the city to meet with other young people will have a reliable mode of transportation.

[segment inaudible]

The challenges facing Haiti with respect to population and sexually-transmitted diseases and maternal and infant mortality are extremely, extremely difficult to address. As we heard earlier, 45 percent of your population is under the age of 15. You have many, many young people who die before they are even one year of age, you have many mothers dying in child birth, you have many mothers dying from abortion. It is in Haiti's long term interest to do everything we can to deal with these problems, to help give every boy and girl a chance to live up to his or her God-given potential.

The work that the Haitian Task Force for Population and Reproductive Health is doing in its Call for Action is a model for other countries. I commend the people who have been part of putting the Call for Action together. This report recognizes that no country --no country anywhere --can move forward if women do not have access to quality reproductive health services, if girls are not educated and if young people are not taught responsibility and how to take control of their own health and well being. So we are here today to celebrate FOSREF's ten years, to announce additional support from your friends in the United States, and to let you know that we will stand in solidarity with you, as you continue to address the problems that stand in the way of Haiti being all that it can be.

Yesterday, at an event at our Ambassador's residence--and I am pleased that the United States Ambassador and his wife are with us today--I thanked the people of Haiti for the many wonderful Haitian-Americans who make so many contributions to the United States. Haitian-Americans who are doctors and nurses in hospitals, who are teachers in our schools and universities, who serve with distinction in the military, who are leaders in business. There is no difference between Haitians here and Haitians in our country, except for the systems and the structures that you do not yet have in place to support human development and to provide education and economic opportunity. But if Haiti is able in the next several years to move forward with its democracy and to provide support for the economy and the education and the health care of its people, then I see a very bright future indeed. God bless you and God bless Haiti.

**Remarks of First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton to
Representatives of Haitian Civil Society Organizations
Residence of the U.S. Ambassador, Port-au-Prince, Republic of Haiti
November 21, 1998**

Thank you very much, Ambassador Carney, Mrs. Vicky Butler. I am delighted to be here at the United States Ambassador's residence. And I am especially pleased to be with Mrs. Geri Preval, who has become a friend of mine through meetings of the First Ladies of our hemisphere.

I want to thank Mrs. Yves for that beautiful embroidered tablecloth and accompanying napkins; when I finally get a house, I will make good use of that. I will also be very proud and honored to hang this magnificent work by Mr. Dodard.

This is my second visit to Haiti. My husband and I came here twenty-three years ago, shortly after we married. At that time, we bought some art, which we have taken with us everywhere we lived. And Haitian art now hangs both in the White House and Camp David. It is taken me twenty-three years to come back. My first effort, as you may know, had to be postponed because of the hurricane, but I am very pleased that I was able to return today and I will take full credit, Mr. Ambassador, for the good weather.

Haiti and the United States are closely joined in friendship and partnership, through our citizens and our shared history, as the two oldest independent nations in this hemisphere. The United States has also been blessed by the many positive contributions of Haitian-Americans.

I want first to express my sympathy on behalf of my husband and the American people for the widespread damage to agriculture, loss of property and life, suffered as a result of Hurricane Georges. Tomorrow, with Mrs. Preval, I will announce additional disaster relief aid from the United States Government, to assist the Haitian people rebuild from the hurricane.

I am especially pleased that I could meet with you, the leaders of civil society, tonight. You play a significant and increasing role in building democracy and expanding opportunity for the Haitian people. After constitutional government was restored in 1994, civil society organizations began to spring up and expand. I heard of one such group, the Union of Valiant Women, who sang a song that begins: the rain of democracy is falling, the flood of hope is running, it's time for us to organize. That is a good song not only for Haiti, but for any democracy around our world.

Over 1,400 civil society organizations have participated in USAID sponsored dialogues. You have discussed how to set goals in areas like fighting poverty, education, and economic development. I have heard that civil society organizations have promoted over 2250 local projects, and are active in over 100 of Haiti's communities. The Haitian people's victory over de facto military rule, political violence and repression is an inspiration to freedom loving people around the world. But now, as with many new democracies, you face new challenges: to strengthen the principles of democracy and the Rule of Law here in Haiti.

I have just come from visiting Honduras, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Guatemala and the Dominican Republic. In each country, I spoke about the importance of civil society, and the role that non governmental organizations are playing to bring people together --people who have been on the opposite sides of terrible conflicts --to build a common future. I have seen how important it is, in countries that do not yet have a long history of freedom and democratic institutions, to learn the art of political compromise and reconciliation; to understand the importance of respect for one's political opponents; and to show the willingness to engage a dialogue and conciliation. All those practices are the heart of a strong and viable democracy. My country has been practicing democracy for more than 220 years. We still face challenges. People still are required to work with other people whom they do not respect and they do not like. But we have learned that it is important to put the good of our country ahead of our personal and political beliefs.

All of you gathered here this evening have an opportunity to continue working with those inside and outside of government to bring people together, to take the necessary steps forward for all the people of Haiti. I respect the work of the civil society groups that have called for an end to the current political impasse: grassroots groups, labor organizations, and business groups like CLED have been active in encouraging resolution of the current conflict.

You have also been building bridges between the private sector and the government. Those of you who follow American politics may remember that bridges are my husband's favorite metaphors. He is always talking about building a bridge to the 21st century and building bridges of understanding between competing groups. And those of you who do follow our politics know that from time to time he has opposition to his efforts to build such bridges. But he has continued to persevere because he knows that building bridges helps to build a stronger democracy.

I also want to encourage you to continue your work in the area of judicial reform. Strengthening the Rule of Law is vital for any functioning democracy, and I am pleased that our government can assist you in these efforts.

We also have to continue to provide opportunity to the people of Haiti, and as Mrs. Preval said, we know your challenges are great: crushing poverty; high illiteracy; inadequate health care; a high incidence of domestic violence. Those are all social indicators of the problems that face Haiti as it attempts to make progress toward a better future.

But the Haitian people are known to be people of enormous spirit, strength and resourcefulness. Many of you are working with men and women, boys and girls, to improve conditions.

I want to say a special word about the particular vulnerability of women, not only in Haiti, but in many countries around the world. I want to recognize the work of COFAL, for the work you have done with women caught up in the legal system. You also recognize that education is the future not only to democracy but also to economic development. I applaud the efforts of the steering committee that has been formed to promote women's and girls' education. In study after study done around the world, the single most important investment any country can make in improving social and economic conditions is to invest in girls and women's education.

I also congratulate the Haiti task force on reproductive health and family planning. This task force serves as a model for USAID's population strategy, for its innovative and global vision in addressing Haiti's population issues. Reproductive health, family planning and women's education go together as a way of empowering and enabling women to be full participants in this society.

I also appreciate the efforts of the Haitian consultative committee of USAID's civil society project. Your contributions to the restoration of the constitutional order and the strengthening of civil society are exemplary.

I began by saying how proud the United States is for the many contributions of Haitian-Americans. Haitian-American doctors and nurses are in many of our hospitals all over our country. Haitian-American teachers are in our schools. Haitian-American military officers serve with distinction. Haitian-American business leaders are making great contributions to our economy. I do not believe that the Haitians who immigrated to America are fundamentally different from the Haitians who remained here in Haiti. The problems that Haiti faces are solvable, especially by people who have already demonstrated their dedication to freedom and their capacity for hard work.

The importance of civil society cannot be overstated. President Kennedy used to say: On this earth, God's work is our own. Alleviating poverty, providing education and health care, offering economic opportunity to men and women, all of which are aimed at creating dignity and independence for the individual person is God's work. I salute all of you for the work you are doing to strengthen democracy in Haiti, respect the human rights of all Haitians and build a future worthy of the Haitian people. Thank you all very much.

First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton
Remarks at MotherCare Event
Brother Pedro de Betancourt Hospital
Antigua, Guatemala - November 18, 1998

Thank you very much. I am absolutely delighted to be here. I want to add my word of greetings to all who are gathered here. To Mrs. Arzu, the minister, ambassadors and all associated with this hospital. I particularly appreciate Dr. Jose del Busto and Marco Tulio Sosa, Dr. Bocaletti and Ms. Toj for the work that they have done in creating this program and in providing needed medical care for so many women and children. Thank you for the opportunity to visit this hospital and to see firsthand, as I did, the training of the midwives who are seated behind me and educated me in a very short period of time about what the difference training means to their ability to care for women.

