

Final

FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
KEYNOTE ADDRESS TO THE HAGUE FORUM
THE HAGUE
FEBRUARY 8, 1999

It is a great honor to be here at this opening session of the Hague Forum -- and to join the ministers and other senior officials of over 170 nations in this global discussion on population and development. I am pleased that this gathering has also drawn so many NGO participants from around the world -- and that there are so many young people here. They represent the great promise of our collective future -- and its challenges. Their presence here among us lends even more urgency to our work -- as we explore together the progress we've made since the UN ICPD Conference in Cairo.

And what better place to gather for this global conversation than here, in this historic city, where people have come together on many occasions to work toward a more just and peaceful world. It was here -- 100 years ago at the Hague Peace Conference -- that world leaders came to devise rules for creating peaceful settlements of international disputes. It was here -- at the end of the last century -- that people gathered for an international exhibition on women -- and talked about the importance of motherhood, and education, and women's rights. And it was here -- in 1945 -- that the UN established its International Court of Justice -- to mediate disagreements among nations peacefully.

This week -- the international community gathers in The Hague again -- to talk about perhaps the greatest challenge of the 21st century -- how to continue to lift up the lives of individuals and families, and the fortunes of nations, during this period of extraordinary population growth around our globe.

When the world began this dialogue in Cairo -- representatives from almost 180 nations came together -- and made history, by agreeing -- for the first time -- that the issues of population and development can't be separated, and that women's reproductive health and empowerment are critical to a nation's sustainability and growth. The world agreed -- for the first time -- that smaller families and slower population growth depended not on control or coercion -- but on choice and opportunity. And the world agreed -- for the first time -- that respect for women's rights and personal dignity must be at the heart of our efforts to improve the quality of life for all of our citizens.

No one who was there in Cairo would say the process of developing that historic consensus was easy. Yet every nation committed to working toward the common goals laid out in the Cairo Programme of Action: that by the year 2015 - - all governments must ensure universal access to a full range of reproductive health care and family planning services; all governments would work to reduce dramatically infant, child, and maternal mortality; and all governments would provide universal access to education -- with a particular emphasis on girls and women.

I'm here today to re-affirm my own country's deep commitment to carrying out the ICPD Programme of Action -- and our renewed determination to continue to work with governments and NGOs to meet its goals worldwide.

This week, we've come together to talk about how the actions and commitments that were made in Cairo are affecting people's lives. And to share stories about what's working in our communities that will help us reach the ambitious 20-year goals we have set for ourselves. I've had the privilege over the past five years of seeing firsthand some of the progress that is being made in many of your countries around the world -- where communities are investing more resources in family planning and reproductive health services -- and expanding other opportunities -- like education and jobs -- to improve the quality of people's lives.

In Uzbekistan -- an area where abortion rates are high -- I toured a new woman's wellness center, and visited with expectant mothers. Today, thanks to clinics like the one I visited -- women have greater access to health and reproductive care -- and the use of contraception has increased by a third to a half. The result: Abortion rates have declined dramatically.

In Indonesia, I'll never forget sitting under a tree in a small village, and watching young new mothers nurture their new babies -- while at the same time learning how to care for them -- and themselves. There are now thousands of village midwives in that country who have been trained in life saving skills -- so that both mothers and babies can live healthy lives.

At a small clinic in Nepal, I saw a safe home delivery kit that is given to expectant mothers. Inside is a bar of soap, twine, wax, a plastic sheet, and a razor blade. Its purpose is to reduce major causes of maternal and neonatal death -- by promoting clean hands, clean surfaces, and clean umbilical cord care. Part of the “Safe Motherhood” initiative, these simple kits teach us that women don’t have to die in childbirth. They don’t have to bleed to death or suffer from terrible infections. With these simple tools -- that cost 13 cents to make -- motherhood can be a safe and healthy experience for all.

I’m pleased to report that we’re making progress in my own country as well. Our government’s funding for family planning services has increased by \$12 million -- expanding access to family planning and reproductive care services to women and families across our country. We continue to work toward the goal of making abortion safe, legal, and rare. So I’m particularly pleased that the number of unintended pregnancies in America is declining, and abortions have fallen a full 12 percent. And through the National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy, we’re also seeing how comprehensive, community-based health programs are bringing down teen pregnancies and teen sexual activity.

Back in 1990, a small town in New York had one of the highest teen pregnancy rates around. The county’s family planning clinic and Catholic Charities decided to work together. They made the clinic free. They enlisted teens to talk to teens. They created a place for youngsters to go every Saturday night with adult supervision. And they brought in religious and business leaders to teach parents how to talk to their own children. Today -- they’ve almost reached their

goals of reducing teenage pregnancy rate by one third by the year 2000.

