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HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
DEMOCRACY INITIATIVE PROJECT EVENT
DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
NOVEMBER 20, 1998

Thank you, Dr. Sang, for that kind introduction. When I was preparing for this trip, I learned that in addition to being an historian, a university professor, and the executive director of the Democratic Initiative Project, that you also find time to write a column. And in one of your columns -- you wrote that "hope is the motor behind human action." I believe that the work you and others do here at the Democratic Initiative Project has given hope to so many in the Dominican Republic -- that justice and freedom are the birthrights of every citizen.

I'm so pleased to be in the Dominican Republic for the first time and to have this opportunity to hear from all of you about the important role that non-governmental organizations are playing in strengthening democracy and the rule of law in your country. I have just come from El Salvador and Guatemala, and was so impressed with how civil society is helping to move these countries toward a new era of peace and reconciliation -- after so many years of struggle and conflict.

So I was particularly interested in meeting all of you -- and learning more about your efforts here in the Dominican Republic. And I'd like to say how impressed I've been today, listening to the presentations from this distinguished panel.

But before I respond to what you have just said, I want to say that like all Americans, I was saddened by the terrible devastation and loss of life and property that you have suffered as a result of Hurricane Georges. And I'm pleased that as part of my visit here -- I am announcing additional aid to help the people of the Dominican Republic recover and rebuild after this terrible storm.

Today, we've come together to talk about what it takes to fulfill the promise of democracy. When I think about what keeps a democracy strong and vibrant -- I sometimes imagine a three-legged stool. One leg is a freely elected government. Another is a free market economy. And the third leg is civil society. And for a democracy to thrive -- it needs all three legs to be both strong -- and in balance.

I know that civil society has played an ever increasing and important role in the development of the Dominican Republic in recent years. Your work to insure fair and free elections truly changed your nation's history. That accomplishment has become an example for the rest of the hemisphere. We have brought people from around the region to witness your domestic electoral monitoring and to take those lessons back to their own country. I am pleased that the Democratic Initiatives Project has been a catalyst in helping to bring so many civil society organizations together, to maximize your efforts.

The DIP -- as we've heard from Dr. Sang and others -- has undertaken important work in educating people about the rights and responsibilities of living in a democracy -- including not only electoral reform and election monitoring, but also community empowerment, and the strengthening of the rule of law. And I'm pleased that my government, through USAID and USIS, has been your partner from the beginning.

Today, I'm very pleased to announce a new USAID grant that will support your ongoing efforts to strengthen the rule of law and respect for human rights here in the Dominican Republic. This 4-year, \$1.5 million grant will support justice sector reform, provide legal services for the poor and disenfranchised, and ensure public accountability. These funds will help encourage greater participation by civil society organizations in these critical areas -- and give the people of the Dominican Republic an even greater stake -- and role -- in an open, democratic future.

Now your talents in bridging differences and finding consensus has a special challenge in the political tensions that currently exist in your country. I commend the work of the Archdiocese in pursuing solutions to that crisis. And I particularly commend the broad coalition of civil society groups which came together earlier this month to seek reconciliation among the political parties of this country.

After just coming from Guatemala, a country that overcame 36 years of civil conflict to find a new acceptance of pluralism, consensus, and tolerance, I have great faith that you can help bring about a national consensus and a national reconciliation that can strengthen the JCE (Central Elections Board), strengthen the independence of the judiciary, and strengthen your democracy.

I look forward to our discussion today, as we explore these matters that are so important to the future of this country -- and to all nations.

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*Marys
main
notes*

**FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
NGO BRIEFING
THE WHITE HOUSE
NOVEMBER 24, 1998**

- Thank you, Tipper. As you said, I've just returned from an extraordinary trip to four Central American countries suffering from the devastation of Hurricane Mitch: Honduras, Nicaragua, El Salvador, and Guatemala. I also visited the Dominican Republic and Haiti -- and saw the long term challenges of reconstruction those countries are facing as a result of Hurricane Georges.
- I met with the presidents of each country, who briefed me on the extent of the damage and loss of life they had sustained, and the emergency needs of the victims and their communities. They also spoke to me about their long term needs and hopes for rehabilitation, reconstruction, and transformation.
- I was proud to meet with our American troops, AID workers, Peace corps volunteers, and ngos who are doing such an extraordinary job of providing much needed food and medical supplies to the victims, and helping people to rebuild their homes, schools, roads, and bridges. (Personal reflections on New York team rebuilding hospital in Sammy Sosa's home town of San Pedro; US troops rescuing President and Mrs. Flores who were stuck between mudslides in a small town; USAID helping to repair damaged irrigation ditch in Haiti; etc.)
- The same day I was in Nicaragua, a plane full of donations from a church in my home town of Little Rock landed at the airport -- bringing water, rice, wheat, and other food to the hurricane victims. These acts of personal generosity have further strengthened the ties of friendship between the American people and the people of Central America and the Caribbean.
- I also had the great privilege of announcing our government's enhanced hurricane relief package. As you know, the President announced \$70 million in relief assistance for Central American on November 5. That support now exceeds a quarter of a billion dollars -- to be channeled largely through USAID, the Department of Defense; and USDA.
- USAID is providing \$70 million -- primarily for food, medicine, shelter, and relief supplies; as well as development assistance and micro enterprise credits. The Department of Defense is providing over five thousand people, dozens of helicopters, bridges and engineering support. The US Department of Agriculture's \$63 million package includes money for wheat, corn, and other food grants. [There's also increased support for the Peace Corps' Crisis Corps, and micro-credit programs.]
- We recognize how important it is to get small businesses back on their feet -- and have already put together an AID/IDB package of \$17 million for a rescue fund for micro-enterprises.
- In response to the requests we've received from these countries, we've already begun work on postponing their debts to the US, and begun working with other international financial institutions to do the same. And we've asked the Immigration & Naturalization

Service to postpone deportations, in order to pursue long term solutions to their concerns.

- ~~In addition to these efforts, maintaining the 5600 military personnel over the next few months will mean actual US assistance will be well over \$300 million.~~
- This hurricane was not only the worst natural disaster to ever hit the Western Hemisphere. This package is an unparalleled U.S. response to any natural disaster. **[What does this mean?]**
- At every stop I made -- I heard how grateful the people of these countries were for the aid and support we are supplying. One of our doctors visited a village -- whose closest clinic was a four hour walk away. He told me that one woman said: "The whole world is one big community and I'm glad our neighbors are here."
- The countries I visited -- particularly El Salvador and Guatemala -- were experiencing the first real hope for the future, after decades of conflict, repression and misery. And I saw the power, spirit, and determination it took to overcome those years of suffering and conflict. Finally, they were making real progress toward peace and growth and economic development. The hurricane reversed much of that hard-won progress in only a few short days. (Many of the women I met with said that this storm was even more devastating than the wars they had finally ended -- because of the extent of the damage inflicted on human life, homes, property, and crops -- their hope for economic opportunity.)
- The president and our government are committed to providing the short term emergency relief that we've talked about here -- but also the long term reconstruction needs to truly rebuild these devastated countries. I know how strongly my husband feels about providing assistance and support -- and how he has directed every agency in the federal government that can contribute to do so.
- But all of us need to respond: Americans in every community -- from business and labor organizations to religious and civic groups. We know there's been an overwhelming response from our fellow citizens -- who want to know how they might help.
- We are encouraging concerned citizens to provide monetary contributions to appropriate organizations rather than collecting clothing and other items for donation. If people want to donate goods, they should also try to raise the funding for shipment.
- The quickest and most effective way for the public to provide help is to directly contact the private voluntary organizations (PVOs) who are currently working in or with local affiliates in Central America and the Caribbean.
- A handout in your packet provides important numbers and contacts -- including a new 1-800 number (1-800-USAID-RELIEF) for private sector donations and businesses wanting to help -- and a clearinghouse number for all organizations working in disaster areas.
- Please help us get out the word that USAID does not have the capacity to pay to move

donated goods or volunteers. But it can help identify transportation in partnership with non-governmental organizations and the Department of Defense.

- We're in this for the long haul. If we can combine the resources of the public and private sector, and exhibit the kind of generosity of spirit and tireless determination that I saw in abundance in every community of these devastated countries -- then we can accomplish even more than providing food and medical supplies and rebuilding homes and bridges -- as critical as those efforts are. We can do even more than get these countries back on their feet. Working together, we can ensure they will be strong, peaceful, and democratic neighbors in the 21st century.

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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.

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
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
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.

FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
ARRIVAL STATEMENT
GUATEMALA
NOVEMBER 18, 1998

I'm very pleased to have this opportunity to make my first trip to Guatemala. I hope that my visit here will further strengthen the ties of friendship between our two countries. I look forward to seeing first hand the remarkable progress that this country has made in the last two years since the Peace Accords were signed.

Like all Americans, I am deeply saddened by the severe loss of life and property wrought by Hurricane Mitch throughout this region. The President and I would like to extend our sympathy, along with all Americans, to the people of Guatemala. We will stand by the people of Guatemala now -- as you deal with emergency needs of food, water, housing and transportation -- as well as in the future -- for the long term reconstruction of your country.

I know that the task of reconstruction will be great, and I am here in part to announce additional disaster relief to Guatemala and the entire region. I have just come from Honduras, Nicaragua, and El Salvador, to express our commitment to those storm-ravaged countries, and to announce new aid which will bring our total relief support to over \$250 million for all of Central America.