It is very important that we recognize that here in Guatemala maternal mortality has been, and remains, a very serious issue, as Dr. Bocaletti said. You are to be congratulated for making safe motherhood a major focus of the health care proposals and programs here. The fact that the Guatemala peace accords set a goal to reduce maternal and infant mortality rates by 50 percent over the next five years is a real testament to the understanding of the leaders who devised the peace accords. Because, as I have said on several occasions already here during my visit, it is one thing to end armed combat and persuade combatants to put down their weapons, but it is an entirely different thing to make peace meaningful in the lives of people. And to a family, the loss of a member through combat or the loss of a mother to unsafe delivery is the same kind of loss. So the fact that you recognize in the peace accords that you had to do something about maternal and infant mortality is a great testament to the wisdom of the Guatemala leaders and people. You have been making progress over the past 20 years reducing mortality by 40 percent, yet it is true that Guatemala still has the highest infant mortality rate in Central America. So this is an urgent problem. As urgent, again as Dr. Bocaletti said, as the loss of life from Hurricane Mitch.

It is also clear that you have recognized that your nation's indigenous people have historically had less access to health care services than the rest of the population. As a consequence, infant and maternal mortality in rural indigenous communities is more than double the national average. And only one in three indigenous mothers can get a sick child to a formal health clinic. And only one in four receives professional prenatal care. And fewer than 20 percent have access to family planning services. That's why what you are doing here at this hospital is so very important.

You are not only improving the health of women and children, but you're showing a sensitivity to your patients. Ensuring that the doctors, nurses and midwives who care for them can speak to them in their own language. By showing sensitivity to their customs and understandings, you are also building trust between different communities. And the most important element of the success of the peace accords, I believe, is the development of trust. I am pleased that the United

States government has been your partners as you work to overcome the inequities in access to health care that keep so many women, particularly indigenous women, from receiving the integrated health and family planning services that they need to lead healthy lives.

Guatemala's health strategy builds in part on a USAID pilot program called MotherCare. MotherCare means exactly what it says -- that we have to care for mothers. And as I have been privileged to travel around the world, I have seen many different societies improve the care of mothers. I was thinking as I watched the midwives perform their role-playing for me where the father summoned a midwife who was not trained at first to take care of his wife, the mother of his children, and then when it was clear that the untrained midwife did not know what to do, the father summoned the trained midwife, who understood immediately what the problem was and took care of the mother. I was thinking of being in a place very far from Guatemala-Nepal in the Himalayan mountains. I went to a similar occasion where the midwives there were also learning what it meant to take care of mothers. They too were practicing "mother care". And it's not all that complicated if we train midwives to recognize what they can do well and then to feel comfortable in referring patients who need medical care to a hospital in time to receive it.

Because you have been making so much progress and because of Guatemala's commitment to lowering maternal and infant mortality, I am very pleased to announce a \$1.6 million contribution to the USAID-funded MotherCare project. This contribution will support Guatemala's efforts both within the government and with NGOs to improve women's access to basic health services. I am particularly pleased that this program involves indigenous families, especially women in designing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating these efforts. I think it is important that we ask the customers of health care as we ask the customers of any other service if they are getting what they need. If they feel comfortable with their health care providers. What else could be done to improve the outcome of their health services.

I'm also very pleased to announce that we brought with us from the United States a fetal monitor. We were told that the hospital needed a fetal monitor. And this piece of machinery will help keep both mothers and their babies alive and healthy. I would like to thank General Electric Medical for this generous donation of the fetal monitor.

As the people of Guatemala make your transition, your historic transition from war to peace, you have recognized that access to education and to health care are fundamental rights of all citizens. And I congratulate everyone associated with this hospital, everyone associated with community efforts that train midwives and help provide better access, and I congratulate the government for understanding the importance of health care as a means of uplifting people's aspirations and hopes and making clear that they are valued members of a larger community. My country is committed to working with you as the health and welfare of the people of Guatemala is improved, and as you build a stronger, more peaceful, prosperous and democratic nation. Thank you very much for letting me see the progress you are making.

FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
EDUCATION REFORM EVENT
COLONIAL MUSEUM
ANTIGUA, GUATEMALA
NOVEMBER 18, 1998

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS: First Lady Arzu; Ambassador Planty; Arabella Castro, minister of Education; Mrs. Otilia Lux [LOOSH] de Coti (indigenous woman educator and founding member of the Girls Education Association); Guillermina Herrera, dean of the University Rafael Landivar; Floridalma Meza (director of National Literacy Council); Gretchen Dykstra (board member, Save the Children); -- and most important -- the young people here today.

First, I want to say how pleased I am to be here at this Colonial Museum -- the site of the first university in all of Central America -- founded in the 16th Century.

And today, the people of Guatemala see education as the surest way to fulfill the promise of peace. The Peace Accords called for broad-based education reform, guarantees of equal access, and commitments to quality. And there is no more powerful reason to fulfill that promise than the children who are with us today -- Guatemala's future leaders.

I was so pleased to see the five girls who met me upon my arrival. I had met them in Washington at the International Girl's Education Conference -- and I was so impressed with their spirit and intelligence back then. And as they took me around to the exhibition booths just now -- I was amazed at how much they've grown and matured since I last saw them. So this event holds special meaning for me today.

The challenge before you is daunting -- as we have already heard. Too many Guatemalan children fail to advance in reading or math; not enough graduate; and there are major inequities among those who live in rural, indigenous communities. Despite the fact that over half of all Guatemalan school aged children are indigenous -- only 8% have access to schooling in their mother tongue. Such disparities in education can only prolong the economic and social divisions of this country -- at a time when you should be reaping the benefits of peace and reconciliation.

Today -- we speak the universal language of opportunity. The chance for every citizen -- young and old; urban and rural; rich and poor; -- to gain the skills necessary to thrive in a democratic, market-based economy of the 21st Century. Backed by the Peace Accords -- the government and the people of Guatemala have made education reform a top priority. And I'm here today to re-affirm my country's strong commitment to be your partner in that important mission.

I'm proud to announce a series of partnerships between our two countries that will strengthen your education reform in three different ways. First, we are providing \$9.1 million in USAID funds to support integrated community literacy programs. These funds will finance a partnership among Save the Children, the University of Massachusetts, the Alliance for Youth Community Development, and Guatemala's National Committee on Literacy. This money will help boost Guatemala's low literacy rate -- the lowest in all of Latin America. It is estimated that nearly 75% of indigenous people are illiterate.

No country entering the competition of the global economy in the 21st century can afford to condemn so many of its citizens to the margins of society. And no democracy can afford to leave so many behind. This program will permit 250,000 out of school youth and adults to learn to read and write.

I will be going in a few minutes to a hospital where we will speak of high infant and maternal mortality statistics here in Guatemala. There is much that access to quality health services can do to lower those statistics. But the single most powerful force to ensure mothers survive childbirth; that infants live beyond their first birthday, and that children have adequate nutrition -- is giving women the skills to read and write.

Second, USAID is providing \$2 million for leadership scholarships for indigenous students, again in partnership with the Rafael Landivar University and the bilingual education community. And today, we heard from a recipient of one of those scholarships -- and how it has changed her life. We must continue to work as hard as we can to close the gap of opportunity and skills among the indigenous people.

And third -- we are adding \$800,000 to expand girls education in Guatemala -- in partnership with your minister of education and the National Council for Mayan Education.

Increasingly, governments around the world are recognizing that investments in the education of women and girls is the single most important investment they can make to improve the lives of all citizens, and to strengthen their nation's economy. And I'm pleased that our governments are partners in opening up these new educational opportunities.

As Guatemala moves forward in this process of reconciliation and peace -- it has a unique opportunity to ensure all its citizens can move forward together, and share equally in the benefits of peace and greater prosperity. Education remains the key to your future. And I commend you for continuing to make progress in this most vital area.

And now, I would like to invite the signers to come up for the signing ceremony.

*Jym
Schwarz*

THE FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
FOSREF CLINIC
HAITI
NOVEMBER 22, 1998

- I'm pleased to be here with Mrs. Preval at this wonderful clinic – and to join the people who make it all possible: Dr. Moise (executive director of FOSREF; Annick Supplice (FOSREF representative); our foundation leaders William Gates (Gates Foundation); Ellen Marshall (UN Foundation); and Vicki Sant (Summit Foundation); and all of you here who work at the clinic, and do such an outstanding job of saving the lives and improving the health of the citizens of this community.
- FOSREF is one of the most effective health organizations in Haiti today working to confront this country's unacceptably high maternal and infant mortality rates -- currently providing some 750,000 people in six clinics throughout Port-au-Prince with reproductive health services.
- Nearly 50% of FOSREF's clients are under 24 years of age, and the decisions of young people to take their own health future into their hands is exciting to watch. The skit we just saw and the impressive words of FOSREF's peer educators explain this organization's unique success.
- My government will continue to support the work that takes place here because it is one of the very best programs reaching young people that we have seen anywhere in the world. USAID has supported FOSREF since its inception, and this year USAID will provide \$230,000 to support its work in family planning and maternal and adolescent health. And as an additional token of our regard, I am pleased to add to the mobility of the youth educators by personally handing over these ten bicycles to you.