So yes. We've made progress around the world since the Cairo Conference, and I want to applaud the people here today -- both government and non-governmental leaders -- for forging ahead with new energy, and a new level of commitment and resources. In Yemen, whose delegation I met with yesterday, they have made great efforts since Cairo to expand access to health services and education. Yemen has seen girls' enrollment in village schools rise 100 - 300% since 1994. And I know that many nations have made progress as well toward the goals we have set. Yet as far as we've come — we must redouble our efforts -- every single day.

This is no time to cut back on our commitments to family planning -- when nearly 600,000 women still die every year — one every minute — from pregnancy related causes. This is no time to question our investments in education -- when there are still 960 million illiterate adults in the world today. And two thirds of them are women.

No nation can hope to succeed in our global economy if half of its people lack the opportunity and the right to make the most of their God-given promise.

No nation can move forward when so many women and children are still trapped in an endless cycle of poverty -- perpetuated by inadequate health care, poor access to family planning and limited education; or are trapped inside social or cultural customs that impoverish their spirits and limit their dreams.

If there is one achievement that I hope we can look back on -- in the year 2015 -- and that I believe would make the most difference in the quality of people's lives, and our ability to move forward as nations -- it would be that every child is wanted; that every pregnancy is planned; and that every woman is blessed with reproductive health, and every woman is in control of her life.

This is our challenge -- and it will take the work of all of us -- governments, ngos, and our young people -- to make that day a reality.

I recognize, as you all do, that there will never be full agreement on some of these issues -- particularly reproductive rights -- because they go to the heart of our personal, political, and religious beliefs. There are people of good faith on all sides of these issues. Yet I also believe that there is more that we hold in common than that which drives us apart. And I believe -- and Cairo confirmed -- that people with profound differences and backgrounds can work together in pursuit of common goals, and the greater good.

I hope we can agree -- first and foremost -- that government has no place in the personal decision a woman makes about whether to bring a child into the world. It's a decision that all individuals and couples should be able to decide freely and responsibly -- without government interference or coercion. Such tactics are an affront to our fundamental notion of respect for human dignity and personal integrity.

Every time we hear calls from those who would do away with family planning, or limit reproductive rights, I hope they will hear the voices of women who have suffered -- and died -- because governments were making decisions that women should have had the freedom to make. Our human history is filled with such examples of inhumanity, and abuse of power.

I hope we will remember the voices of the women in my own country who lined up around the block for hours in 1916, waiting for Margaret Sanger to open the nation's first family planning clinic in Brooklyn, New York. Before the police shut it down 10 days later -- the clinic managed to help hundreds of women, and they all had stories to tell: about miscarriages and illegal abortions, and their desperate struggles to feed and clothe eight, nine or ten children.

I hope we will remember the voices of women who suffered, often in silence, in Nazi Germany. For Aryan women, deemed "valuable" -- abortion facilities were prohibited -- and their miscarriages were investigated by the police. Jewish women, and gypsy men and women in concentration camps -- faced mass sterilization as part of the quest to prevent inferior children.

I hope we will remember the voices of women from Romania. When I visited that country a few years ago, I spoke with women about what it was like before they had democracy. When they were taken against their will, once a month during their work hours, to a general holding facility, where they were physically examined to determine if they were pregnant -- stripping them of their dignity and humanity. As part of that nation's campaign to increase its population

-- family planning, sex education, and abortions were outlawed.

And I hope we will also listen to the voices coming out of China. ^① Those voices now include many who are working to ensure that their country's family planning practices are voluntary and respectful. ^② When I was there -- I heard about what the one-child policy ^{new} ^{has affected} ~~had once meant~~ for too many women -- including forced sterilizations and abortions. [Which is why -- in my speech at the UN Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995 -- I said that "It is a violation of human rights when women are denied the right to plan their own families -- and that includes being forced to have an abortion or being sterilized against their will."]

→ Resentment new voice from China ~~include~~ who are supporting relaxation of the one child policy

While I hope we agree that government has no place in these most personal decisions -- we know government plays a critical role in providing women and families the health services and tools of opportunities that can break the cycle of poverty and suffering -- and lead to full and productive lives. And the single most important step we can all take to meet that goal is to make voluntary family planning a top priority in every nation.

Policy
and
work
to
ensure
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We know that by giving couples the freedom to choose the spacing and number of their children, women not only gain more control over their lives, they also can begin to contribute more fully to their communities -- and to the progress of their nations. And through family planning -- we not only lessen the number of unwanted pregnancies, we diminish the number of illegal and unsafe abortions that cause so many unnecessary deaths -- and so much unnecessary suffering.

in 32 countries across the country

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we have high hopes for UNFPA's new program which is assisting model voluntary family planning efforts

I'll always remember going to a maternity hospital in Salvador de Bahia in Brazil, where I saw women get the information they needed to make wise choices about planning their families. I saw mothers cradling their new born babies in the hallways as they stood in line for their check-ups. I watched young people being educated on the most basic of reproductive facts. I saw young pregnant women, waiting for their pre-natal check ups, and I saw parents being taught what to feed their young children, and how to care for them.