During my visit here, I look forward to meeting with President and Mrs. Alvaro Arzu, as well as with women leaders who fought on different sides of the conflict -- and who are now coming together to lead their country into a new chapter of peace and reconciliation.

I am also looking forward to visiting the Colonial Museum in Antigua, and learning more about the education reform that is taking place in Guatemala -- which is so critical to the continuing growth and progress of this nation. I will also visit a hospital, to witness first hand the strides you are making to reduce maternal mortality, and expand access to health services to all of Guatemala's citizens.

I am particularly pleased and honored to have the opportunity to address Guatemala's Congress, and congratulate your entire nation for all you've done to heal the wounds from 36 years of war, and build a peaceful, democratic, and inclusive Guatemala for the future.

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} This area also ^{each year to San Salvador} (suffered) terrible damage from a volcano in 1986. ^{And} homes and roads have been rebuilt. And now, ^{what peaceful} the people of El Salvador are the victims of the largest 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 rebuild your country. ^{move forward to} (And to move forward.)

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} ~~one of the world's~~ ~~worst~~ natural disasters.

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.

to rebuild their infrastructure
We know that the people of ~~El Salvador and the rest of this~~ *Central America* region need more help. So starting this week -- the Department of Defense will bring in more ~~heavy lift~~ helicopters, more people to build roads and bridges, more medical supplies. And in the coming weeks -- we will *quadruple* ~~more than triple~~ the number of US troops -- from 1300 to ~~4800~~ *5600*.

We know that people need more food. And today ~~in~~ *1* Honduras, I announced an additional \$5~~1~~ 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.

★ (Already --
USAID --

✓ 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. 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 in the
To help
rehabilitate
& reconstruct
affairs-

You will be the base of support for the relief efforts region

Peau caps is

Setting up
a crisis
coordination
group back from
P-C - volunteer
w/ special
skills

wide -- ~~A~~ and soon there will be more of you to help out. Today,
Secretary Cohen ordered over 560 troops to be deployed here at
this base -- ^{staying area} and 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.

wheat 30,000 tons
I realize that ^{many} most 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

A { → USAID moved
immediate
response in
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airlifted
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over
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to help
cooperate
effort

FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
STATEMENT ON HURRICANE MITCH
MANAGUA, NICARAGUA
NOVEMBER 16, 1998

[Acknowledgments: President and Mrs. Aleman, Ambassador Gutierrez, Foreign Minister Eduardo Mon-teay-ah-LEH-gray]

Thank you all for your extraordinary courage, commitment, and endless stamina in helping Nicaragua recover from one of the worst tragedies in human history.

I want to thank Ambassador Gutierrez and the entire Embassy and A.I.D staffs, who have literally been working around the clock since the disaster struck.

And to the commander of U.S. Troops here, Major Lawrence Zaben. I had the privilege of flying with Major Zaben on my trip to Panama a few years back. And I know that our troops and our mission here in Nicaragua could not be in better hands.

And let me say a special word of thanks to our troops. Everyone here and back home is so proud of your bravery and determination and all you've accomplished -- working day and night with your Nicaraguan and Mexican colleagues to deliver more than 450,000 pounds of food and supplies, often to the most isolated parts of Nicaragua.

I'm also delighted to see so many non-governmental organizations here who have been on the frontlines of the relief effort -- from those delivering food to victims to others helping them save their small businesses and rebuild their lives.

In fact, this event is a reunion of sorts for me. During my first trip to Managua in 1996, I met with a group of amazing women who had benefited from FINCA's Village Banking program. I'll never forget them proudly showing me what a loan of just a few dollars had meant to them. Some were selling clothes and mosquito nets they'd made. One had opened a bakery.

They call themselves Madres Unidas [Mahd-rays Ooh-knee-dahs], Mothers United. And I am delighted that some of them are here with us today. I spoke with them earlier and heard about all of their successes and challenges. One had turned her grocery store into a mini-mart. One of them had lost all their belongings during the Hurricane. But, she still believes she will make it through the tough times. As do all the rest.

I have thought of these women many times in recent weeks as I've read about the Hurricane and the devastation it left in its wake in Nicaragua. And I wanted to come back here today, on behalf of my husband and the American people, to bring Nicaraguans our thoughts and prayers, more assistance, and a commitment to continue to stand with you over the long haul as you repair and rebuild your beautiful nation.

Earlier, I met with President Aleman and other members of the Nicaraguan government....and they described how this epic disaster has touched every Nicaraguan...leaving children without parents, leaving 100,000 people without homes, leaving communities without roads, bridges, food, without medicine, crops, and livelihoods. And I especially want to express my condolences about the victims of the mudslide on the Casitas [Kah-see-tahs] Volcano. We all mourn their deaths.

None of us will ever forget the courage of the Nicaraguan people to overcome a decade of war, to survive the horrific earthquake that hit Managua 26 years ago, and to choose democratic progress and peace over division and dictatorship. And so too do you inspire the world today with your determination -- not just to bring your nation back to where it was before this disaster, but to move it forward into the future.

When Mrs. Gore came back from Nicaragua last week, she, like every citizen in our country, was awed by the strength of the people here, many of whom lost everything, yet they still never lost hope. You have shown that a hurricane can destroy crops and roads, homes and families. But no hurricane will ever destroy the spirit of the Nicaraguan people.

As a Nicaraguan writer [Angela Sab-eye-yohs] wrote in a letter to me: "We Nicaraguans are survivors." We think of the Vice-Mayor of Posoltega [Poh-sol-tey-ga], who lost her husband, three children and three grandchildren in the Volcano avalanche...and now works to help the survivors. We think of the unemployed man who now makes a living taking stranded motorists across what was once a highway, and now a river. We think of the staff and clients of FINCA Nicaragua, who were among the first to travel to the most devastated areas and begin distributing medicine, clothing, food, and water. Most of the supplies were provided by FINCA members themselves. I hope people around the world hear these heroic stories and decide that they don't want to sit on the sidelines, that they want to do their part.

had established with the war veterans over the past few years --
5,000 people in 14 communities ~~affected~~ 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.*

know that
I'm ~~pleased to report 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.

There is much hard work to be done -- as you work together

to rebuild homes and schools; restore roads and bridges; and provide food and medicine to those in need. And I want to thank the US troops in particular -- on behalf of a grateful President and the American people -- for being here, and for taking on this important mission. Through your work as members of this new Task Force -- you will not only be helping the people of El Salvador and this entire region. You will also be conveying -- in a very real way -- the highest ideals of our nation. And for that, you deserve our deepest appreciation.



U.S. AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PRESS RELEASE

WASHINGTON, DC 20523
<http://www.info.usaid.gov> (also see: www.ofdalac.org)

PRESS OFFICE
(202) 712-4320

Monday, November 23, 1998
98-175

Contact: Rekha Chalasani
or Jess Sarmiento

U.S. DISASTER RELIEF FOR HURRICANE MITCH EXCEEDS \$263 MILLION ** (over \$300 -)*

U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) - \$70 Million

*216
3012*

- \$ 30,000,000 Relief and Disaster Assistance (medicine, relief supplies)
- \$ 35,000,000 Food for Peace, Emergency Food Assistance
- \$ 5,000,000 Development Assistance, Microenterprise Credits
(additional \$12 million in Microenterprise Credits from the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB))

Publicly Donated Goods Airlifted Through USAID/DoD Denton Program (as of 11/16):

Total number of Flights: 53 Quantity of Goods: 2027.4 Metric Tons
Total Value of Goods: \$6,775,329

USAID Relief Supply Flights (as of 11/16):

Total number of Flights: 10 Value of Goods: \$807,034

USAID Emergency Food Aid Airlifts (as of 11/16):

Total number of Flights: 31 Quantity of Food Aid: 2,959 Tons

Department of Defense (DoD) - \$130 Million

- \$ 75,000,000 Section 506(b) drawdown of defense stocks and services
- \$ 55,000,000 DOD operations package for first 30 days

U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) - \$63 Million

- \$ 27,000,000 President's food initiative, Section 416(b) wheat surplus
- \$ 6,000,000 Section 416(b) Corn
- \$ 20,000,000 Food for Progress, Food Grants
- \$ 10,000,000 P.L. 480 Title I concessional loans

Total U.S. Government Funding as of November 16, 1998 = \$ 263 Million

Planned Long-Term USAID Food and Development Assistance for Fiscal Year 1999 (annual appropriation)

Honduras	\$ 22.78 Million	El Salvador	\$ 34.12 Million
Nicaragua	\$ 24.69 Million	Guatemala	\$ 60.13 Million



U.S. AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

BUREAU FOR HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE (BHR) OFFICE OF U.S. FOREIGN DISASTER ASSISTANCE (OFDA)

Central America - Hurricane Mitch

Fact Sheet # 18a

November 23, 1998

Note: New material is underlined

Background: On October 24 Atlantic Tropical Storm Mitch was upgraded to a hurricane that developed into one of the strongest and most damaging storms to ever hit the Caribbean and Central America. At its height on October 26 and 27, the hurricane had sustained winds of 180 mph and dumped heavy rains over Central America. Although the winds diminished as Hurricane Mitch traveled inland over Honduras on October 30, the storm continued to produce torrential rains, reaching a rate of more than 4 inches per hour, which caused catastrophic floods and landslides throughout the region. After its slow, destructive march north and west across Honduras and Guatemala, Mitch dissipated over southeastern Mexico but briefly regained tropical storm strength as it moved northeasterly across Mexico's Yucatan Peninsula, the Gulf of Mexico and southern Florida. By November 5 all tropical storm warnings were discontinued as Mitch's remnants tracked out into the Atlantic. Prior to Mitch making landfall, USAID/OFDA pre-positioned assets throughout the region along the storm's forecasted course, and quickly launched its emergency relief efforts as the hurricane passed overland. The USAID/OFDA Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART) was established to coordinate the U.S. Government relief effort for Central America. Senior Regional Advisor and DART leader Paul Bell has managed the DART personnel and its operations in Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua from the USAID/OFDA Regional Office at the U.S. Embassy in San Jose, Costa Rica.