- I am particularly pleased that our US government partnership with FOSREF will now be expanded many times over by the foundations that we have heard from today. They have recognized – as we have – that FOSREF does exception work – particularly with Haiti’s young people. And I want to personally express my appreciation to the William H. Gates Foundation; the UN Foundation; and the Summit Foundation – for your invaluable contributions to the health and well being of Haiti’s women and children.
- All of these grants – as well as USAID’s support – are being offered in response to the Haitian Task Force for Population and Reproductive Health’s powerful blueprint to address this nation’s most serious health issues – including maternal mortality; family planning, and reproductive health.
- This report recognizes that no country can move forward – socially or economically – if women don’t have access to quality reproductive health services; if girls aren’t educated; if young people aren’t taught to take control of their own health and well being.
- Haiti faces daunting health challenges – with one in ten of Haiti’s poor women dying in childbirth; with a growing population that could double by the year 2027; with the highest maternal mortality rate in the hemisphere.

- I want to thank all of you here today for all that you are doing now – and in the future -- to turn these statistics around. I also want to underscore my own country's commitment to continue to support your efforts – as you rebuild from the hurricane; as you expand the tools of opportunity for your people – including health care; and as you strengthen your democracy.
- I will be leaving Haiti later this afternoon. But I will never forget the important work you are doing here.

**FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
VISIT TO PERNIER IRRIGATION SITE
HAITI
NOVEMBER 21, 1998**

- I want to begin by expressing to the people of Pernier and the people of Haiti the deepest sympathy on the part of my husband and myself and the American people for the devastation and loss of life caused by Hurricane Georges. Our hearts and prayers go out to you in this difficult time.
- We can see the damage that this hurricane has done to the irrigation canal – which is so important to farmers and communities in this area. This community has suffered in other ways as well – in ruined crops, destroyed roads; and lost homes. I’ve been told that hundreds of families living in these mountains and along the riverbanks need special help.
- Unfortunately, one of the reasons that the damage has been so extreme is because of the history of deforestation here in Haiti – which makes the soil much more vulnerable to erosion. That’s why protecting the watershed in the upper regions is so important for the future of farming in this region. If you protect the soil on your land – then you preserve the land below you as well.
- Many of you have already lost your homes. You can’t afford to lose your livelihoods as well. Today, I’m pleased that we are to witness the signing of USAID grants to a series of partners to help protect this watershed.
- I want to thank our partners -- at Canadian Center for Consultation and International Cooperation; the Pan American Development Foundation, the Government of Haiti, and Winrock International, an American NGO – for joining the farmers and communities of this region to help protect the environment and their agricultural future.

- A \$1.3 million grant will help farmers restore irrigation canals like this one – so they can bring precious water to their crops. A \$50,000 grant to Winrock will help reopen footpaths and access roads, so that the people of this area can go to and from the market, and get their lives back to normal.
- In addition, I am pleased to announce \$2.1 million in additional USAID disaster aid for emergency food aid and the repairing of rural health centers, irrigation systems and roads. This brings the total disaster relief to Haiti since Hurricane Georges to \$14.1 million. In addition, we are targeting some of AID's regular programs to areas that were the hardest hit by the storm.
- On behalf of the United States government, I am also pleased that we are able to provide tools and seed today to help with this relief effort.
- The people of Haiti have already shown they are made of strong stuff. I recognize the enormously difficult task you face in rebuilding homes and communities and livelihoods in the aftermath of the hurricane. But I also know that your unbreakable spirit and determination will prevail. What you do here will benefit your children and grandchildren. And I'm pleased that my government is working hand in hand with you in this important effort.

FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
CIVIL SOCIETY RECEPTION
PORT AU PRINCE, HAITI
NOVEMBER 21, 1998

I'm so pleased to be here in Haiti ~~for the first time~~, and to see firsthand the ~~progress~~ ^{STANES} you are making since democracy was restored in 1994. Haiti and the United States are closely joined through our citizens and through our shared history as the two oldest independent nations in the hemisphere.

I first want to express my sorrow, on behalf of my husband and the American people, for the widespread damage and loss of property and life you have suffered as a result of Hurricane Georges. I'm here in part to announce additional disaster relief aid to assist the Haitian people rebuild from that terrible storm.

I want to congratulate the leaders of civil society here – who are playing an ever increasing role in building democracy and expanding the tools of opportunity for the Haitian people. I've learned that right from the beginning – after your constitutional government was restored in 1994 – that civil society organizations began to expand. I heard about a meeting of grassroots leaders – called the Union of Valiant Women – who came together to discuss the social and economic challenges ahead. And they sang a song that began: "The rain of democracy is falling; the flood of hope is running; it's time for us to organize." And that's what you and the Haitian people have been doing every since.

Over 1400 civil society organizations have participated in USAID sponsored dialogues -- to discuss how to set goals in areas like poverty, education, and economic development. I've heard that civil society organizations have promoted over 2250 local projects – in over 100 of Haiti's communities.

Your victory over de facto military rule and political violence and repression has been an inspiration to freedom loving people around the world. But now you face new challenges – to strengthen the principles of democracy and the rule of law here in Haiti.

I have just come from visiting El Salvador and Guatemala, where I was impressed with the role that civil society and non governmental organizations – in partnership with local mayors and with national leaders -- are playing in those countries to bring people together who have fought on opposite sides for so long – to build a common future. And I have seen how important it is – particularly in countries that do not have a long history of freedom and democratic institutions – to learn the art of compromise and reconciliation. It's vitally important we all understand that the ability to recognize and respect both sides – and the willingness to engage in dialogue and conciliation – are at the heart of a strong and viable democracy.

You are facing a difficult period here in Haiti as you work to create a fully functioning government. And I urge the people in this room to continue to work with those inside and outside of government to bring people together and take the necessary steps forward. I want to recognize the work of many of you here – particularly the civil society groups that have called for an end to the current impasse -- including grassroots and labor organizations, and business groups like CLED – who are active in encouraging resolution of the current conflict – and building bridges between the private sector and the government.

I also want to encourage you to continue your work in the area of judicial reform. Strengthening the rule of law is vital to a functioning democracy – and I'm pleased that my own country is assisting you in this effort.

We recognize that to fulfill the promise of democracy – we need to begin with a guarantee of fair and free elections, and insure a strong and independent judiciary. People also need to have the tools of opportunity to continue to move forward. Here in Haiti, your challenges are great. Haiti still suffers from crushing poverty -- due in large part to a high rate of illiteracy (33% of women from the ages of 15-49 have no education – and there's only 23% enrollment of children in rural areas.); perhaps the weakest health system in the entire region (Haiti has the highest maternal mortality rate in the hemisphere); and a high incidence of domestic violence (more than 70% of the female population has experienced some form of violence).

But you have shown that you are people of enormous spirit and resourcefulness, and I want to recognize the work that many of you are engaged in to improve the health and well being of the Haitian people. I know that women are a particularly vulnerable group in Haiti and in all developing countries -- and I want to recognize the work of COFAL – for your ground breaking efforts to assist women detained in prison by improving their understanding of their rights, and giving them professional legal counsel.

Education is the key to a strong democracy and to economic development, and I applaud the efforts of the steering committee that has been formed across civil society organizations to promote women's and girls education. I also congratulate the Haiti Task Force on Reproductive Health and Family Planning – which serves as a model for USAID's population strategy -- for its innovative and global vision for addressing the population issues.

Volunteerism is a major building block of democracy and your collective actions exemplify that spirit. In particular, I extend congratulations to the Haitian Consultative Committee of USAID's civil society project. Your contributions to the restoration of constitutional order and to the strengthening of civil society are exemplary.

The efforts of all of you and the Haitian people will ensure that Haiti's still young democracy will take root – and grow. The Haitian people have demonstrated their dedication to freedom and hard work. And I'm so pleased that I've had this opportunity to meet you – and to learn more about how you are moving your people – and your nation – forward.

First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton
Statement Upon Arrival
Port au Prince, Haiti
November 21, 1998

I am delighted to be in Haiti. As the two oldest independent countries in the hemisphere, we share both a common past and a common future.

I have come to reinforce the strong bonds of family, friendship, and history between our nations and to congratulate the people of Haiti on the road you taken – rising above oppression and returning democracy and freedom to your country. And, on behalf of my husband and the American people, I want to let you know that we will continue to stand beside you as you rebuild in the aftermath of Hurricane Georges, overcome the current challenges to democracy, and move forward to make sure all Haitians have tools of opportunity – such as health care, jobs, and education – to succeed in the next century.

Since the Hurricane struck Haiti, the thoughts and prayers of the American people have been with you. And I am pleased to have the opportunity to visit Pernier Fatima Canal and announce new contributions that the U.S. is making to help you rebuild your agricultural foundation and your entire nation.

I am looking forward to spending time with President and Mrs. Preval; meeting with representatives of civil society; and seeing firsthand the economic, social, and democratic progress that has taken place in Haiti over the last four years.