But I also saw women who were hospitalized -- because they didn't have access to these family planning services -- and as a last desperate resort --had submitted to illegal or unsafe abortions.

When I met with the minister for health in that state -- he explained what all of us have always known. That the wealthy have access to the health care and reproductive care they need. And poor women do not. They are the ones who struggle to try to feed, clothe and educate more children than they could ever support. And they are the ones who suffer -- and often die -- because the only option they have to limit their families are illegal and unsafe abortions.

It's up to all of us here today to ensure that every woman -- in every community -- has access to voluntary family planning and reproductive health services. They are basic, fundamental rights.

In Cairo -- the world made commitments to ensure that women had greater access to those services -- and I want to applaud our host country — the

Netherlands — for living up to its financial obligations -- and being one of the strongest donor nations. The Dutch government has more than doubled its funding for population and reproductive health programs between 94 and 96.

Since Cairo -- American support for international population activities has also increased significantly. American foundations are now providing approximately \$150 million every year for population activities. Just a few months ago, I accompanied the heads of four major foundations to one of the poorest neighborhoods in Port au Prince, Haiti. The leaders of the Gates, Soros Summit and United Nations foundations sat with me around a small table -- as we watched young people perform a skit about how to say “no” to sex. I’m pleased that these private foundations are investing in programs like this one in Haiti that are working with young people to reduce teen pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases like AIDS.

The United States government -- through USAID -- is also making significant contributions to family planning efforts worldwide. Since Cairo, more than \$3 billion has been spent on programs in population and reproductive health in developing countries -- and \$2.5 billion on programs that promote women’s advancement in economic, social, legal, and political rights. Among the results of these efforts: well over 50 million couples are now using family planning, and tens of thousands of health workers are being trained in over 60 countries.

Yet while the United States was on target the first year with its financial commitment to Cairo for international population and reproductive health programs

-- reaching \$752 million in 1995 -- we've now fallen behind. While my husband -
- and this Administration -- has fought hard for increased funding -- Congress has
cut bilateral funding for family planning by 30%. And as all of you know so well -
- US funding for the United Nations Population Fund has been eliminated.

Along these lines -- I am pleased to announce that my husband has in his
budget for the year 2000 a proposed \$25 million voluntary contribution to the
UNFPA. This money would help women and couples all over the world have the
right --reaffirmed in Cairo -- to "decide freely and responsibly the number and
spacing of their children, and to have the information, education, and means to do
so." The restoration of US funding to UNFPA would send a strong signal that the
US continues to be committed to supporting the ICPD Programme of Action. The
over 170 countries who joined that consensus can't be wrong. I also hope that this
year -- we can work with Congress to untangle the issue of paying our debts to the
United Nations from the unrelated issue of family planning overseas. We must be
able to live up to those important obligations.

As important as it is that every country make these commitments to family
planning and reproductive health services -- we know that even that goal is not
sufficient to lift women and families out of the cycle of poverty and hopelessness
that so many remain trapped in today. Family planning alone is not enough. That
was the genius of Cairo. In order for people and nations to develop -- they need
education, and jobs, and the ability to participate fully in the political life of their
communities. And the single most important investment a country can make in its
future is in education for women and girls. You educate a woman, and you

educate a family. And the entire community benefits.

We've learned -- through experience -- that the better a woman is educated -- the lower the rates of infant mortality. And the better a woman is educated -- the few babies she has -- and the more able she is to feed, and clothe, and educate her children.

I visited a village in Bangladesh -- where people were so poor that children had to work in the fields -- and couldn't go to school. But when the government began a program to give families rice and other food -- so that they didn't have to force their daughters to go to work, I saw how pleased parents were to see their girls in a classroom -- instead of struggling in the fields.

In Thailand, I met with young girls who had contracted AIDS — after their families had sold them into prostitution. A number of NGOs were working with these girls and their families, and they explained how you could tell the families who had made this desperate decision. Their houses were bigger. But their daughters were dying. I tried to talk to these parents about the importance of educating their daughters, and how much more valuable they would be to themselves and to their parents instead of being sold into slavery. Education is an investment in the future. And no family -- and no nation -- can move forward without making that investment.

The issues of population and development are among the great challenges of the 21st Century. And it is up to all of us -- government leaders;

NGOs, businesses, citizens, and yes, -- our young people -- to provide both the resources and the political will to meet those challenges.

If we are to meet the goals set in Cairo -- then we must not only work within our own governments. We must forge stronger ties between governments and non governmental and civil society organizations.

I spoke yesterday at the NGO Forum. And as I have always been -- I was overwhelmed by the passion, commitment, and energy that they possess -- and inspired by the extraordinary work that they do in communities around the world. They have been at the forefront of the progress we've made -- by bringing the voices of women and the concerns of ordinary citizens into the decision making process. Long before Cairo -- advocacy groups and ngos have been working to expand access to health care and other desperately needed services -- and holding governments accountable for meeting those needs.