USG Assistance: On November 5, President Clinton announced a \$70 million assistance package for Central America in response to Hurricane Mitch. This package has been augmented and now totals \$263 million, to be channeled largely through USAID, the Department of Defense (DOD), and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). Of this package, \$30 million in assistance will be provided by USAID's Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA), \$35 million by USAID/Food for Peace (USAID/FFP), \$130 million by DOD, \$63 million by USDA, and the remaining \$5 million will be for development assistance and micro-enterprise credits. The assistance by USAID will provide immediate disaster relief, including health and water/sanitation needs, food, shelter, and other emergency relief commodities as well as airlift support and logistics. USAID/OFDA assistance to date, described below, is part of this overall package, which is being closely coordinated with DOD.

Honduras: Honduras suffered the brunt of Hurricane Mitch. After being stalled for more than two days off the country's northern coast, the storm traveled inland during October 30 and 31. Extensive wind damage and devastating floods occurred nationwide, but particularly on the northern seaboard and in the Bay Islands. As of November 10, the National Emergency Committee of Honduras (CONEH) reported that 6,600 persons were killed, 8,052 were missing, 11,998 were injured while approximately 1.4 million were left homeless. The U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) estimated at least 70,000 houses had been damaged and the USAID/OFDA DART estimated that more than 92 bridges had been damaged or destroyed. Damage to the nation's infrastructure isolated entire communities which made access by emergency aid workers extremely difficult and it hampered efforts to supply the larger cities with food, water and other essentials. Additionally, press reports state that nearly 70 percent of crops were destroyed by Hurricane Mitch, with the U.S. Embassy reporting that much of the banana crop, grain fields and shrimp industry were devastated.

On October 27, the U.S. Ambassador to Honduras James F. Creagan declared a disaster due to the effects of Hurricane Mitch. USAID/OFDA responded immediately by providing a total of \$125,000 to the USAID Mission in Honduras for the local purchase and transport of critical relief supplies, including food, simple cooking stoves, blankets, and medical supplies. USAID/OFDA also provided a total of \$750,000 for the deployment of DOD aircraft to assist in overflight assessments, search and rescue operations, and delivery of relief supplies. Initially grounded by poor visibility, the USAID/OFDA-funded aircraft missions have been operating since November 1. As of November 18, 13 Black Hawk (UH-60 or MH-60) and 6 Chinook (CH-47) helicopters, and 2 C-27, 1 C-130 and 1 C-12 cargo planes are distributing relief supplies from Soto Cano airbase. USAID/OFDA has deployed a total of 1,038 rolls of plastic sheeting, thirty-two 10,000-liter water

bladders, 25,500 five-gallon water jugs, and 1,004 body bags to Honduras at a total estimated cost of \$423,999 including transport. The first airlift carrying USAID/OFDA relief supplies arrived at La Ceiba on October 31, the second arrived at Soto Cano airbase on November 1, the third airlift arrived at Soto Cano on November 2, the fourth arrived at Soto Cano on November 9, and the fifth arrived at Tegucigalpa on November 22. Supplemental relief commodities were transported by DOD on November 9 and 10. To date, USAID/OFDA has provided \$400,000 to the USAID Mission for the local purchase of food and emergency supplies, and for other response activities. Additionally, USAID/OFDA has provided \$800,000 to the USAID Mission, which will grant funding to resident PVOs in Honduras for the purchase and delivery of local relief supplies. USAID/OFDA has also purchased and airlifted plastic food storage bags from Costa Rica that will allow for the distribution of critical food stocks to 100,000 families in Honduras. USAID/OFDA has provided \$2 million to USAID in Tegucigalpa to fund projects to repair the nation's water supply system. On November 20, USAID/OFDA provided \$2,133,000 through USAID/Tegucigalpa to CARE to assist approximately 70,000 families for up to four months with basic livelihood needs such as: sanitation and health, agriculture, construction, food and shelter.

USAID/OFDA has had disaster specialists on the ground in Honduras since October 27. Disaster specialists from USAID, Miami-Dade County Fire Rescue Department (Miami-Dade), and the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) have operated out of Tegucigalpa, San Pedro Sula, La Ceiba, Danli, Choluteca and Soto Cano airbase. USAID/OFDA personnel in Honduras have assisted CONEH's Emergency Operations Center, conducted field assessments, coordinated aircraft and transport logistics, and performed other disaster relief activities. As of November 20, there are four USAID/OFDA DART members operating in Honduras.

USAID/OFDA DART assessments indicate that the most heavily affected areas in Honduras include the Bay Islands of Guanaja, Roatan and Utila, and the cities of La Ceiba, Tocoa, Trujillo, San Pedro Sula, Tegucigalpa and Choluteca. In the Bay Islands initial relief efforts focused on providing shelter and water carrying capacity, then shifted to the delivery of emergency food supplies. As of November 8, no further emergency relief assistance is required in the Bay Islands. In the Valle del Aguan region, the road transportation network is largely open allowing sufficient food and water distribution. However, as of November 16 there were still large numbers of people residing in shelters, especially in Santa Rosa del Aguan.

As of November 12 the USAID/OFDA DART continues to provide food, plastic sheeting for shelter, and water carrying supplies to residents. Also, the DART is providing air transport for other agencies carrying critical relief supplies to this area. Overland access to San Pedro Sula has been restored and no further emergency response action is anticipated. Overland access between La Ceiba and San Pedro Sula has also been restored, and all forms of traffic are reaching Tegucigalpa. The DART reports that the towns of Danli and El Paraiso are still inaccessible by road, and there are over 12,000 displaced persons with no emergency shelter in the region. The DART conducted an assessment in Catacamas, and concluded there are still persons without shelter in the region, 50-70% of the crops had been lost, and health supplies are sufficient for at least the next 30 days. Overland transportation in the area is still severely limited so airlifts of supplies will continue. USAID/OFDA delivered shelter materials for up to 90 displaced families in Catacamas and over 12 tons of food were delivered on November 16. After multiple deliveries of food, fuel, water and medical supplies to La Mosquitia region, no further emergency assistance is anticipated. To address short-term food requirements USAID/Tegucigalpa has established two strategic food reserves located at CARE warehouses in Tegucigalpa and San Pedro Sula. A recent DART assessment in Nacaome reported four cases of hemorrhagic dengue and that 50% of the sampled population tested positive for Malaria. The Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) was alerted to the health situation and will send a team to the region. The DART has recommended potable water programs for Nacaome as water systems and electricity have not functioned since October 30.

All major airports in the country are operational, and most ports are open with the exception of Trujillo and Guanaja, while Puerto Castilla is partially functional. Further, as most of the major roads are functioning, the need for aircraft transport is diminishing. It has been noted, however, that while the reconstruction of major paved roads has been given priority, the repair of secondary roads has been neglected. The rehabilitation of unpaved roads has been identified as critical need to the country's economic revival. Further, a detailed food security assessment is being carried out jointly by several organizations operating in the country.

The DART priority continues to be the delivery of supplies, food, water, and shelter to targeted populations. The Government of Honduras indicates that their assistance priorities are for medications and immunizations, information dissemination, disease control, bridging, shelter, latrines and field sanitation, food, and heavy construction.

Nicaragua: Mitch inflicted its greatest damage in Nicaragua through severe rains that caused extensive flooding and landslides. As of November 12, the Nicaraguan National Defense System estimated that 2,362 people had died and 970 were missing, many as a result of a large mudslide that inundated ten communities situated at the base of the Casitas Volcano, and that 867,752 people were displaced nationwide. A Nicaraguan transportation official reported as of November 6 that 71 bridges are either destroyed or heavily damaged, and OCHA estimated that 70% of roads were impassable immediately after the storm. On November 12, the Government of Nicaragua estimated that more than 30,000 houses in Nicaragua were either totally or partially destroyed.

On October 29, U.S. Ambassador to Nicaragua Lino Gutierrez declared a disaster due to continued flooding. USAID/OFDA has provided \$175,000 for the local purchase and transport of critical relief supplies, including medicines, food and shelter material. On November 2, USAID/OFDA provided \$250,000 for the deployment of DOD UH-60 and CH-47 helicopters to assist with search and rescue efforts and the delivery of relief supplies. As of November 18, 5 UH-60 and 5 CH-47 helicopters are operating in Nicaragua. Airlifts of USAID/OFDA relief supplies to Nicaragua, consisted of 679 rolls of plastic sheeting, 10,000 polyester blankets, 4,000 wool blankets, three 10,000-gallon water bladders, and 15,500 five-gallon water jugs, at a total estimated cost of \$419,267 including transport. The first airlift arrived in Managua on November 4, a second on November 8, and a third on November 19. On November 19, USAID/OFDA provided \$4 million to USAID/Managua to fund relief grants to reduce hunger and the threat of disease for thousands of victims in rural areas.

USAID/OFDA has operated in Nicaragua since October 29. The DART personnel from USAID, Miami-Dade, and DOD have conducted assessments, assisted national search and rescue operations, and performed other response activities. As of November 18, five USAID/OFDA DART members are posted in Nicaragua.