In particular, I will visit the Basile Moreau School, a model school, where parents are taking an active role in making sure their children have a strong education and future. I'll visit the Well-Being Committee of Pignon Hospital and learn about how the power of microcredit, health care, and community participation are being used to improve the lives of Haitian women and their families. And I will go to the FOSREF clinic and see how family planning and health education are helping to reduce maternal mortality, infant mortality, and HIV/AIDS, especially among young people.

I know these are times of both promise and challenge for the people of Haiti. But, just as the U.S. stood beside you as you battled oppression in the past, we will stand with you as you work to build a strong democracy, economy, and civil society for the future.

FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
MOTHERCARE EVENT
BROTHER PEDRO DE BETANCOURT HOSPITAL
GUATEMALA CITY, GUATEMALA
NOVEMBER 18, 1998

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS: Ambassador Planty; Marco Tulio Sosa, Minister of Health; Dr. Jose del Busto, director of hospital; Dr. Elizabeth de Bocaletti, director of Mothercare; and Letitia Toj [LETISHA TOO], director of R'xin Tinamit [RESHEEN TEENAMEET]. And the many doctors and health care professionals here -- who every day help to save and improve the lives of those in your care.

Thank you for this opportunity to tour this hospital, and to see first hand the extraordinary work you are doing here to promote the health of Guatemala's women and children -- particularly those who historically have been left out of the health care system.

I have just met with some of your physicians and health workers -- including two women who attended international women's conferences in Cairo and in Beijing. And once again, I am struck by how much women around the world are connected by common concerns -- and work toward common goals.

One of the most widespread problems facing women today is maternal mortality. And here in Guatemala -- you are to be congratulated for making safe motherhood a major focus of your work. Maternal mortality statistics in Guatemala, particularly for indigenous women -- is among the highest in the region. The fact that the Guatemala Peace Accords set a goal to reduce maternal and infant mortality rates by 50% over the next five years is a testament both to the depth of the problem you face -- and your determination to remedy it.

Despite a 40% reduction over the past 20 years -- Guatemala still has the highest infant mortality rate in Central America. One of the tests of the Peace Process is whether the commitment will be met to increase spending for health and education by 50% by the year 2000.

Your nation's indigenous people have historically had far less access to health care services than the rest of the population. As a consequence -- infant and maternal mortality in rural indigenous communities is more than double the national average. Only one in three indigenous mothers can get a sick child to a formal health clinic -- and only one in four receives professional, pre-natal care.

That's why what you are doing here at this hospital is so very important. You are not only improving the health of these women and their children. By insuring that patients can talk to their health providers in their own language, and by showing sensitivity toward their culture -- you are also building a new level of trust between your communities.

I'm pleased that the United States government has been your partner as you work to overcome the inequities in access to health care that keep so many women -- particularly indigenous women -- from the services they need to lead healthy lives. Guatemala's health strategy builds in part on a USAID pilot program called MotherCare.

This project encourages greater cultural sensitivity to the health of the indigenous people -- by strengthening community health care -- delivered by traditional indigenous midwives. The primary goal of this partnership is to provide quality women's and children's health services to people in their homes, their communities, and their hospitals.

Today, I'm very pleased to announce a \$1.6 million contribution to the USAID funded MotherCare project -- that will support Guatemala's efforts -- both within the government and with NGOs -- to improve women's access to basic health services. And I'm particularly pleased that this program involves indigenous families -- especially women -- in designing, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating these efforts.

I think we would all agree that the ultimate customers should define the kind of services they desire -- and should actively participate in determining how those services will be provided.

I'm also very pleased that we have been able to bring with us from the United States a fetal monitor -- which will help keep both mothers and their babies alive and healthy. I was told this is what the hospital needed. And we can thank General Electric Medical for this generous donation.

As the people of Guatemala make your historic transition from war to peace, you recognize that access to health care is a fundamental right of all citizens. And I congratulate all of you here today for taking the lead in that important mission. And today, I want to underscore my own country's commitment to not only work with you as you improve the health and welfare of all your people -- but as you build a stronger, more peaceful and democratic nation as well.

Thank you.

FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
STATEMENT ON HURRICANE MITCH
EL SALVADOR
NOVEMBER 16, 1998

[Acknowledgments] My friend and fellow First Lady, Mrs. Elizabeth Calderon Sol; Ambassador Patterson, for her leadership during this very difficult time; and Minister of Interior, Mario Acosta. Thank you to Mayor Hector Silva and the people of San Salvador, for the honor you have just given me. I also want to thank the school children who met me here today, who represent the bright future of this courageous and determined nation. And my deepest appreciation to Colonel Packett and all the US troops and AID workers here, as well as to Salvadoran troops and relief workers -- who have been working so hard over the past few days to help their fellow citizens recover from this terrible storm.

The people of this nation have endured a decade of conflict, and are now making an historic transition to peace. In the face of terrible damage from an earthquake in San Salvador in 1986, homes and roads have been rebuilt. And now, the people of El Salvador are the victims of the most powerful hurricane ever to hit the Western hemisphere. But again, the spirit of the people here is unbroken. And we stand with you today -- as we have before -- to support your efforts to move forward and rebuild your country.

I know that most of the American troops here only just arrived a few days ago. And I'm sure that already, you've found the conditions hard, and your nights sleepless. But I want you to know that there is no more important mission than the one you are fulfilling here, helping our neighbors overcome this tragic natural disaster.

As many of you know, when news of the Hurricane's damage became known, my husband immediately started working to help the people of Central America meet the most urgent needs. We dedicated \$80 million to help provide food and water for the hungry, plastic sheeting for the homeless, medicine to heal the sick and prevent disease. Engineers to rebuild roads, schools, bridges, and infrastructure; Helicopters to rescue people and deliver supplies to remote villages.

Two days ago, the President announced an additional \$45 million in military equipment and services. And he called a halt to deportations from Honduras, Nicaragua, Guatemala, and El Salvador -- through the end of the year, while we pursue longer term equitable solutions to your immigration concerns.

Today, in Honduras, I announced that the US is dramatically increasing our contributions to the Central American countries hurt by Hurricane Mitch. We are opening a new chapter in our assistance, providing emergency relief and long-term reconstruction, and making a commitment totaling more than \$250 million.

We know that the people of Central America need more help to rebuild their infrastructure. So starting this week -- the Department of Defense will bring in more helicopters, more people to build roads and bridges, more medical supplies. And in the coming weeks -- we will quadruple the number of US troops -- from 1300 to 5600.

We know that people need more food. And today, I announced an additional \$57 million in rice, beans, vegetable oil, dry milk, wheat and other basic commodities -- bringing our total US food aid to central American to \$81 million. Three shipments a day are coming in by air.

We know that so many micro-entrepreneurs throughout Central America have lost homes and businesses, now need a helping hand to get back on their feet. And today, I announced that the United States Agency for International Development and the International American Development Bank are giving \$17 million to micro financing institutions -- so they can continue to provide the loans that owners will use to rebuild their businesses, and their lives. I've met with women entrepreneurs throughout the Americas over the past few years -- and know how these small loans can help transform their lives, and the lives of their families. So I'm pleased that we can help them recover, so they can continue to contribute to their communities.

This evening, I'm very pleased to announced further American relief efforts, aimed at helping the people of this country to recover from the hurricane and its aftermath. Already, USAID has provided flood victims with rolls of plastic sheeting for temporary shelter, thousands of gallons of water, and a US relief specialist to work with you to help coordinate relief efforts.

As of today, we are creating a new Joint Task Force here in El Salvador -- similar to the one that has accomplished so much in Honduras. Task Force Eagle will coordinate US relief efforts not only here in El Salvador, but in Nicaragua and Guatemala as well -- and I've just been briefed on some of those plans to relieve the suffering, and get people back on their feet.

You have much work to do -- and soon there will be more of you to help out. Today, Secretary Cohen ordered over 560 troops to be deployed here at this staging area -- to serve the people of Central America.

I know that one of the greatest needs here is the lack of food. So I'm also pleased to announce that the USDA has approved \$10 million in low-interest loans for the purchase of food supplies in El Salvador -- doubling the current amount. In addition, USDA will provide 30,000 metric tons of wheat to respond to Salvador's food needs. And the Peace Corps is setting up a crisis corps coordinator to bring back former Peace Corps volunteers with special skills to help in your rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts.

I realize that many of you have just begun your work here -- and are just beginning to see the devastation and suffering that has done so much damage to this region and its people. But you will also see the extraordinary courage and spirit of the people of El Salvador, as they continue to help each other -- house by house, family by family, community by community.

I've already heard stories of great courage and generosity. One of the NGOs here in El Salvador has worked over the years with war veterans in one area -- helping them with their farms. Within two hours after the Hurricane struck, members of this organization immediately set about helping the veterans and their families get to higher ground.