The contributions of NGOs were critical to building the consensus that was formed at Cairo. And the progress that we've made since could not have been made without their hard work and commitment. But let's not forget perhaps their greatest contributions. Strengthening the institutions of civil society that are so vital to our democratic freedoms.

The commitments we make here today are critical to the future of this

planet. We just have to look into the faces of the young people who are joining us here to see the extraordinary promise of that future -- and also its great challenge. One third of the world's population -- two billion people -- are now under the age of 15 -- and starting to enter their reproductive years. Another one billion are between the ages of 15 and 24 -- just beginning their reproductive lives.

Will they have the freedom and the information to make wise choices about their lives and their families? Will they have the opportunity to grow up healthy, educated, and be able to live up to their God-given talents? Will we be able to end the spread of AIDS and other diseases? Will we be able to prioritize our resources to close the gaps in health, and education, and opportunity, that continue to threaten the progress of every nation? It's up to every one of us to fulfill our promise.

I want to end with a story about Kusum Singh, a young Indian girl who was married at the age of 13 to an abusive, illiterate husband. "At the age of 15, I decided I had no future," she said. So she decided to take more control of her life. When elections for community health workers were held -- she stood for election, and won. But to come out of her home and work in the village, she had to take a courageous step: take off her veil. She said the biggest challenge in her health care work was to get other women out of their homes. "First two joined, then four, and before your eyes, we became a group." She says she now has the capacity to mobilize 250 women "to walk with me" toward a healthier life.

It is up to all of us here -- government leaders, non governmental organizations, and advocates -- to help women like Kusum around the world to gain control over their lives, and fulfill their God-given promise. We have already come a very long way since Cairo and Beijing -- by walking down this path together. We used to come one by one, daring not to speak out or raise our voices. Now the hopes and dreams of women are recognized as never before; and in more and more nations, women are calling for their rights -- including reproductive rights -- to be recognized. But our work is not over until the day when every young person -- in every community -- can stand up and say "I have a future."

FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
ADDRESS TO NGO FORUM
THE HAGUE
FEBRUARY 7, 1999

I want to thank Florence (Manguyu) for that kind introduction. I am pleased and honored to be here at the NGO Forum -- as you talk about the progress that's been made since Cairo -- and the challenges ahead. First I want to thank everyone here -- all 800 of you -- for the work you do every single day to make life better in your communities. That is the greatest contribution any one of us can ever make.

I know that many of you -- especially the young people -- are truly heartbroken that Ginger of the Spice Girls was not able to be here. I'm afraid I'm no substitute -- as singing isn't my strong point. But I would like to read you a poem I've just discovered by a woman poet from Surinam, because I think her words remind us of why we're all here today.

"Nothing rises so high
as a voice that calls out
in the middle of the day.

A voice so fine;
a voice so strong
it's never false,
even when the wind
blows hard.

Woman, you rise so high,
you inspire;
you abide;
in the midst of the battle
of every day."

All of you here -- from every corner of the world -- represent the voices of women; women who are struggling to care for and educate their children; women who are seeking more control over their lives; women who want to contribute to the progress that's being made in their communities, and in their nations.

Today, as I look out on all of you, and see extraordinary diversity in this room -- I am overwhelmed -- as I was in Beijing -- by the passion, commitment, and energy that you possess, and I'm inspired, once again, by the extraordinary work that you do. You are the vanguards of Cairo -- the ones who are making the ICPD Programme of Action a reality in people's lives. And your presence here at The Hague is truly a reflection of a new reality in the world today.

No longer are the discussions about global challenges -- or their solutions -- decided upon by government officials and policy makers alone -- often behind closed doors. In a

movement that was truly born in Cairo -- and then caught fire at the UN Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing -- non governmental organizations have finally taken their rightful place at the table, both in their own countries, and in international forums like this. Finally -- the voices of ordinary citizens are being heard on critical issues that affect the lives of all of us. Finally, grass roots organizations and people working on the front lines in their communities are becoming part of the decision making process. Finally, the role that NGOs play in planning, and developing and monitoring programs and services that advance women and families is being recognized for the value that it brings.

Almost five years ago -- NGOs and governments helped forge an historic consensus around the challenges of global population growth, and its impact on families and nations. At the ICPD Conference in Cairo -- many of you said, let's stop focusing on lowering the numbers, and work instead on lifting up lives. You argued that women, children, and families must be at the heart of economic development efforts. You helped people understand that a far more comprehensive approach was needed -- an approach based on choice and opportunity -- not government control or coercion.

I've heard stories about how difficult it was to bring so many sides together -- and to reach a consensus not only on language of the final Programme of Action -- but its goals. I've heard that there were times when talks were at a standstill -- and that NGO leaders would come down from the balconies -- and out from side rooms -- to help people find common ground, and craft common language.