The November 12 assessment report from the USAID/OFDA DART indicates that emergency relief efforts are expected to continue for the next one to two weeks. The areas most affected were the northwestern Pacific coast, the north-central region and the northeastern Atlantic coast. The northwest is largely accessible by road and relief supplies have been widely distributed. The north-central and northeastern areas are still accessible only by helicopter and airlifts to both regions continue. In-depth damage assessments of the northwest have been difficult due to the region's remote location and lack of previously existing infrastructure. The DART informs that the management of the relief effort has been well coordinated by the Government of Nicaragua, and the warehouse system in Managua is operating extremely well. Additionally, all of the country's ports are reported to be open. Continued support for air transport during the emergency relief phase, and continued assessments of isolated areas, remain priorities. Short-term food stocks are adequate, but the lack of air transport has limited its distribution. Secondary to disaster response, planning for rehabilitation and mitigation programs are beginning. On November 12 and 13 a new assessment of bridges and roads was conducted by the Nicaragua government, DOD and OFDA representatives. Recommendations for reconstruction assistance will be forthcoming. Further, USAID/OFDA is currently reviewing relief assistance proposals for Nicaragua that include primarily agricultural and health projects.

Guatemala: The storm moved northwestward across Guatemala on November 1, causing heavy rains and severe flooding. The national emergency office (CONRED) took steps to evacuate 5,969 people prior to the storm's arrival. The Red Cross estimated that 27,000 people were still housed in shelters as of November 4. As of November 9, officials reported a total of 258 deaths and 120 people missing in Guatemala, while 723,581 people were still at risk. The most recent reporting from OCHA indicated that 32 bridges, and 40 roads had been severely damaged or destroyed by flood waters. CONRED reports that about 19,000 homes were either destroyed or heavily damaged. On November 5 the U.S. Embassy estimated that 95% of the nation's banana crop was decimated, 25-60% of the corn, bean, coffee, and sugar crops were destroyed, and 30% of the cattle herd was lost.

On October 31, Ambassador Donald J. Planty declared a disaster for Guatemala. In response, USAID/OFDA provided \$25,000 through the U.S. Embassy to Catholic Relief Services for the local purchase of food. USAID/OFDA has delivered 290 rolls of plastic sheeting, 3,000 polyester blankets, 7,350 five-gallon water jugs, and four 3,000-gallon water bladders to Guatemala, at a total estimated cost of \$182,013 including transport. The first airlift arrived in Guatemala City on November 4, and the second on November 9. USAID/OFDA has also provided \$ 50,000 for the rental of local helicopters for aerial assessments of disaster-affected areas. As of November 18, 6 DOD UH-60 and 4 CH-47 helicopters were operating in Guatemala to facilitate USAID/OFDA relief efforts. On November 18 USAID/OFDA provided \$1 million in grants to non-governmental organizations (NGOs) for disaster response projects that will provide assistance in the following sectors: water/sanitation, emergency shelter, medicine, hygiene, and agriculture.

USAID/OFDA disaster relief personnel have operated in Guatemala since October 27. They have assisted CONRED in coordinating the national relief effort, and have conducted damage assessments and oversight of USAID/OFDA assistance. As of November 18, there are five USAID/OFDA DART members posted in Guatemala. The DART reports indicate that northeastern Guatemala was most severely affected, including Isabal, Zacapa and Alta Verapaz. USAID/OFDA will continue to distribute water jugs and plastic sheeting for shelters, as well as support the transport of relief supplies of other agencies. The DART also reports that all major roads are passable and the bridges damaged along the Atlantic Coast Highway are operable. In general, the USAID/OFDA DART has identified water treatment and addressing health issues, such as malaria, dengue and diarrhea as the highest priorities. However, due to the devastation suffered by the agricultural sector, the USAID/OFDA DART also recommends seeds and tools assistance programs during long-term recovery efforts. The DART is currently reviewing project proposals that have been submitted to USAID field missions that address water and sanitation and health projects, as well as agricultural programs.

El Salvador: As of November 9, the National Emergency Committee (NEC) of El Salvador reported that 239 deaths and 135 people missing as a result of flash floods, and the Red Cross estimated that 400 people had died and 600 were missing. As of November 6, the Government of El Salvador estimates that 55,864 people have been displaced and has established 107 emergency shelters. The government also estimates that 10,000 houses have been destroyed and thousands more were seriously damaged.

Ambassador Anne W. Patterson declared a disaster in El Salvador on November 1. In response, USAID/OFDA provided \$25,000 for the immediate needs of flood victims. In addition, on November 5 USAID/OFDA airlifted 117 rolls of plastic sheeting, 5,150 polyester blankets, 6,000 five-gallon water jugs, and four 3,000-gallon water bladders, at a total estimated cost of \$98,451 including transport. On November 18 USAID/OFDA provided \$1 million in grants to non-governmental organizations (NGOs) for disaster response projects that will distribute recovery packages to the areas of greatest need.

A Miami-Dade disaster specialist was in El Salvador November 1-5 to assist USAID/OFDA/LAC in coordinating initial relief operations. As of November 18, two USAID/OFDA DART members are based in San Salvador to assist in the ongoing assessment of relief needs and priorities. Initial assessment reports indicate that all seaports, airports and major roads are now open and that health issues are likely the most critical problem in El Salvador. The USAID/OFDA DART is conducting an assessment in the southeastern portion of the country to evaluate the overall effectiveness of the relief effort and to make recommendations on additional relief projects.

Belize: The Government of Belize established an Emergency Operations Center in Belize City to prepare for the storm's arrival and evacuated over 75,000 people from Belize City and the coastal islands to temporary shelters in Belmopan. Contrary to initial forecasts, the hurricane did not directly strike Belize. Nonetheless, heavy rains caused flooding throughout the coastal areas, particularly in Belize City. The Government of Belize has since granted permission for residents to return to Belize City, however according to the Red Cross thousands had opted to remain in emergency shelters long afterward. On October 29, U.S. Charge d'Affaires Joel Danies declared a disaster for Belize due to the impacts of Hurricane Mitch. In response, USAID/OFDA immediately provided \$25,000 for the local purchase of food for distribution to displaced populations inhabiting emergency shelters. In addition, USAID/OFDA provided funding for two DOD Black Hawk helicopters based in Honduras to conduct overflight assessments and evacuations. Weather conditions during the storm's peak never permitted these aircraft to fly and as Hurricane Mitch turned and tracked away from Belize the helicopters were deployed to support emergency logistics requirements in Nicaragua. A four-person USAID/OFDA assessment team (comprised of a USAID/OFDA/LAC Regional Advisor and three Miami-Dade disaster specialists) was in Belize from October 29 to October 31. The team assessed needs of the evacuated population and reported that food stocks were adequate in Belmopan, but in short supply at Belize City. The team also reported that sanitation and hygiene were poor in all flood-affected areas. No additional USAID/OFDA assistance is anticipated for Belize.

Costa Rica: Heavy rains along the entire Pacific coast of Costa Rica prompted the National Emergency Commission to evacuate at-risk populations. The Government of Costa Rica (GOCR) has since granted permission for people to return to their homes although approximately 1,700 people remain in temporary shelters up to a week after the storm had passed. Four people are reported dead as a result of the storm while four are still missing. On October 23, the U.S. Charge d'Affaires to Costa Rica Richard L. Baltimore III declared a disaster due to severe flooding caused by Hurricane Mitch. USAID/OFDA responded by providing a total of \$45,000 to the U.S. Embassy in San Jose. Funds were used to rent local helicopters to provide overflight assessments and the delivery of food, water, and medicine to affected populations. No additional USAID/OFDA assistance is anticipated for Costa Rica. As of November 18, there are four USAID/OFDA

DART personnel stationed at the DART Headquarters in San Jose to coordinate the disaster response in the region.

Region: USAID/OFDA has provided \$5 million to DOD for reconstruction activities in Honduras, Nicaragua, El Salvador and Guatemala. These funds will support the purchase of reconstruction and engineering materials and supplies, including gravel for road repair. USAID/OFDA has provided an additional \$4 million to DOD for continued aircraft support in Honduras, Nicaragua, Guatemala and El Salvador, which contributes to the positioning of more than 40 DOD helicopters in Central America. As of November 12, these aircraft had flown over 400 missions in support of USAID/OFDA relief efforts. To date, USAID/OFDA has provided \$2 million to the PAHO to address emergency water and sanitation needs of Hurricane Mitch victims. USAID/OFDA has also provided \$160,000 to the U.S. Embassy in San Jose for the regional deployment of emergency supplies and personnel.

USAID/OFDA Assistance in Honduras	\$6,731,999
USAID/OFDA Assistance in Nicaragua	\$4,844,267
USAID/OFDA Assistance in Guatemala	\$1,257,013
USAID/OFDA Assistance in El Salvador	\$1,123,451
USAID/OFDA Assistance in Costa Rica	\$45,000
USAID/OFDA Assistance in Belize	\$25,000
USAID/OFDA Assistance to the Region	\$11,160,000
Total USAID/OFDA Assistance for Hurricane Mitch (to date)	\$25,186,730

PUBLIC DONATION INFORMATION FOR VICTIMS OF HURRICANE MITCH

Disasters often generate an outpouring of interest and concern by the American people which lead to spontaneous collections of relief supplies, i.e. food, clothing, medical supplies etc. **In the interest of effective coordination of such public response we encourage concerned citizens to provide monetary donations to appropriate organizations.**

As transportation of relief supplies is limited by capacity, infrastructure damage and continuing weather constraints, it is difficult to move supplies into the affected countries. Unsolicited commodity donations often place an unnecessary burden on relief workers and local governments to store, transport and distribute supplies to those affected populations in need. This can also detract from the provision of more urgently needed relief assistance. USAID/OFDA can not provide assistance for the transport of donated goods.