Thanks to their courage -- and the relationship of trust they had established with the war veterans over the past few years -- 5,000 people in 14 communities were gotten out before the flood waters came in. When the water did come -- the force of it destroyed three bridges in the area. But the people were saved.

I know that many of those families are now back in their houses -- and our country -- through USAID -- is putting together a recovery package, to replant crops, to provide housing utensils like pots and pans, and to help them get their lives back together.

It always amazes me that people who themselves are suffering find the generosity of spirit to reach out to others in distress. I've heard that six helicopters from the Salvadoran Air force flew to Honduras the other day -- transporting food that this government donated -- after receiving a plea for help. And that's the spirit that will hold all of you together in the days ahead -- as American and Salvadoran troops and relief workers join forces to put this entire region back on its feet, and moving forward.

FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
VISIT TO HOGAR DEL NINO SAN VINCENTE DE PAUL
SAN SALVADOR, EL SALVADOR
NOVEMBER 17, 1998

Mrs. Calderon Sol; Sister Thelma Monges; Minister Giner; USAID's Mark Schneider; and most importantly, the children. It's a pleasure to be here at the Hogar del Nino San Vicente de Paul, which is doing such an excellent job of providing education and care to the children who need it most. In my country and in so many others, too many children are the victims of violence; and are the true victims of poverty. Here, you have given them a place to feel loved, and protected, and cared for.

This home also serves as an integrated development center that your government has recognized will help these young people not only survive -- but flourish.

The United States has a special bond with this home -- which was rebuilt after the earthquake of 1986 -- partly with funding from USAID, and partly with contributions from Salvadorans and this church. I'm even more pleased to be here to announce two new grants from USAID to support education reform in El Salvador.

Your First Lady has been a leading voice for children long before her husband became president. And I can attest to her powerful advocacy on behalf of children at the First Lady's conferences over the past four years.

So I'm pleased to join with her today at this wonderful children's home -- which expresses so eloquently the importance of ensuring equal access to education for every child. What you offer at this school is essential if children are to have real opportunities to grow and flourish; if nations are to grow and prosper; if democracies are to endure.

El Salvador has made impressive progress in its school reform efforts. Enrollment rates have been growing, and progress is being made to decentralize school authority over budget and teacher hiring. And in 1997 -- the World Bank presented your Minister of Education with its International Award of Excellence.

We all know that education is El Salvador's -- and every country's best hope for the future. And toward that end, I'm very pleased to announce a \$1.8 million grant from USAID that will help early childhood education become an integral part of El Salvador's education system. This initiative will support EDIFAM, which will assist poor rural families with pre-school children. These efforts will be carried out in collaboration with the Institute for the Protection of Minors.

The program builds on what we've learned in my own country -- that children from poor families; children in single parent households; and children whose parents have left to find work -- have special needs. They need special help and support to compete effectively in school. And without it, they are the ones most likely to fall behind, repeat grades, and drop out -- before acquiring the basic skills they need to survive in the modern world. And when that happens, not only do our communities suffer. Our nations suffer as well.

I'm also pleased to be here as we provide an additional contribution of \$800,000 to the healthy school programs, where your minister of education, together with USAID, the World Bank, and PAHO, have demonstrated that healthy children are better students. As a result of this program -- children not only receive healthy snacks. They also have access in their schools to vaccinations, vitamins, dental and eye care. Even a hair cut.

These two programs reflect the dynamism of education reform in El Salvador, which has earned worldwide recognition. They also underscore the importance your country places on giving these wonderful children -- and every child -- the tools of opportunity. So that no one is every left behind. And everyone has a chance to fulfill his or her God-given potential. And in the long run -- it's education that will strengthen the democratic and peaceful nation that you have sacrificed so much to achieve.

Thank you.

FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE CONFERENCE
SAN SALVADOR, EL SALVADOR
NOVEMBER 17, 1998

It's a great pleasure to have this opportunity to visit El Salvador for the first time. I'm so pleased to once again see my friend and your nation's First Lady, Elizabeth Calderon Sol. This morning, she took me to a center for domestic violence -- where I met a victim of abuse whose husband beat her, saying "You are nothing." Yet today, she told her life has meaning -- and she has hope in her future -- thanks to the services she received at this center.

And I've just come from a meeting with some remarkable women leaders from across El Salvador's political and economic spectrum. Some of these women bear the terrible physical scars of torture. They all share the emotional scars of a war that touched all Salvadoran families. Now those wounds are healing, as these women -- and so many others -- lead the efforts to redefine and build El Salvador's democratic future.

Listening to these women today has given me a far deeper appreciation of the extraordinary strides all of you have made since the signing of the Peace Accords six years ago. I came to El Salvador to be a witness myself to this historic transition from war to peace, and from violence to reconciliation.

Today -- my thoughts are also with you as you face a different kind of challenge -- the devastation caused by this century's worst storm. I stopped briefly in Honduras and Nicaragua yesterday -- to announce new United States disaster relief efforts for the region, and to express personally the deepest concerns of the President and the American people for the people of Central America during this very difficult time. Last evening, I announced additional disaster relief for the people of El Salvador to help you recover and rebuild.

I also wanted to tell you about the outpouring of food, clothing, medicine and support not just from the United States government but from people and communities across America. It is a reflection of the deep and permanent friendship between our two countries. So many of those living in the United States trace their roots to El Salvador -- and they are now contributing to our growth and prosperity. There are also close bonds between the religious communities of America and El Salvador -- fueled by a mutual passion for justice and peace.

As I hear about how the people of El Salvador have come together from all walks of life -- to support each other in the aftermath of this storm-- I can't help but think that same courage and unbreakable spirit sustained you as you walked down that long and difficult road to peace.

In the six years since the signing of the Peace Accords -- you have made remarkable progress. You have reshaped your military and modernized the police to serve the people. You have helped reintegrate the combatants into civilian life; distributed land to those on both sides; resettled the victims of war; and begun to rebuild the infrastructures of your communities. You created a truth commission **that provided** an accounting of the human rights violations of the past. And you've made remarkable progress in strengthening the rule of law -- electing a new Supreme Court -- and reforming your judicial system. For the first time in El Salvador -- there's a new juvenile code and a new criminal code -- providing legal protections for women and children. And today, the law says that every individual is presumed innocent until proven guilty.

Perhaps the most profound change is that Salvadorans who once fought on opposite sides of the battle field are now debating their differences from opposite sides of the aisle in the legislature -- and citizens are using ballots instead of ~~guns~~^{words} to express their disagreements. Your efforts here are giving hope to so many around the world -- in Ireland, and Bosnia, and other areas of conflict -- that divisions can be healed; that peace can be won; that forgiveness and compassion can be more powerful than bitterness and anger.

I'm proud that my country has worked closely with the people of El Salvador during this historic transition to democracy. It is a role that I've seen the United States undertake in struggling democracies around the world -- working with both government and civil society organizations. And it's a role that to me most deeply reflects our own commitment to the principles of justice and freedom.

In preparing for this trip, I've heard amazing stories of how Salvadorans have foregone the hatreds and differences of the past -- and come together in the spirit of cooperation.

A former army colonel and an ex-guerilla fighter working side by side to rebuild schools, roads and wells in a former region of conflict. They embraced on the side of the road, marveling how a few years earlier, they had been trying to kill each other, and were now engaged in a common effort to improve their community.

The mayors of six small towns in one war-torn region -- from different political parties -- who overcame their initial instincts to split limited resources among each town. They decided to put cooperation over conflict -- combining their funds to build a road linking the two most needy and remote villages. And as a result, those war-ravaged ghost towns have been transformed into flourishing communities. Bombed out buildings are the foundations for new homes -- and silent, deserted streets are now filled with the voices of children.

Today, I listened to Lorena Pena, a leading women from the FMLN and now a member of El Salvador's legislature -- who was the sole survivor of her brothers and sisters who died during the war. She told us how she didn't think she could sit down at the same table with her adversaries. Yet she recognized -- as so many did -- that the nation faced problems that everyone had to come together to solve.

slav q (os
rescue
disappointment
yenceres
feel
new
slaves

And I listened to Ana Guadalupe Martinez -- who said she cried when she signed the paper to demobilize the weapons of war. She believed those weapons were her protection -- but she was able to overcome her fears -- and be a vital part of the peace process.

Yet as strong as the spirit of reconciliation is today -- I recognize that the memories of your violent past are never far beneath the surface. Last night you marked the 9th anniversary of the murder of the six Jesuits, their house keeper and her daughter. That cold blooded act -- and the murder of so many of El Salvador's religious leaders -- dramatized for Americans how brutal this war had become, and that it was time to find a way to end it. And we will always remember the four American nuns who were killed here, martyrs to their mission of peace.

I can only imagine the pain that such memories must still bring the families of the victims and all the citizens of this country. Yet such memories must also be powerful reminders of how far you've come -- and how determined you are that you will never, ever, go back.