The level of NGO participation in Cairo -- and the energy it produced -- was unprecedented. It helped lay the ground for the NGO Forum in Beijing -- where for the first time, our voices and numbers were strong enough for us to say -- for all the world to hear -- that women's rights are human rights, and human rights are women's rights.

I wanted to come here first to salute you. Not just for the invaluable work you did in Cairo -- but for the even more important work you've done since then to make the goals of that conference move from rhetoric to reality.

And progress is being made. Nations are making greater investments in family planning and reproductive health services, and developing more integrated approaches to economic and social development. And I know from my experience in my own country -- and in my travels around the world -- how vital you are to this march toward progress.

Just before I came here to The Hague -- I invited NGO leaders in my own country to the White House -- to talk about the challenges the United States faces in the area of family planning. These are the organizations who have placed the concerns of women and children at the top of our nation's agenda -- and who have fought tirelessly -- in the Hall of Congress, and in their own communities -- to ensure their needs are met. They are the ones who have pushed so successfully to increase the funding for family planning programs in the United States -- and to keep abortions in America safe, legal, and rare.

In my trips overseas -- I've seen firsthand the extraordinary work that you do. The health centers that you run in small villages and poor urban neighborhoods -- where family planning and reproductive health services are saving lives; and helping women gain authority and dignity. And I've seen the programs you support to make sure more girls go to school -- and more women get the small loans they need to start their own businesses.

Yet even as we celebrate the progress that's being made by NGO's -- in my own country, and in countries around the world -- we recognize how far we still have to go. Many NGOs are still struggling to grow, and to be recognized. And some governments still stifle their valuable work. While many are powerful voices for change — others need advocacy and other skills training in order to have greater impact.

Today -- I challenge you to forge even stronger links with your government partners -- to ensure that the commitments made in Cairo are made real in every community.

Today -- I challenge you to keep sharing your stories -- so that word of what works and what doesn't work can help us scale up successful projects, and improve the quality of care for all citizens.

Today -- I challenge you to reach out — not only to your partners in government — but to new constituents. I'm so pleased that the Youth Forum has attracted so many young people who are making such contributions to the discussions here. I heard one young person say, "People finally have started talking *with* young people instead of merely *about* youth." And that's what we must do more and more. By next year -- nearly one billion adolescents -- the largest generation ever -- will be entering their reproductive years. Whether they have the reproductive information and services they need -- and the opportunities to lead productive, fulfilling lives -- depends on the actions we take together now.

I also urge the NGO community to reach out to fathers, and husbands. If progress is to be made in promoting family planning and gender equity -- or any of the other challenges before us today -- then men must become full and willing partners in the process.

My final challenge to you today is never, ever give up. Don't ever think that the work that you do, day in and day out, isn't having an impact on people's lives and futures. And don't ever think you are working alone. Look around you -- and feel the strength in your numbers and common purpose.

President Kennedy once said that on this earth, God's work is our own. And certainly what you do -- to improve the health and welfare of women and children; to save lives, and secure women's most basic rights -- is the most important work there is. Thank you for doing God's work.

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FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
KEYNOTE ADDRESS TO THE UN POPULATION FORUM
THE HAGUE

FEBRUARY 8, 1999

It is a great honor to be here at this opening session of the UN Population Forum -- and to join the ministers and high level representatives of over 180 nations in this global discussion on population and development. I am pleased that this gathering has also drawn so many ngo participants from around the world -- and that there are so many young people here. They represent the great promise of our collective future -- and its challenges. Their presence here among us lends even more urgency to our work -- as we explore together the progress we've made since the ^{ICPO} UN Conference in Cairo, ~~was held almost five years ago.~~

And what better place to gather for this global conversation than here, in this historic city, where people have come together ^{on many occasions} through the ages to work toward a more just and peaceful world. It was here -- 100 years ago at the Hague Peace Conference -- ^{that} where world leaders came to ^{devise} work out the rules ^{for} of creating peaceful settlements of international disputes. It was here -- at the end of the last century -- when people gathered ~~here~~ for an international exhibition on women -- and talked about the importance of motherhood, and education, and women's rights. ~~Many of the same concerns we are still grappling with today.~~ ^{And,} It was here -- in 1945 -- where the UN established its International Court of Justice -- to mediate disagreements among nations ^{peacefully}

This week -- the international community gathers in the Hague again -- to talk about perhaps the greatest challenge of the 21st century -- how to continue to lift up the lives of ^{indiv. fams and} families, and the fortunes of nations, during this period of extraordinary population growth around our globe.

When The UN

~~We~~ began this dialogue ~~almost five years ago~~, in Cairo, ~~at the UN~~
~~International Conference on Population and Development~~. Like today,
representatives from 180 nations came together -- and ~~we~~ made history. ~~We~~ *by*
agreed *ing* for the first time -- that the issues of population and development can't
be separated, and that women's reproductive health and empowerment are critical
to a nation's sustainability and growth. ~~We~~ *The UN* agreed -- for the first time -- that
smaller families and slower population growth depended not on control or coercion
-- but on choice and opportunity. And ~~we~~ *The UN* agreed -- for the first time -- that respect
for women's rights and personal dignity must be at the heart of our efforts to
improve the quality of life for all of our citizens.