USAID encourages the public to contact directly those private voluntary organizations (PVOs) who are currently working in, or with local affiliates, in Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Belize, Costa Rica and El Salvador to provide monetary donations. A list of PVOs may be obtained by contacting InterAction directly at 202-667-8227 x 106, or via the internet at www.interaction.org. Those interested in providing specific relief services or supplies should contact Volunteers in Technical Assistance (VITA) for information and guidelines. VITA can be reached at 703-276-1914, or via the internet at www.vita.org.

**BRIEFING FOR NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS AND PUBLIC INTEREST
GROUPS ON THE ADMINISTRATION'S RELIEF EFFORTS FOR CENTRAL AMERICA**

**Tuesday, November 24, 1998
Presidential Hall (Room 450), Old Executive Office Building
3:30 P.M.**

AGENDA

- I. Welcoming Remarks**
Maria Echaveste
Assistant to the President and Deputy Chief of Staff
- II. Presentation on the Impact of Hurricane Mitch**
Harriet C. Babbitt
Deputy Administrator, USAID
- III. NGO Presentation**
Marjorie Tsitouris
Director, CARE Emergency Group
- IV. Observations of Devastation in Central America**
Mrs. Elizabeth Gore
- V. Details of the Response from the United States Government**
First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton
- VI. Overview of the Administration's Next Steps in the Relief Efforts**
Harriet Babbitt
- VII. Closing**
Maria Echaveste
- VIII. Questions & Answers**



KEY NUMBERS TO CALL

- **For private sector donations and business wanting to help**

Call USAID Emergency Response Business Desk: 1-800-872-4373 or
1-800-USAID-RELIEF.

- **For monetary donations and contact with organizations working in disaster areas**

Call InterAction: 202-667-8227, ext. 106, or via the Internet at www.interaction.org.

- **For small donations of goods and technical services**

Call VITA: 703-276-1914, or via the Internet at www.vita.org.

- **For large donations of goods and services**

Call USAID: 1-800-872-4373 or 1-800-USAID-RELIEF.

- **For further information and updates**

Go to the USAID Website: www.info.usaid.gov.



WHAT TO DO TO HELP IN RESPONSE TO HURRICANES MITCH AND GEORGES

We greatly appreciate the generosity of the American people. To ensure that the most urgent needs are met, we encourage concerned citizens to provide monetary contributions to appropriate organizations rather than collecting clothing and other items for donation. If you want to donate goods, please also try to raise funding for shipment.

- The quickest way for the public to provide help is to contact directly those private voluntary organizations (PVOs) which are currently working in or with local affiliates in Central America and the Caribbean.
- A list of PVOs may be obtained by contacting InterAction at 202-667-8227, ext. 106, or via the Internet at www.interaction.org. InterAction is a coalition of voluntary humanitarian and development organizations which work overseas.
- Those interested in providing specific technical relief services or supplies should contact Volunteers in Technical Assistance's (VITA) Disaster Information Center for information and guidelines. VITA, under contract with USAID, serves as a clearinghouse and helps coordinate offers of humanitarian relief with the non-governmental organizations working on the ground. VITA can be reached at 703-276-1914, or via the Internet at www.vita.org.
- If you need assistance in ensuring a financial contribution is routed effectively, or in finding transportation for your donations, please call USAID's disaster relief toll free number: 1-800-872-4373 or 1-800-USAID-RELIEF.
- Our ability to transport relief supplies is limited by infrastructure damage and continuing weather constraints, making it difficult to move supplies into the affected countries. We need to be sure that our first response efforts are focused on the immediate crisis and reaching the people in urgent need. Therefore, it is essential that donations are prioritized to meet the most critical needs quickly..
- The following items are priority needs: non-perishable foods such as canned goods; over-the-counter medicines with one or more years before expiration; towels; unused, cleaned and sorted clothing; and, hygiene items such as toothbrushes, toothpaste and soap.
- Unfortunately, USAID does not have the capacity to pay to move donated goods or volunteers. However, USAID helps identify transportation in partnership with non-governmental organizations and the Department of Defense.

HRC
US gen's response

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FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
NGO BRIEFING
THE WHITE HOUSE
NOVEMBER 24, 1998

- I've just returned from an extraordinary trip to four central American countries suffering from the devastation of Hurricane Mitch: Honduras, Nicaragua, El Salvador, and Guatemala. I also visited the Dominican Republic and Haiti -- and saw the long term challenges of reconstruction those two countries are facing as a result of Hurricane Georges.
- I met with the presidents of each country, who briefed me on the extend of the damage and loss of life, and told me of their immediate and long term needs. But they also spoke to me about their ~~plans~~ ^{long term needs} for rehabilitation, reconstruction, and transformation.
- I was also proud to meet with our American troops, AID workers, Peace corps volunteers, and ngos who are doing such an extraordinary job of providing much needed food and medical supplies to the victims, and helping the people of these countries to rebuild their homes, schools, roads, and bridges. (Personal reflections on New York team rebuilding hospital in Sammy Sosa's home town; US troops rescuing President and Mrs. Flores who were stuck between midslies in a small town; USAID helping to repair damaged irrigation ditch in Haiti; etc.)

Rehabilitation
includes
Peace Corps

I had the privilege of announcing our enhanced hurricane relief package -- which now, including ^{also} exceeds \$263 million from USAID; the Department of Defense; and USDA. With increased support ~~for the~~ ^{of} Peace Corps and micro-credit programs, the figure surpasses ~~\$300 million~~.

she's more than
an american } ~~Peace Corps~~
crisis Corps volunteer } ~~help~~
sleep

- I saw ~~evidence not only of our government aid but of private contributions as well.~~ ^{the} (The same day I was in Nicaragua, a plane full of donations from a church in my home town of Little Rock landed with donations of water rice, wheat, and other food.) These acts of generosity have further strengthened the ties of friendship between the American people and the people of Central America and the Caribbean.)
- I also heard -- at every stop I made -- how grateful the people of these countries were for the aid and support we were supplying. One of our medical units visited one village -- whose closest clinic was a four hour walk away. One woman said: "The whole world is one big community and I'm glad our neighbors are here."
- The countries I visited -- ~~particularly El Salvador and Guatemala~~ -- were experiencing the first real hope for the future, after decades of conflict, repression and misery. And I saw the power, spirit, and determination it took to overcome those years of division and conflict. Finally, they were making real progress toward peace and growth and economic

~~and~~

development. The hurricane reversed much of that progress in only a few short days. (Many of the women I met with said that this storm was even more devastating than the wars they have finally ended -- because of the extent of the damage inflicted on human life, homes, property, and crops.) *Then economic opportunity*

The P resident
+ our gov't.
This country is committed to both the short term emergency relief that we've talked about here -- but also the long term reconstruction of these devastated countries. I've spoken to my husband about how strongly he feels -- and how he has directed every agency in the federal government that can contribute to this mission to do so.

- All of us need to respond*
- But we need more than government aid to make a real difference in the future of these nations. We need the people and NGOs represented in this room -- and Americans in every community -- from business and labor organizations to religious and civic groups -- to contribute. *We know there's been an overwhelming*

- *regards to our fellow citizens want to know*
We are encouraging concerned citizens to provide monetary contributions to appropriate organizations rather than collecting clothing and other items for donation. If you want to donate goods, please also try to raise funding for shipment.

- The quickest and most effective way for the public to provide help is to directly contact the private voluntary organizations (PVOs) which are currently working in or with local affiliates in Central America and the Caribbean. (A sheet being handed out will provide phone numbers).

- Those interested in providing specific technical relief services or supplies should contact Volunteers in Technical Assistance (VITA) Disaster Information Center.

- If you need assistance in ensuring a financial contribution is route effectively, or in finding transportation for your donations, please call USAID's disaster relief toll free number.

Sheet in your folder
Our ability to transport relief supplies is limited by infrastructure damage and continu-- so we need to be sure that our first response efforts are focussed on the immediate crisis -- and reaching the people in urgent need. Donations should be prioritized to meet the most critical needs quickly.

- Those priority needs include non-perishable foods such as canned goods; over-the-counter medicines; towels; unused cleaned and assorted clothing; and hygiene items such as toothbrushes, toothpaste and soap.
- Unfortunately, USAID does not have the capacity to pay to move donated goods or volunteers. But it can help identify transportation in partnership with non-governmental organizations and the Department of Defense.
- We're in this for the long haul. If we can combine the resources of the public and private

sector, and exhibit the kind of generosity of spirit and tireless determination that I saw in abundance in every community of these devastated countries -- then we can accomplish even more than provide food and medical supplies; we can do even more than rebuild homes and bridges; we can do even more than get these countries back on their feet. We can ensure they will be strong, peaceful, and democratic neighbors in the 21st century.

We know you need more relief workers. And I'm pleased to announce that ~~within the next few days Peace Corps volunteers who left during the disaster will return either to their old communities or places where they're needed most.~~ And within the next few weeks, several dozen members of the Peace Corps Crisis Corps, a group of returned volunteers, will be in Honduras and Nicaragua to lend a hand with both immediate relief and long-term recovery.