The progress that all of you have made here in El Salvador is very real. So are the challenge you face ahead, as you turn your extraordinary energy and spirit to the tasks of the future -- building a strong economy, expanding the tools of opportunity, protecting human rights, and deepening the roots of democracy.

Women have always been the primary victims of war. Today, you have put down the guns of war. Yet crime continues to block your dreams of peace and **security**. And women are once again the victims. I want to talk to you today about one aspect of that crime -- the violence *Epidemic* that too many women in your country and in my country suffer every day -- in their homes -- at the hands of their husbands, partners, or fathers. Domestic violence is now recognized as the most pervasive human rights violation in the world. Here in El Salvador, one in six women have been sexually assaulted, and the number of domestic abuse complaints at one agency topped 10,000 last year. Between 25% and 50% of women throughout Latin America have reportedly been victims of domestic violence.

The problem is all pervasive -- yet very difficult to see. Every country on earth shares a dark secret. Too often, the women we see shopping at the markets, working at their jobs, or caring for their children by day go home at night and live in fear. Not fear of an invading army or a natural disaster or even a stranger in an alley -- but fear of the very people, family members, whom they are supposed to depend upon for help and comfort. This is the trust-destroying terror that attends every step of a victim of violence.

For these women, home provides inadequate refuge; the law little protection; and public opinion, even less sympathy. That's why we must say over and over again, in the strongest possible voice: we do not believe that violence against women is "simply cultural" -- we believe it is simply criminal.

A crime - just a domestic war -
The devastating effects of domestic violence on women are enormous. The physical injury, mental illness, and terrible loss of confidence limits the capacities of women to fulfill their God-given potential. We are also learning about the ~~direct~~ economic costs of domestic violence in terms of job loss, decreased productivity in the workplace, and absenteeism.

According to the World Bank, one work day in every five lost by women for health reasons is the result of problems associated with domestic violence.

Studies by the Inter-American Development Bank -- which has done pioneering work in this area -- show how domestic violence is a key factor in a country's ability to sustain economic growth. Some of you may have attended a conference on domestic violence that the IDB convened in Washington, DC last year. There's also a powerful connection between domestic violence and the unending cycle of women in poverty.

The effects of violence on children -- our next generation of leaders -- are devastating as well. We know that children from families in which women are victims of domestic abuse are three times more likely to require medical care -- and have a much harder time at school. Children of abusive fathers not only repeat the behavior of their own children -- but commit violent acts in the larger society as well.

Faun

Here in El Salvador, the children who were the most vulnerable victims of the war continue to suffer from physical and mental abuse. Over half of El Salvador's street children had a family member killed during the war -- or ^{Saw} seen their homes destroyed. Yet even more of them have experienced violence at home.

In US -
every person
you know
of person who
was victim
of abuse

The costs of domestic violence -- in shattered lives, diminished dreams, and weakened economies -- is devastating. Yet here in El Salvador -- you have proven once again that you can come together to solve the most difficult problems. I know that your First Lady is playing a significant role in combating domestic violence.

Unprecedented

When I met her at the White House last year -- this was the subject most uppermost in her mind. And I remember she went over to our Justice Department -- to learn more about what our country was doing to combat domestic violence.

I'm proud that the United States -- through USAID -- has worked with you in your efforts to end domestic violence and expand the rights of El Salvador's citizens. And we will continue to do so, as you strengthen the rule of law, ensure the new legal codes are understood and applied fairly, open up new opportunities for citizens, and make democracy work -- at the local level.

Today, I visited the offices of the Salvadoran Institute of Women's Development (ISDEMU) where Mrs. Calderon has been a moving force.

I met women who work on the national hotline -- which is such an important resource for victims of domestic violence. ISDEMU is a model of public/private partnership -- leading El Salvador's efforts to combat domestic violence through a combination of legal, social, and economic supports for women. Perhaps the most powerful moment of my visit there was to look at an exhibit hanging on the wall of the weapons that have been used to batter and violate women -- knives, machetes, and wooden clubs. And to hear how they taught the people who came to the Center that when a one year old child is beaten with a wooden spoon -- that too is violence that must be stopped.

today

1st of June

*visited
17 years
need a
radio*

Through a series of historic legal reforms, women and their families have gained greater rights-- including the right to free legal counsel and child support. And for the first time in your history -- domestic violence is finally being called what it is -- a criminal offense.

The impact of your efforts on women's lives cannot be overstated. I've heard the story of Maria, a 32-year old mother of two who suffered years of violence, afraid to act out of fear of reprisals against her children. But thanks to a public outreach campaign, she asked for help, and was immediately given protective services. She has since obtained a divorce, received counseling; and been given ownership of her family home. And today -- I listened to an abusive husband -- who is learning how to deal with his anger -- and stop his violent behavior.

I'm pleased that the First Lady is hosting this forum on domestic violence -- to put the nation's spotlight on this terrible problem, and to build on the remarkable progress already being made here. By sharing ideas, forging strategies, and learning from each other about what has worked to bring down the rate of domestic violence in your communities, you can help women end the silence -- and the torment -- forever.

*Claim
who happen at
home is a
private matter --*

What many of you have done in your towns and communities has already saved lives. What you will do together can save many more.

We have learned so much. Whether it was at the UN Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing three years ago -- or the Vital Voices Conference just a few weeks ago in Montevideo, including representatives from your own country -- we have learned what we can accomplish when we come together to raise our voices, forge a common future, and hold our governments accountable for taking concrete steps to advance the status of women.

We've also learned that if we are to create a world in which women and children can live without fear of violence -- then we must do more than change the laws, as important as those legal reforms are. We must do more than break the silence, as important as it is to raise our voices on behalf of those who are silenced by fear. We must also ensure that women have the tools of opportunity they need to be full and equal partners in their societies.

Let's line
up women
+ police
men
Don't
compromise
very important
for you
have to

For women to live free of violence -- they must have access to education. It's the single most powerful tool to raise the status of women and girls -- and should be the birthright of every citizen -- of every nation.

For women to live free of violence -- they must have access to credit. I've seen the lives of women in Central American and around the world be transformed as a result of a small micro-credit loan, as they become more economically independent, and gain confidence to play a greater role in the economic and political life of their countries.

For women to live free of violence -- they must have access to health care for themselves and their children -- including family planning.

For women to live free of violence -- we must recognize -- once and for all -- that no nation can move forward unless every citizen is valued and treated with dignity, and given the opportunity to fully contribute to his or her society's political and economic life.

*make good
Begin --*

*Change
alludes*

This region of the world is undergoing a profound economic, democratic, and social renewal. As a result, millions of people now enjoy the right to freely elect their own leaders; engage actively in political life; speak freely, and meet in support or opposition to a cause. Yet you still face major challenges that keep your dreams of a secure and peaceful nation from being fulfilled. There is much work still to be done to bring down crime -- including domestic violence; continue judicial reforms; deepen grass roots democracy; and lift your families out of the cycle of poverty.

And now, you must come together again, from the national halls of government to town halls, across all parties and ages, men and women, to rebuild from the devastation of Hurricane Mitch.

I am more convinced than ever -- given the courage and determination of your people -- that you will do just that. I'm here today to underscore my own country's unswerving commitment to support your efforts not only to rebuild your communities in the aftermath of the hurricane -- but to advance the cause of peace and prosperity that you have sacrificed so much -- and so long -- to achieve.

As the world celebrates the 50th anniversary of the UN Declaration of Human Rights, I am reminded of the words of one of America's greatest peace makers who played an historic role in bringing the people of our country together in a time of violence and division. A few blocks from here -- the words of Robert F. Kennedy are embedded in stone. "Some people see things as they are, and say, why? I dream of things that never were, and say, why not?"

The people of El Salvador have a right to dream of a future of peace, justice, and human dignity. And they have a right to see that dream become a reality in the 21st Century.

Thank you.

**FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE CONFERENCE
SAN SALVADOR, EL SALVADOR
NOVEMBER 17, 1998**

*w/ writer
changes*

It's a great pleasure to have this opportunity to visit El Salvador for the first time. I'm so pleased to once again see my friend and your nation's First Lady, Elizabeth Calderon Sol. This morning, she took me to a center for domestic violence -- where I met a victim of abuse whose husband beat her, saying "You are nothing." Yet today, ^{she told me her life has} ~~her life has~~ ^{meaning,} improved -- and she has hope in her future -- thanks to the services she received at this center.

And I've just come from a meeting with some remarkable women leaders from across El Salvador's political and economic spectrum. Some of these women bear the terrible physical scars of torture. They all share the emotional scars of a war that touched all Salvadoran families. Now those wounds are healing, as these women -- and so many others -- lead the efforts to redefine and build El Salvador's democratic future.