No one who was there in Cairo would say the process of developing that
consensus was easy, ~~and surely disagreements remain~~. Yet every nation
committed to working toward the common goals laid out in Cairo's Programme of
Action: that by the year 2015 -- all governments must ensure universal access to
health care -- including reproductive health care services; all governments would
work to dramatically reduce infant and maternal mortality; and all governments
would provide universal access to education -- with a particular emphasis on girls
and women.

PHOTOCOPY
HRC HANDWRITING

I'm here today to re-affirm my own country's deep commitment to carrying out the ICPD's Programme of Action -- and our renewed determination to continue to work with governments and ngos to meet its goals worldwide.

This week, we've come together to talk about how the actions and commitments that were made in Cairo are affecting people's lives. And to share stories about what's working in our communities that will help us reach the ambitious 20-year goals we have set for ourselves. I've had the privilege over the past five years of seeing firsthand some of the progress that is being made in many ~~of your~~ countries around the world -- where communities are investing more resources in family planning and reproductive health services -- and expanding other opportunities -- like education and jobs -- to improve the quality of people's lives.

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Kazakh
In Uzbekistan -- an area where abortion rates ^{were} ~~are~~ high -- I toured a new health clinic -- ~~only a few simple rooms~~ and visited with expectant mothers. Today, thanks to clinics like the one I visited -- women have far greater access to health and reproductive care -- and the use of contraception has increased by a third to a half. The result: Abortion rates have declined dramatically.

women
wellness
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In Indonesia, I'll never forget sitting under a tree in a small village, and watching young new mothers nurture their new babies -- while at the same time learning how to care for them -- and themselves. There are now thousands of village midwives in that country who have been trained in life saving skills -- so that both mothers and babies can live healthy lives.

At a small clinic in Nepal, I saw a safe home delivery kit that is given to expectant mothers. Inside is a bar of soap, twine, wax, a plastic sheet, and a razor blade. Its purpose is to reduce major causes of maternal and neonatal death -- by promoting clean hands, clean surfaces, and clean umbilical^{cord} care. Part of the "Safe Motherhood" initiatives, these simple kits teach us that women don't have to die in childbirth. They don't have to bleed to death or suffer from terrible infections. With these simple tools -- that cost 13 cents to make -- motherhood can be a safe and healthy experience for all.

I'm pleased to report that we're making progress in my own country as well. Our government's funding for family planning services has increased by \$12 million -- expanding access to family planning and reproductive care services to women and families across ^{our} the country. We continue to work toward the goal of making abortion safe, legal, and rare. ~~And a national~~ So I'm particularly pleased that the number of unintended pregnancies in America is declining, and abortions have fallen a full 12 percent. ^{Another NCTAP, how} We're also seeing comprehensive, community-based health programs are bringing down teen pregnancies and teen sexual activity.

Back in 1990, a small town in New York had one of the highest teen pregnancy rates around. The county's family planning clinic and Catholic Charities decided to work together. They made the clinic free. They enlisted teens to talk to teens. They created a place for youngsters to go every Saturday night with adult supervision. And they brought in religious and business leaders to teach parents how to talk to their own children. Today -- they've almost reached their goals of reducing teenage pregnancy rate by one third by the year 2000.

→ Can we quantify
in some way-?

So yes. We've made remarkable progress around the world since the Cairo Conference, and I want to applaud the people here today -- both government and non-governmental leaders -- for forging ahead with new energy, and a new level of commitment and resources. Yet as far as we've come — we must never, ever slacken our efforts -- even for a moment.

This no time to cut back on our commitments to family planning -- when nearly 600,000 women still die every year — one every minute — from pregnancy related causes. This is no time to question our investments in education -- when there are still 960 million illiterate adults in the world today. And two thirds of them are women.

No nation can hope to succeed in our global economy if half of its people lack the opportunity and the right to make the most of their God-given promise.

No nation can move forward when so many women and children are still trapped in an endless cycle of poverty -- perpetuated by inadequate health care, poor access to family planning, ^{and} limited education; or are trapped inside social or cultural customs that impoverish their spirits and limit their dreams.

If there is one achievement that I hope we can look back on -- in the year 2015 -- and that I believe would make the most difference in the quality of people's lives, and our ability to move forward as nations -- it would be that every child is wanted; that every pregnancy is planned; and that every women is blessed with reproductive health and freedom.

This is our challenge -- and it will take the work of all of us -- governments, ngos, and our young people -- to make that day a reality.

I recognize, as you all do, that there will never be full agreement on some of these issues -- particularly reproductive rights -- because they go to the heart of our personal, political, and religious beliefs. There are people of good faith on all sides of these issues. Yet I also believe that there is more that we hold in common than that drives us apart. And I believe -- and Cairo confirmed -- that people with profound differences and backgrounds can work together in pursuit of common goals, and the greater good.