~~When I've~~
~~For those of you who have met Peace Corps volunteers, you know that they are this very, strong type. And I'm sure that when they come back to the U.S., they will bring with them a~~
passion about the rich traditions, warm hospitality, and unyielding spirit of the people here. And they will join the legions of other citizens in my country, millions of whom trace their roots to Central America who understand that we are connected by culture, history, borders and above all friendship. All over my country, people are opening their hearts and wallets, children donating pennies, adults donating clothing and food. As of Friday, more than 40 planes full of private American donations had arrived here ~~from a dozen states.~~ *95 million in*

~~And today, a plane full of donations from Christ the King church in my home town of Little Rock Arkansas is landing at Soto Cano with water, rice, wheat, canned meat, dried beans and other food. This same church has been doing to its sister city of Trujillo for the past two years, seeing more than 6,000 Hondurans in one week, bringing needed medicine and even building a new operating room in the local hospital. In fact, it is because of a generator they built there that the Hospital has held strong through the storm.~~

~~And I have faith that what we create here together will be just as unshakable. Because it too is made from a foundation of friendship, a human spirit that would not be crushed, a belief in a common destiny. It too is based on our knowledge that if all citizens and nations do their part for Honduras now, and if we stand together as Americans, we can not only restore jobs, roads, and crops, but rebuild a Central America that we are proud to pass down to our children.~~

And as we do, please know that Estamos con Ustedes. [Estah-mos Con Oo-steh-des]. May God bless Guatemala. Thank you very much.

Nicaragua.

Nicaragua

Julie

I am heartened by the outpouring of support by nations and international organizations around the world. And today, I want to call on all people, all nations, all groups to do their part. I hope that everyone in my country and around the world sees

Estamos con Ustedes. [Ec-stah-mos Con Oo-steh-des]
Compassion.

Nicaragua

FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
STATEMENT ON HURRICANE MITCH
~~TEGUICIGALPA, HONDURAS~~ MANAGUA, NICARAGUA
NOVEMBER 16, 1998

[Acknowledgments]

I want to thank all of you for your extraordinary courage, commitment, and sheer stamina in helping Honduras recover from one of the worst tragedies in human history. I'm delighted to see so many non-governmental organizations here -- from those delivering food to victims to others helping them save their small businesses and rebuild their lives.

I want to thank our Ambassador and the entire Embassy and A.I.D. staffs, who have been literally working around the clock since the disaster struck. And our U.S. Troops, ~~many of which I just met with at Soto Cano~~, whose dedication and bravery have made us so proud. ~~I will always remember those first search and rescue missions they took, going up in helicopters in between storms, saving children stuck on tree branches and rooftops, and even rescuing the President and Mrs. Flores when they were caught in a mudslide.~~

USAID - often thought of them... how they fared...

Two weeks ago, Mrs. Flores told me about that incident in a letter she sent me. In it, she wrote movingly of the horrible toll this catastrophe has taken on Honduras -- and she asked the United States for additional help. Today, I have come here, on behalf of my husband and the American people, to bring Hondurans our thoughts and prayers, more assistance, and a commitment to continue to stand with you over the long haul as you repair and rebuild your beautiful nation.

Strong

Alman

Nicaragua

Just a few minutes ago, I met with President Flores and other members of the Honduran government...and they described how this epic disaster has touched every person in this country...leaving children without parents, leaving families without homes, leaving communities without roads, bridges, food, without medicine, crops, and livelihoods. And I especially want to express my condolences over the death of your Mayor, Dr. Cesar Castellanos [Cas-tay-yah-nos].

~~He had a wonderful dream for this capital...and I'm sure that he is somewhere, somewhere very proud of all Hondurans are doing in the face of disaster, to make it a reality.~~

~~Hundreds of victims of the mudslide on Casitas Volcano.~~
None of us will ever forget the courage of the people of Honduras and all of Central America in choosing democratic progress and peace over division and dictatorship. And so too do you inspire the world today with your determination -- not just to bring your nation back to where it was before this disaster, but to move it forward into the future.

When Mrs. Gore came back from Honduras last week, she, like every citizen in our country, was awed by the strength of the people here, many of whom lost everything, but they still never lost hope. You have shown that a hurricane can destroy crops and roads, homes and families. But no hurricane will ever destroy the spirit of the Honduran people.

I think of the ~~year-old child whose house was swept away~~ felt the earth moving.

Woman holding her infant child in her arms in a ~~the photo was taken~~ ~~plastic was the only thing~~ ~~in the city of San Jose~~
Nicaragua

Because of civil war, we can't get in world's history... 26 years ago in Managua... now

We all mourn their deaths.

called a halt to deportations

under his feet, but still went back to pull family and friends from the rubble. We think of the 36 year old woman who was torn from her husband and three children by the storm... and floated in the sea on a makeshift raft she built, singing and praying for 6 days until she was rescued. We think of the people of one town, who instead of waiting for help, worked together to clear the highways of 15 miles of debris. A local radio reporter put it this way: "We are trying to make gold from mud." And we think of the outpouring of support from nations and people and organizations all over the world, including the supplies arriving here today from the U.S., Japan, Russia, and Mexico.

When the news of the Hurricane's damage hit our country, 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 diseases like Cholera. Engineers to rebuild roads, schools, bridges and infrastructure. Helicopters to rescue people and deliver supplies to remote locations.

Two days ago, he announced an additional \$45 million in military equipment and services. He asked his Secretary of the Treasury to find the best way to provide debt relief from the U.S. and the international community. And he promised to stop deporting citizens from Honduras, Nicaragua, El Salvador, and Guatemala through the end of the holidays this year, *while we pursue longer-term equitable solutions to your immigration concerns.*

And today, I am so pleased to announce that the U.S. 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 \$200 million.

Nicaragua 250

We know the ~~Honduran~~ people need more military help. So starting this week, the Department of Defense will bring in more heavy-lift helicopters, more people to build roads and bridges, more medical supplies, a field hospital and 11 water purification systems to help ease the suffering and begin to rebuild an infrastructure shattered by flooding. We're establishing a second Joint Task Force in El Salvador to coordinate our military relief efforts there and throughout Nicaragua and Guatemala. And in the coming weeks, we will more than triple the number of U.S. Troops -- from 1,300 to 4,800.

Nicaragua *(to Central America)*

We know the people of ~~Honduras~~ need more food. And today, I am proud to announce an additional \$51 million in rice, beans, vegetable oil, dry milk, wheat and other basic commodities -- bringing our total U.S. food aid to over \$81 million. Until food can come by land, three shipments a day are coming by air. As of today 30 flights have brought 6 million pounds of food to this region.

25 *2.6 million*

We know micro-entrepreneurs, many of whom lost homes and businesses, now need a helping hand to get back on their feet. I pleased to announce that the United States Agency for International Development and the International American Development Bank are giving ~~25~~ \$17 million to microfinancing organizations -- so they can continue to provide the loans that owners will use to rebuild their businesses, their lives, their nations.

We know your countries are under heavy debt burdens. I am pleased to announce that the US is prepared to...



When the news of the Hurricane's damage hit our country, 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 diseases like Cholera. Engineers to rebuild roads, schools, bridges and infrastructure. Helicopters to rescue people and deliver supplies to remote locations.

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

And today, I am so proud to announce that the U.S. is dramatically increasing our contributions to the Central American countries hurt by Hurricane Mitch.

We are opening a new chapter in our assistance, providing both emergency relief and long-term reconstruction, and making a commitment totaling more than \$250 million.

We know ^{EL SALVADOR} the ~~Nicaraguan~~ people 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, a field hospital and 11 water purification systems to help ease the suffering and begin to rebuild a region shattered by flooding.

Today, we're establishing a second Joint Task Force in El Salvador to coordinate our military relief efforts there and throughout Nicaragua and Guatemala. And in the coming weeks, we will quadruple the number of U.S. Troops -- from 1,300 to 5,600.

We know the people of ^{EL SALVADOR} ~~Nicaragua~~ need more food. And today, I am proud to announce an additional \$51 million in rice, beans, vegetable oil, dry milk, wheat and other basic commodities -- bringing our total U.S. food aid to Central America to over \$81 million. Until food can come by land, three shipments a day are coming by air. As of today 25 flights have brought 2.6 million pounds of food to this region.

We know this country is under a heavy debt burden. And I am pleased to announce that the U.S. is prepared to provide debt relief of up to \$54 million for Honduras and Nicaragua, the two countries hardest hit by Hurricane Mitch. This would relieve your country of your obligation to service your bilateral debt to the U.S. through the year 2000. Our country believes Honduras and Nicaragua should be relieved of all their debt service obligations for the next two years. And we will be working with our partners to accomplish this goal.

As I mentioned earlier there are many micro-entrepreneurs, like the ones I met with earlier, who, in the aftermath of the hurricane may need a helping hand to get back on their feet. I pleased to announce that the United States Agency for International Development and the International American Development Bank are giving \$17 million to microfinancing organizations so they can continue to provide the loans that owners will use to rebuild their businesses, their lives, their nations.

We know you need more relief workers. And within the next few weeks, several dozen members of the Peace Corps Crisis Corps, a group of returned volunteers, will be in Honduras and Nicaragua to lend a hand with both immediate relief and long-term recovery.