Listening to these women today has given me a far deeper appreciation of the extraordinary strides all of you have made since the signing of the Peace Accords six years ago. I came to El Salvador to be a witness myself to this historic transition from war to peace, and from violence to reconciliation.

Today -- my thoughts are also with you as you face a different kind of challenge -- the devastation caused by this century's worst storm. I stopped briefly in Honduras and Nicaragua yesterday -- to announce new United States disaster relief efforts for the region, and to express personally the deepest concerns of the President and the American people ^{for the people of Central America} during this very difficult time. Last evening, I announced additional disaster relief for the people of El Salvador to help you recover and rebuild.

I also wanted to tell you about the outpouring of food, clothing, medicine and support not just from the United States government but from people and communities across America. It is a reflection of the deep and permanent friendship between our two countries. So many of those living in the United States trace their roots to El Salvador -- and they are now contributing to our growth and prosperity. There are also close bonds between the religious communities of America and El Salvador -- fueled by a mutual passion for justice and peace.

As I hear about how the people of El Salvador have come together from all walks of life -- to support each other in the aftermath of this storm-- I can't help but think that same courage and unbreakable spirit sustained you as you walked down that long and difficult road to peace.

In the six years since the signing of the Peace Accords -- you have made remarkable progress. You have reshaped your military and modernized the police to serve the people. You have helped reintegrate the combatants into civilian life; distributed land to those on both sides; resettled the victims of war; and begun to rebuild the infrastructures of your communities. You created a truth commission **that provided** an accounting of the human rights violations of the past. And you've made remarkable progress in strengthening the rule of law -- electing a new Supreme Court -- and reforming your judicial system. For the first time in El Salvador -- there's a new juvenile code and a new criminal code -- providing legal protections for women and children. And today, the law says that ~~an~~ individual ~~is~~ ^{is} presumed innocent until proven guilty.

Every

15

Perhaps the most profound change is that Salvadorans who once fought on opposite sides of the battle field are now debating their differences from opposite sides of the aisle in the legislature -- and citizens are using ballots instead of guns to express their disagreements. Your efforts here are giving hope to so many around the world -- in Ireland, and Bosnia, and other areas of conflict -- that divisions can be healed; that peace can be won; that forgiveness and compassion can be more powerful than bitterness and anger.

I'm proud that my country has worked closely with the people of El Salvador during this historic transition to democracy. It is a role that I've seen the United States undertake in struggling democracies around the world -- working with both government and civil society organizations. And it's a role that to me most deeply reflects our own commitment to the principles of justice and freedom.

In preparing for this trip, I've heard amazing stories of how Salvadorans have foregone the hatreds and differences of the past -- and come together in the spirit of cooperation.

A former army colonel and an ex-guerilla fighter working side by side to rebuild schools, roads and wells in a former region of conflict. They embraced on the side of the road, marveling how a few years earlier, they had been trying to kill each other, and were now engaged in a common effort to improve their community.

The mayors of six small towns in one war-torn region -- from different political parties -- who overcame their initial instincts to split limited resources among each town. They decided to put cooperation over conflict -- combining their funds to build a road linking the two most needy and remote villages. And as a result, those war-ravaged ghost towns have been transformed into flourishing communities. Bombed out buildings are the foundations for new homes -- and silent, deserted streets are now filled with the voices of children.

Today, I listened to ^{LORENA} Peña ~~Mendoza~~, a leading women from the FMLN and now a member of El Salvador's legislature -- who was the sole survivor of her brothers and sisters who died during the war. She told us how she didn't think she could sit down at the same table with her adveraries . Yet she recognized -- as so many did -- that the nation

faced problems that everyone had to come together to solve.

ANA

And I listened to [^]Guadalupe Martinez -- who said she cried when she signed the paper to demobilize the weapons of war. She believed those weapons were her protection -- but she was able to overcome her fears -- and be a vital part of the peace process.

Yet as strong as the spirit of reconciliation is today -- I recognize that the memories of your violent past are never far beneath the surface. Last night you marked the 9th anniversary of the murder of the six Jesuits, their house keeper and her daughter. That cold blooded act -- and the murder of so many of El Salvador's religious leaders -- dramatized for Americans how brutal this war had become, and that it was time to find a way to end it. And we ~~remember~~ ^{will never forget} that the martyrs of ~~this war include~~ ^{always remember} the four American nuns who were killed here, ~~on a~~ ^{martyrs to} mission of peace. ^{their}

I can only imagine the pain that such memories must still bring the families of the victims and all the citizens of this country. Yet such memories must also be powerful reminders of how far you've come -- and how determined you are that you will never, ever, go back.

The progress that all of you have made here in El Salvador is very real. So are the challenges you face ahead, as you turn your extraordinary energy and spirit to the tasks of the future -- building a strong economy, expanding the tools of opportunity, protecting human rights, and deepening the roots of democracy.

Women have always been the primary victims of war. Today, you have put down the guns of war. Yet crime continues to block your dreams of peace and **security**. And women are once again the victims. I want to talk to you today about one aspect of that crime -- the violence that too many women in your country and in my country suffer every day -- in their homes -- at the hands of their husbands, partners, or fathers. Domestic violence is now recognized as the most pervasive human rights violation in the world. Here in El Salvador, one in six women have been sexually assaulted, and the number of domestic abuse complaints at one agency topped 10,000 last year. Between 25% and 50% of women throughout Latin America have reportedly been victims of domestic violence.

The problem is all pervasive -- yet very difficult to see. Every country on earth shares a dark secret. Too often, the women we see

shopping at the markets, working at their jobs, or caring for their children by day go home at night and live in fear. Not fear of an invading army or a natural disaster or even a stranger in an alley -- but fear of the very people, family members, whom they are supposed to depend upon for help and comfort. This is the trust-destroying terror that attends every step of a victim of violence.

For these women, home provides inadequate refuge; the law little protection; and public opinion, even less sympathy. That's why we must say over and over again, in the strongest possible voice: we do not believe that violence against women is "simply cultural" -- we believe it is simply criminal.

The devastating effects of domestic violence on women are enormous. The physical injury, mental illness, and terrible loss of confidence limits the capacities of women to fulfill their God-given potential. We are also learning about the direct economic costs of domestic violence in terms of job loss, decreased productivity in the workplace, and absenteeism. According to the World Bank, one work day in every five lost by women for health reasons is the result of problems associated with domestic violence.

Studies by the Inter-American Development Bank -- which has done pioneering work in this area -- show how domestic violence is a key factor in a country's ability to sustain economic growth. Some of you may have attended a conference on domestic violence that the IDB convened in Washington, DC last year. There's also a powerful connection between domestic violence and the unending cycle of women in poverty.

The effects of violence on children -- our next generation of leaders -- are devastating as well. We know that children from families in which women are victims of domestic abuse are three times more likely to require medical care -- and have a much harder time at school. Children of abusive fathers not only repeat the behavior of their own children -- but commit violent acts in the larger society as well.

Here in El Salvador, the children who were the most vulnerable victims of the war continue to suffer from physical and mental abuse. Over half of El Salvador's street children had a family member killed during the war -- or seen their homes destroyed. Yet even more of them have experienced violence at home.

The costs of domestic violence -- in shattered lives, diminished dreams, and weakened economies -- is devastating. Yet here in El Salvador -- you have proven once again that you can come together to solve the most difficult problems. I know that your First Lady is playing a significant role in combating domestic violence.

When I met her at the White House last year -- this was the subject most uppermost in her mind. And I remember she went over to our Justice Department -- to learn more about what our country was doing to combat domestic violence.

I'm proud that the United States -- through USAID -- has worked with you in your efforts to end domestic violence and expand the rights of El Salvador's citizens. And we will continue to do so, as you strengthen the rule of law, ensure the new legal codes are understood and applied fairly, open up new opportunities for citizens, and make democracy work -- at the local level.

Today, I visited the offices of the Salvadoran Institute of Women's Development (ISDEMU) where Mrs. Calderon has been a moving force. I met women who work on the national hotline -- which is such an

important resource for victims of domestic violence. ISDEMU is a model of public/private partnership -- leading El Salvador's efforts to combat domestic violence through a combination of legal, social, and economic supports for women. Perhaps the most powerful moment of my visit there was to look at an exhibit hanging on the wall of the weapons that have been used to batter and violate women -- knives, machetes, and wooden clubs. And to hear how they taught the people who came ^{to the center} there that when a one year old child is beaten with a wooden spoon -- that too is violence that must be stopped.

Through a series of historic legal reforms, women and their families have gained greater rights-- including the right to free legal counsel and child support. And for the first time in your history -- domestic violence is finally being called what it is -- a criminal offense.