I hope we can agree -- first and foremost -- that government has no place in the personal decision a woman makes about whether to bring a child into the world. It's a decision that every couple should be able to decide freely and responsibly -- without government interference or coercion. Such tactics are an affront to our fundamental notion of respect for human dignity and personal integrity.

Every time we hear calls from those who would do away with family planning, or limit reproductive rights, I hope they will hear the voices of women ~~who have come before us~~ who have suffered -- and died -- because governments were making decisions that women should have had the freedom to make. Our human history is filled with such examples of inhumanity, and abuse of power.

I hope we hear the voices of the women in my own country who lined up around the block for hours in 1916, waiting for Margaret Sanger to open the

nation's first birth control clinic Brooklyn, New York. Before the police shut it down 10 days later -- the clinic managed to help hundreds of women, and they all had stories to tell: about miscarriages and illegal abortions, and their desperate struggles to feed and clothe ^{or} nine and ~~ten~~ children.

I hope we hear the voices of women who suffered, often in silence, in Nazi Germany. For Aryan women, deemed "valuable" -- abortion facilities were prohibited -- and their miscarriages were investigated by the police. Jewish women, and gypsy men and women in concentration camps -- faced mass sterilization as part of the quest to prevent inferior children.

I hope we hear the voices of women from Romania. When I visited Romania a few years ago, I spoke with women about what it was like before they had democracy. When they were taken against their will, once a month during their work hours, to a general holding facilities where they were physically examined to determine if they were pregnant -- stripping them of their dignity and humanity. As part of that nation's campaign to increase population -- birth control, sex education, and abortions were outlawed.

And I hope we will also listen to the voices coming out of China. Those voices now include many who are working to ensure that their country's family planning practices are voluntary and respectful. When I was there -- I heard about what the one-child policy had once meant for too many women -- including forced sterilizations and abortions. [Which is why -- in my speech at the UN Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995 -- I said that "It is a violation of human

rights when women are denied the right to plan their own families -- and that includes being forced to have an abortion or being sterilized against their will.”]

While I hope we agree that government has no place in these most personal decisions -- we know government plays a critical role in providing women and families the health services and tools of opportunities that can break the cycle of poverty and suffering -- and lead to full and productive lives. And the single most important step we can all take to meet that goal is to make voluntary family planning ^a ~~the~~ top priority in every nation.

We know that by giving couples the freedom to choose the spacing and number of their children, women not only gain more control over their lives, ^{They can} ~~begin to~~ contribute more fully to ~~the life of~~ their communities -- and to the progress of their nations. And through family planning -- we not only lessen the number of unwanted pregnancies, ^{We} ~~diminish~~ the number of illegal and unsafe abortions that ~~are causing~~ so many millions of unnecessary deaths -- and so much unnecessary suffering.

I'll always remember going to a maternity hospital in Salvador de Bahia in Brazil, where I saw women getting ^{the} ~~information~~ they ~~would~~ ^{need} to ~~enable them~~ to make wise choices about planning their families. I saw mothers cradling their new born babies in the hallways as they stood in line for their check-ups. I watched young people being educated on the most basic of reproductive facts. I saw young pregnant women, waiting for their pre-natal check ups, and I saw parents being taught what to feed their young children, and how to care for them.

But I also saw women who were ^{hospitalized} sick, and in pain, and many who were ~~dying~~ -- because they didn't have access to these family planning services -- and as a last desperate resort -- they had submitted to illegal or unsafe abortions.

When I met with the minister of health ^{for state} in that city -- he explained what all of us have always known. That the wealthy have ~~always had~~ access to the health care and reproductive care they ~~are~~ ^{do} needed. And poor women ~~have~~ ^{do} not. They are the ones who struggle to try to feed, ^{and} clothe and educate eight, nine, or ten children. And they are the ones who suffer -- and ^{too} often die -- because the only option they have to limit their families are illegal and unsafe abortions.

It's up to all of us here today to ensure that every woman -- in every community -- has access to voluntary family planning and reproductive health services. ^{They are} ~~It is a~~ basic, fundamental right, ~~And it's critical to our nations' futures.~~

In Cairo -- ^{the world} ~~we all~~ made commitments to ensure ^{the} women had greater access to those services -- and ~~here~~ -- I want to applaud our host country -- the Netherlands -- for living up to its financial obligations -- and being one of the strongest donor nations. The Dutch government has more than doubled its funding for population and reproductive health programs between 94 and 96. I'm ^{pleased} ~~also proud of my own~~ country's record. ~~I've already mentioned an increase in America's domestic spending on family planning.~~ ^{USAID}

Since Cairo ^{American} support for international population activities have also increased significantly. American foundations are now providing approximately

\$150 million every year for population activities. Just a few months ago, I accompanied the heads of four major foundations to one of the poorest neighborhoods in Port au Prince, Haiti. The leaders of the Gates Foundation, the Soros Foundation, the Summit Foundation, and the UN fund -- sat with me around a small table -- as we watched young people perform a skit about how to say "no" to sex. I'm pleased that these private foundations are investing in programs like this one in Haiti that are working with young people to reduce teen pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases like AIDS.