When the Peace Corps volunteers come back to the U.S., they will bring with them a passion about the rich traditions, warm hospitality, and unyielding spirit of the people here. And they will join the legions of other citizens in my country, millions of whom trace their roots to Central America and understand how connected we are by culture, history, borders and above all friendship. All over my country, people are opening their hearts, donating clothing, food, and money. As of Friday, more than 40 planes carrying \$5 million in private American donations had arrived here from a dozen states.

But what is most special about this warehouse is that the supplies that travel here are from all over the world. I'm told that at one point last week, a U.S. plane, a Russian plane and a Canadian plane were all on the ground at the same time unloading relief supplies.

What a powerful image that is. Because our troops and relief workers here are building not just physical bridges but bridges between people and nations that will survive long after we go home. Holding them up is a foundation of friendship, a human spirit that cannot be crushed, a faith in what we can accomplish when we stand together. And, when we do, when each of us does our part, on the other side are not only restored jobs, roads, and crops, but a Nicaragua that has been rebuilt, and a Central America that we are proud to pass down to our children.

May God bless Nicaragua. Thank you very much.

FLCO

WHCA FL CO

☑ work



FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
REMARKS BEFORE THE GUATEMALAN CONGRESS
GUATEMALA CITY, GUATEMALA

NOVEMBER 19, 1998

Remember that
the cameras
are on you

There are 3 of us Congress
That are playing

the
we will join
more women
members
proportionally
to the population

It's

Try to be
a STRUGGLE
to stay awake

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, ^{we can} 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. ^{an am} 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.

street violence -

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 ^{has} 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. Africa
Bosnia*

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.

*pay the
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.

Let me thank Secretary Caldera for his extraordinary leadership in the aftermath of Hurricane Mitch. And I want to say a special thanks to Colonel Davis, Colonel Jacoby, Colonel Fennel, and all the U.S. troops at Soto Cano, as well as our Honduran partners.

Now, I know there are just a few more people on this base than usual right now...that the conditions have been hard, the obstacles immense, and that sleep probably seems like a distant memory. But, I hope you also know that there is no more heroic, no more important mission than the one you are fulfilling. You are helping our neighbors overcome one of worst tragedies in human history. And every single American is grateful for the personal sacrifices you've made... and so proud of all you've accomplished.

On Saturday, my husband announced that he had approved a total of \$75 million in defense equipment and services for the Central America relief effort. And right after this, I will be announcing even more resources -- more helicopters, more troops, more medical supplies, more engineering and road building units -- which will give you more reinforcements as you continue to help the people of Honduras recover and rebuild.

Because when the Hurricane first struck, we saw not only devastating pictures of children who lost parents, families who lost homes, communities that lost bridges, roads, power, water, crops, entire livelihoods.

We also saw Hondurans, whose spirit could not be crushed, whose will to survive and rebuild was stronger than any hurricane. And we saw pictures of many of you -- members of the Joint Task Force-Bravo, who, from day one, were right here, risking your lives to save the lives of the Honduran people.

On search and rescue missions...in helicopters, air-dropping food and saving children stuck on tree branches and roof tops...I'm told you rescued 1,000 people in the first days alone. Mrs. Flores even wrote to me, explaining how she and President Flores were stuck between mudslides in a small town...and how it was the U.S. Military that rescued them by helicopter and brought them back to the capital safely.

And in the weeks since, as your numbers have grown, I have heard countless stories of the clean water you're bringing to people who have been suffering without it. The roads you're clearing to reach families cut off from food and shelter. The medicine you've brought to sick children and their families. And the Honduran people in village after village who line up waiting for you to come with help...and thanking you for all you've done.

In one village that your medical team visited, I'm told their leader explained that the nearest clinic is a 4 hour walk away. And that she said, "The whole world is one big community and I'm glad our neighbors are here."

No where is that more clear than right here. What an incredible sight it must be to see planes landing at Soto Cano and at Toncontin from all over the world -- including those bringing help today alone from the U.S., Japan, Russia and Mexico. And what an incredible inspiration it is for U.S. citizens to know that our troops are working with the Hondurans to bring aid and comfort to people here -- with whom we share culture, family, borders, and above all, friendship.

Because, as you know better than anyone, relationships between countries are strengthened not just by diplomats and Presidents, but by citizens. And like the troops I've been privileged to meet all over the world, you will leave behind in Honduras not just assistance, but also goodwill...not just bridges across water, but bridges between people and nations.

Years from now, when the Honduran children you've helped think about what the United States stands for, they will see your faces. And they will think back to the food and shelter and medicine you brought -- and the stronger communities and friendships and Americas that you left behind.

I know this is what I, and every other citizen of the United States will give thanks for -- not only next week at Thanksgiving time, but for all time.

Thank you very much.

Draft -- November 15, 11:00 p.m.

FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON

REMARKS TO THE TROOPS

SOTO CANO BASE, HONDURAS

NOVEMBER 16, 1998

more 60s
in afternoon -
direct

great
speech
piece
Thank you!

meanings -
ADPs -
→ Same in
Cher
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Covers

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peace +
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peace
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warehouse -
ARAD
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Thank you
Thank you.
we have much
to be
thankful for -
so many plans & US

called up to
keep a notebook
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**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
FIRST LADIES' CONFERENCE ON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE
SAN SALVADOR, EL SALVADOR -- NOVEMBER 17, 1998
(AS DELIVERED)

I've been in many situations where my anthem and the anthem of another country were played. But I don't know that I've ever been more moved than I was just now to be with all of you as you sang the anthem of a democratic and peaceful El Salvador. It made me very proud and very grateful to have a chance to be with all of you to witness that. (Applause) It has been a great pleasure for me to visit your country. I am pleased that my friend and your First Lady has invited me, and I am delighted that I have been able to see firsthand today many of the changes that are occurring in your country.

This morning we went to a center for domestic violence, where I met a victim of abuse whose husband had beaten her, saying while he did, "You are nothing." Yet today, she spoke about how her life now has meaning and how she has hope in the future, thanks to the services and understanding that she received at this center. It reminded me again how important it is, regardless of what circumstances one finds oneself in, to have hope and to be given the opportunity to believe in yourself again. So the message of today, as we discuss a terrible problem in our hemisphere -- domestic violence -- is that violence in any form, whether conflict with armed combatants or conflict in the home, must be part of our past. And that we must work together to create a peaceful future for everyone.

I also was privileged to meet with some of the remarkable women leaders from across El Salvador's political and economic spectrum. You know many of the women that I met with and there are many others who could have been included in the discussion that Elizabeth and I had. But I am struck by the courage and commitment of the women from all sides of the political spectrum who spoke to me about the real issues confronting this country or any country: education, health care, training, jobs -- the kind of issues that should unite us across any political division. I also understood more clearly the extraordinary strides that have been taken by so many people here since the signing of the Peace Accords six years ago. I am privileged that I could come to El Salvador to be one of many witnesses to this historic transition from war to peace, from violence to reconciliation.

Today my thoughts -- as well as the thoughts of my husband, our government, and the people of the United States -- are also with you as to face a different kind of challenge, the result of the devastation caused by this century's worst storm. I stopped briefly in Honduras and Nicaragua yesterday to announce the United States' disaster relief effort for this region and to express personally the deep concerns of the President and the American people for the people of this area at this difficult time. I was also privileged last evening to announce additional disaster relief for the people of El Salvador to help recover and rebuild their lives and families and communities.

I also hope that you know about the great outpouring of love and concern that is coming from every corner of my country. Food and clothing, medicine and support -- not just from our government -- but from people and churches and communities in every corner of our nation. It is

a reflection of the deep and permanent friendship between our two countries. So many who live in the United States can trace their roots here to El Salvador and they are now contributing to the growth and prosperity of both our nations. There are also close bonds between the religious communities in our countries fueled by a mutual passion for justice and peace.

As I have learned more 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 the same courage and unbreakable spirit that is sustaining you during this terrible tragedy sustains you also as you also walk down a long and difficult road to peace. You have made remarkable progress. It is sometimes hard when you're in the midst of transition and change perhaps to see everything that you have accomplished. But just think for a minute about what has been achieved. You have reshaped your military and modernized the police to serve the people. You have helped reintegrate combatants into civilian life. You have distributed land to those on both sides of the conflict. You have resettled victims of war. You have begun to rebuild the infrastructures of your communities. You created a Truth Commission that provides an accounting of the human rights violations of the past. And you have made extraordinary progress in strengthening the rule of law, electing a new Supreme Court, reforming your judicial system. For the first time in El Salvador there's a new juvenile code and a new criminal code providing legal protection for women and children. And today the law says clearly that every individual is presumed innocent until proven guilty. Now you are dealing with some of the problems that come in the aftermath of such a transition: a problem of crime, which we know a lot about in our country, seeking to end the violence that is driven by criminals just as you sought to end the violence because of combatants in war.

But perhaps the most profound change is that Salvadorans who once fought on opposite sides of the battlefield are now debating their differences from opposite sides of the aisle in the legislature. And citizens are using ballots instead of bullets to express their disappointments and disagreements. Your efforts here are giving hope to people all over the world. Just think of it, people in Northern Ireland and Bosnia and the Middle East, places like Rwanda or Kashmir, can look to the people and leaders of El Salvador to see how peace and reconciliation can be accomplished -- that divisions can be healed, that forgiveness and compassion can be more powerful than bitterness and anger. My country has been pleased to work with the people of El Salvador and its government during this historic transition to democracy. It is a role that my husband believes very strongly that the United States must play, working with those who would be peacemakers, working with both governments and nongovernmental agencies. It is a role that my husband believes reflects the deepest principles of the United States.