The impact of your efforts on women's lives cannot be overstated. I've heard the story of Maria, a 32-year old mother of two who suffered years of violence, afraid to act out of fear of reprisals against her children. But thanks to a public outreach campaign, she asked for help, and was immediately given protective services. She has since obtained a divorce, received counseling; and been given ownership of her family

home. And today -- I listened to a ~~woman who was beaten by her~~ ^{an abusive husband -- who is learning to deal}
~~husband, who spoke courageously about how her life has now turned~~ ^{with his}
~~around, because her husband doesn't beat her anymore.~~ ^{anger, and}
^{Stop his}
^{violent behavior --}

I'm pleased that the First Lady is hosting this forum on domestic violence -- to put the nation's spotlight on this terrible problem, and to build on the remarkable progress already being made here. By sharing ideas, forging strategies, and learning from each other about what has worked to bring down the rate of domestic violence in your communities, you can help women end the silence -- and the torment -- forever. What many of you have done in your towns and communities has already saved lives. What you will do together can save many more.

We have learned so much. Whether it was at the UN Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing three years ago -- or the Vital Voices Conference just a few weeks ago in Montevideo, including representatives from your own country -- we have learned what we can accomplish when we come together to raise our voices, forge a common future, and hold our governments accountable for taking concrete steps to advance the status of women.

We've also learned that if we are to create a world in which women and children can live without fear of violence -- then we must do more than change the laws, as important as those legal reforms are. We must do more than break the silence, as important as it is to raise our voices on behalf of those who are silenced by fear. We must also ensure that women have the tools of opportunity they need to be full and equal partners in their societies.

For women to live free of violence -- they must have access to education. It's the single most powerful tool to raise the status of women and girls -- and should be the birthright of every citizen -- of every nation.

For women to live free of violence -- they must have access to credit. I've seen the lives of women in Central American and around the world be transformed as a result of a small micro-credit loan, as they become more economically independent, and gain confidence to play a greater role in the economic and political life of their countries.

For women to live free of violence -- they must have access to health care for themselves and their children -- including family planning.

For women to live free of violence -- we must recognize -- once and for all -- that no nation can move forward unless every citizen is valued and treated with dignity, and given the opportunity to fully contribute to his or her society's political and economic life.

This region of the world is undergoing a profound economic, democratic, and social renewal. As a result, millions of people now enjoy the right to freely elect their own leaders; engage actively in political life; speak freely, and meet in support or opposition to a cause. Yet you still face major challenges that keep your dreams of a secure and peaceful nation from being fulfilled. There is much work still to be done to bring down crime -- including domestic violence; continue judicial reforms, deepen grass roots democracy; and lift your families out of the cycle of poverty.

And now, you must come together again, from the national halls of government to town halls, across all parties and ages, men and women, to rebuild from the devastation of Hurricane Mitch.

I am more convinced than ever -- given the courage and determination of your people -- that you will do just that. I'm here today to underscore my own country's unswerving commitment to support your efforts not only to rebuild your communities in the aftermath of the hurricane -- but to advance the cause of peace and prosperity that you have sacrificed so much -- and so long -- to achieve.

As the world celebrates the 50th anniversary of the UN Declaration of Human Rights, I am reminded of the words of one of America's greatest peace makers who played an historic role in bringing the people of our country together in a time of violence and division. A few blocks from here -- the words of Robert F. Kennedy are embedded in stone. "Some ~~men~~^{people} see things as they are, and say, why? I dream of things that never were, and say, why not?"

The people of El Salvador have a right to dream of a future of peace, justice, and human dignity. And they have a right to see that dream become a reality in the 21st Century.

Thank you.

**FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
PEACE AND RECONCILIATION EVENT
SAN SALVADOR, EL SALVADOR
NOVEMBER 17, 1998**

- I am so pleased to be here, to have this opportunity to meet this remarkable group of women of El Salvador who have played such an extraordinary role not only in bringing a close to the war -- but in forging a future of peace and reconciliation.
- I've read about the suffering that many of you -- and so many of your fellow citizens -- have experienced during the conflict. Some of you have been captured and tortured; others have lost husbands and other family members in the war. Yet here you are -- leaders in your country -- Supreme court judges; high elected officials in your parties; cabinet ministers; lawyers; advocates on behalf of women and children. Your experiences and your accomplishments reflect both the tragedy and the hope of El Salvador.
- I know that last night -- there was a mass held not far from here commemorating the 9th anniversary of the slaying of the six Jesuits, their house keeper and her daughter. And while that event must bring back such painful memories of the past -- I would think it would also underscore for you how far you've come.
- I'm here to learn more about how you have accomplished this historic transition to peace since the Accords were signed six years ago, and hear you talk about the lessons that you have learned during this period.
- I want to congratulate you and all of the women of El Salvador for taking the lead in the peace process -- and now, in leading your country forward. We all know that for progress to continue, women must be fully engaged in the political life of their country -- at the grassroots -- and at the highest levels of government.
- You are all proof of how much progress is being made in your country -- where women play such a prominent role in all aspects of your society.

- I urge you to continue to promote that active political engagement of women across the political spectrum -- to ensure issues that we all care about -- from domestic violence, to job discrimination, to equal access to the legal system are debated and promoted.
- I've seen women in communities across the world who -- like yourselves -- have been the peacemakers. Women in nations of conflict who have witnessed the violence of war and conflict -- and have come together to end the violence, demand justice, and begin the healing. You deserve the deepest gratitude of a thankful nation.
- I believe that all of you are part of a strong, global movement, in which women are coming to recognize our common interests, and the importance of becoming engaged in the political process. We've also learned that while we speak different languages, and hold different religious beliefs -- what we hold in common is far stronger than that which divides us.
- As we look forward to the 21st century -- perhaps the greatest challenge in your country and mine and every nation is how we bridge the differences that for too long have divided human kind. Attempting to address these differences, and creating conditions for equality will be, I believe, essential to making the 21st Century a more peaceful and prosperous and stable place.
- Thank you for inviting me here today -- to learn and to listen. So that more of us can know about your stories, your triumphs, and your challenges. I look forward to our discussion today.

FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
VISIT TO HOGAR DEL NINO SAN VINCENTE DE PAUL
SAN SALVADOR, EL SALVADOR
NOVEMBER 17, 1998

Mrs. Calderon Sol; Sister Thelma Monges; Minister Giner; USAID's Mark Schneider; and most importantly, the children. It's a pleasure to be here at the Hogar del Nino San Vincente de Paul, which is doing such an excellent job of providing education and care to the children who need it most. In my country and in so many others, too many children are not only the victims of violence; but the victims of poverty as well. Here, you have some of the most vulnerable children in San Salvador a place to feel loved, and protected, and cared for.

This home also serves as an integrated development center that your government has recognized will help these young people not only survive -- but flourish.

The United States has a special bond with this home -- which was rebuilt after the earthquake of 1986 -- partly with funding from USAID, and partly with contributions from Salvadorans and this church.

Your First Lady has been a leading voice for children long before her husband became president. And I can attest to her powerful advocacy on behalf of children and families at the First Lady's conferences over the past four years.

So I'm pleased to join with her today at this wonderful children's home -- which expresses so eloquently the importance of ensuring equal access to education for every child. What you offer at this school is essential if children are to have real opportunities to grow and flourish; if nations are to grow and prosper; if democracies are to endure.

El Salvador has made impressive progress in its school reform efforts. Enrollment rates have been growing, and progress is being made to decentralize school authority over budget and teacher hiring. And in 1997 -- the World Bank presented your Minister of Education with its International Award of Excellence.

We all know that education is El Salvador's -- and every country's best hope for the future. And toward that end, I'm very pleased to announce a \$1.8 million grant from USAID that will help early childhood education become an integral part of El Salvador's education system. This initiative will support EDIFAM, which will assist poor rural families with pre-school children. These efforts will be carried out in collaboration with the Institute for the Protection of Minors.

The program builds on what we've learned in my own country -- that children from poor families; children in single parent households; and children whose parents have left to find work -- have special needs. They need special help and support to compete effectively in school. And without it, they are the ones most likely to fall behind, repeat grades, and drop out -- before acquiring the basic skills they need to survive in the modern world. And when that happens, not only do our communities suffer. Our nations suffer as well.

I'm also pleased to be here as we provide an additional contribution of \$800,000 to the healthy school programs, where your minister of education, together with USAID, the World Bank, and PAHO, have demonstrated that healthy children are better students. As a result of this program -- children not only receive healthy snacks. They also have access in their schools to vaccinations, vitamins, and dental and eye care. They can even get a hair cut.

These two programs reflect the dynamism of education reform in El Salvador, which has earned worldwide recognition. They also underscore the importance your country places on giving these wonderful children -- and every child -- the tools of opportunity. So that no one is ever left behind. And everyone has a chance to fulfill his or her God-given potential. As you come together to meet the challenges before you, El Salvador -- and all nations -- need the contributions of every citizen. Education, above all, will ensure you gain the peaceful and democratic society that you have all sacrificed so much to achieve.

Thank you.