I've heard many stories preparing to come here, and even since I've been here, about how so many individuals were able to forgive, leave the past behind, and work with people who were once their sworn enemies in a spirit of cooperation. A former Army Colonel and 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, marvelling how a few years earlier they had been trying to kill one another. I've heard stories like that in other countries that have also taken the hard, but rewarding road to peace. I remember sitting at a meeting in Cape Town, South Africa across from two men who could not have been more different. One, the General of the Army of the former Apartheid regime, the other a Black Liberation fighter who is now the leader of one of the houses of the

legislature. And the white General said "You know, I would have just as soon killed him a few years ago." And the black President in the Senate said "And I would have just as soon responded in kind...but now we know we have much more in common to build a stronger country than we've ever dreamed possible." I've heard of the Mayors of six small towns in one war torn region who came together to put collaboration over conflict, providing their funds to build a road, linking the two most needy and remote villages. 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. Each of you in this room, I know, has a story that you could tell -- a story of loss, a story of tragedy, a story of disappointment from the past. But I also know you can tell new stories, and those new stories are about rebuilding and moving forward. Despite how difficult that must be for all of you, and how hard it is to live with the memories of lost loved ones, you are setting an extraordinary example for the rest of the world.

The experience that you have gone through is in many ways comparable to what happens with domestic violence. Women have always been the primary victims of war. Women lose their husbands, their fathers, their sons in combat. Women often have to flee from the only homes they have ever known. Women are often the refugees from conflict and sometimes, more frequently in today's warfare, victims. Women are often left with the responsibility, alone, of raising the children. Women are again the victims in crime and domestic violence as well. Throughout our hemisphere we have an epidemic of violence against women, even though there is no longer any organized warfare that puts women in the direct line of combat. But domestic violence is now recognized as being the most pervasive human rights violation in the world. Here in El Salvador, according to the statistics gathered by your government, 1 in 6 women have been sexually assaulted and the number of domestic abuse complaints at just one agency topped 10,000 last year. Between 25 and 50 percent of women throughout Latin America have reportedly been victims of domestic violence.

The problem is all pervasive, but sometimes difficult to see. Every country on earth shares this dark secret. Too often, the women we see shopping at the markets, working at their jobs, 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 a dark alley, but fear of the very people -- family members -- who 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, their homes provide inadequate refuge, the law little protection, public opinion often less sympathy. That's why we have to say over and over again, as Elizabeth has done and as so many of you have echoed, that violence against women is not simply cultural or a custom. It is simply criminal, a crime. The devastating effects of domestic violence on women are just as dramatic as the effects of war on women. The physical injury, the mental illness, the terrible loss of confidence limits the capacities of women to fulfill their God-given potentials.

We are also learning about the economic costs that come with domestic violence, in terms of job losses and decreased productivity in the workplace. And we can see and we are beginning to calculate how much money it costs every society where domestic violence is a problem. According to the World Magazine, one work day in every five is lost by women for health reasons 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 the conference on domestic violence that the IDB convened in Washington last year. There is a powerful connection between domestic violence and the unending cycle of women in poverty.

The effects of violence on children is 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 concentrating and doing well in school. Children of abusive fathers not only repeat the behavior on their own children, but commit violent acts in the larger society as well. Here in El Salvador, the children who are 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 their homes destroyed, even more of them experienced violence at home.

In the United States, we have done a survey in our prisons, and what we found would not surprise you -- that the vast majority of prisoners are men who themselves were the victims of abuse at the hands of an older relative. The cost 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 are unafraid to face difficult problems. And I am very proud that your First Lady is playing a significant role and is known throughout our hemisphere for combating domestic violence. I remember well when we talked at the White House about domestic violence. It was a subject that was uppermost in her mind, and she went to the Justice Department and spoke to the people in our government who are responsible for fighting domestic violence. Today, I met the people in your government, some of them whom are also responsible for taking on this difficult social, legal, medical, and psychological and economic problem. The United States and USAID has worked with you in your efforts to end domestic violence and expand the rights of El Salvador's citizens. We will continue to be your partner in this effort.

When I visited with Mrs. Calderon Sol at the Salvadoran Institute of Women's Development today, I met the people who are working on the national hotline, and in other programs, designed to help save women and children from violence and then to try, if possible, to work with the women to rebuild their lives and to work with the men to rehabilitate them. ISDEMU is a model of a public-private partnership, leading El Salvador's efforts to combat domestic violence; your combination of legal, social, and economic support for women. There were some very moving moments during my visit this morning. Hearing from a woman who had been the victim of domestic violence for 17 years until she heard on the radio about this place that could perhaps offer her some help. She found her way to it and the counselors and the people there worked with her to rebuild her self-confidence and her sense of self-worth. And they also worked with the perpetrator, the man who had been beating her on a regular basis. And they now have a better understanding of how to live together without violence. There was also a man there who admitted he had been a perpetrator of violence. He didn't like that about himself, but he didn't know where to turn. Again, he found his way to this center and the psychologist worked with him, and he began to understand more about himself and learned how to control his behavior. And now both he and his wife are receiving counseling.

But, perhaps, the most lasting reminder of what the toll of domestic violence is was a display that had been put on the wall of the room where we were meeting. It was an exhibit of some of the

weapons that had been used to batter and violate women -- knives, machetes, and wooden clubs. And the medical director told how a one-year old child had been beaten with a wooden spoon until it broke, and that is part of the exhibit as well. This is a problem that occurs in every country and every society. And yet, we know that if there is an epidemic of domestic violence, it has great legal and social effects. So what you have done here, through a series of restored legal reforms, is to give greater rights to women and their families, including the right to free legal counsel and child support. And for the first time in your history, domestic violence is finally called what it is--a criminal offense.

I am pleased that the First Lady is hosting this forum on domestic violence to help put the nation's spotlight on this terrible problem and to build on the remarkable progress that has already been made here. By sharing ideas and forging strategies, and learning from one another, we can work together to bring down the rates of domestic violence. And we can help women end their painful silence. We have learned a great deal about what works to end domestic violence. You have taught the world many of the things that work. I was very struck, as I told Elizabeth, as we went into the National Hotline and there was a woman answering the phones and there was a call that came in while I was there, and then there was a police officer sitting with her with a radio so that he could dispatch help immediately if someone called for that help. I've been in many domestic violence centers, and I've not seen that close cooperation between the people in the center and the police. That's a very, very important step that you have taken. Now I know from my own experience, in my own country, that the police need a lot of training. Many police officers do not recognize the beating of a wife as a crime. That is true in my country, that is true throughout our hemisphere and the world. So, police officers need training, they need help in understanding that domestic violence is a crime.

In my country, many judges do not take domestic violence as seriously as violence from a stranger. Judges need the training and support to understand that a man beating his wife with a wooden club is committing just as much of a crime as a stranger who would beat a woman on her way home from the market. So there is much work to be done to change attitudes and to implant new ideas about what domestic violence truly is. But from what I have seen and what I have learned about what you have already done, you are well on the road, another road for peace and reconciliation. Because for women, in our world today, we have to ensure that they can grow and mature and live their lives in a world that's as free of violence as possible. That means that we have to do more than change laws, as important as those legal reforms are. We have to give women the feeling that they have a right to stand up for themselves. We have to tell them they no longer should be silenced by fear. And we have to ensure that they have access to the tools of opportunity that will enable them to be full and equal partners in their societies.

For women to live free of violence, they must have access to education. It is the single most powerful tool to raise the status of women and girls and it should be the birthright of every citizen of every nation. Many women stay in abusive relationships because they are not educated and do not believe they can find their own way in the world. The more we educate women, the more we will diminish the possibility that any woman will remain the victim of domestic violence.

For women to live free of violence, they must have access to credit. I've seen the lives of

women, from many walks of life, changed, transformed as the result of small micro credit loans. As they became more economically independent, they gained confidence to stand up for their rights in their own families and to play a greater role in their communities.

For women to live free of violence, they must have access to health care for themselves and their children. And if they do have access to health care, they are better able to understand what they need and what they can obtain for themselves and their children and they don't feel so dependant, as they might otherwise.

And for women to live free of violence, we must make good on the central message of the platform for action from the UN Women's Conference in Beijing. That no nation can progress unless every citizen is valued and treated with dignity and given the opportunity to live up to his or her God-given potential.

You have come so very far, and the progress that I have heard about and that I have seen myself suggests to me that El Salvador is well on the way to fulfilling your own dreams of a peaceful, democratic, prosperous and secured future for all of your people in the next century. It will not be easy, nothing worth doing ever is easy. But given the courage and determination of the people in this room and throughout this country, you will be successful. And I am here today to underscore my own country's unswerving commitment to support your efforts -- not only to help you rebuild in the aftermath of the hurricane -- but to help you advance a 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 United Nations Declaration of Human Rights, I am reminded of the words of one of America's great peacemakers who played an historic role in bringing our countries together in a time of violence and divisions. I speak of Robert F. Kennedy. A few blocks from here, his words, that are so moving to all of us, 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?"

Well, certainly, El Salvador is where it is today because many people of good faith, with very different opinions came together to say "why not?" The people of El Salvador, the women, the men and the children have a right to dream of a future of peace, justice, and human dignity. And I believe that everything you have done to bring your country to this point, as you continue down this road for the fulfillment of that dream -- will make it possible for all of us, throughout our hemisphere and the world -- to continue to look to El Salvador as a model and example and for that I am very grateful.

Thank you very much and God Bless El Salvador. (Applause)

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 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

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.