Year? | The United States government -- through USAID -- is also making significant contributions to family planning efforts worldwide. More than \$3 billion to programs in population and reproductive health in developing countries -- and \$2.5 billion to programs that promote women's advancement in economic, social, legal, and political rights. Among the results of these efforts: well over 50 million couples are now using family planning, and tens of thousands of health workers are being trained in over 60 countries.

Yet while the United States was on target the first year with a financial commitment to ICPD for international population and reproductive health programs -- reaching \$752 million -- we've now fallen behind. While my husband -- and this Administration -- has fought hard for increased funding -- Congress has cut bilateral funding for family planning by 30%. And as all of you know so well -- US funding for the United Nations Population fund has been eliminated.

Along these lines -- I am pleased to announce that my husband has in his budget for the year 2000 a proposed \$25 million voluntary contribution to the UNFPA. This money would help women and couples all over the world have the right --reaffirmed in Cairo -- to “decide freely and responsibly the number and spacing of their children, and to have the information, education, and means to do so.” The restoration of US funding to UNFPA would send a strong signal that the US continues to be committed to supporting internationally agreed approaches to population growth. I also hope that this year -- we can work with Congress to untangle the issue of paying our debts to the United Nations from the unrelated issue of family planning overseas. We must be able to live up to those important obligations.

As important as it is that every country make these commitments to family planning and reproductive health services -- we know that even that goal is not sufficient to lift women and families out of the cycle of poverty and hopelessness that so many remain ~~trapped~~ trapped in today. Family planning alone is not enough. That was the genius of Cairo. In order for people and nations to develop -- they need education, and jobs, and the ability to participate fully in the political life of their communities. And the single most important investment a country can make in its future ~~and the future of its people~~ is in education -- ~~particularly~~ for women and girls. You educate a woman, and you educate a family. And the entire community benefits.

We’ve learned -- through experience -- that the better a woman is educated -- the lower the rates of infant mortality. And the better a woman is educated -- the

few babies she has -- and the more able she is to feed, ~~and~~ clothe, and educate her children.

I visited a village in Bangladesh -- where people were so poor that children had to work in the fields -- and couldn't go to school. But ^{when} ~~that country understood the importance of education -- particularly for girls.~~ So the government began a program to give families rice and other food -- so that they didn't have to force their daughters to go to work, I saw how pleased parents were to see their girls in a classroom -- instead of struggling in the fields.

In Thailand, I met with young girls who had contracted AIDS — after their families had sold them into prostitution. A number of ngos were working with these girls and their families, and they explained how you could tell the families who had made this desperate ^{decision} ~~act~~. Their houses were bigger. But their daughters were dying. I tried to talk to these parents about the importance of educating their daughters, and how much more valuable they would be to themselves and to their parents instead of being sold into slavery. Education is an investment in the future. And no family -- and no nation -- can move forward without making that investment.

The issues of population and development among

~~These~~ ^{are} the great challenges of the 21st Century ~~that face us all.~~ And it is up to all of us -- government leaders, ^{business, citizens.} ngos, and yes, -- our young people -- to provide both the resources and the political will to meet those challenges.

~~We are to meet~~ goals set in ~~Cairo~~
If ~~we are going to make~~ the commitments made in Cairo ~~a reality~~ -- then we must not only work within our own governments. We must forge stronger ties between governments and non governmental and civil society organizations.

I met yesterday with the delegation of international ngos here, ~~and~~ as I always have been, ~~I~~ I was overwhelmed by the passion, ~~and~~ commitment, and energy that they possess -- ~~and~~ the extraordinary work that they do in communities around the world. They have been at the forefront of the progress we've made -- by bringing the voices of women and the concerns of ordinary citizens into the decision making process. Long before Cairo -- advocacy groups and ngos have been working to expand access to health care and other desperately needed services -- and holding governments accountable for meeting those needs.

The contributions of the ngos were critical to building the historic consensus that was formed at Cairo. And the progress that we've made since could not have been made without their hard work and commitment. But let's not forget perhaps their greatest contributions. Strengthening the institutions of civil society that are so vital to our democratic freedoms.

~~If we are to meet~~ the goals ~~of~~ ^{set in} Cairo -- and advance the lives of women and families around the world -- then we can only do so walking down this path together -- as partners. Governments, ngos, grass roots advocates -- and especially our young people.

The commitments we make here today are critical to the future of this planet. We just have to look into the faces of the young people who are joining us here to see the extraordinary promise of that future -- and also its great challenge. One third of the world's population -- two billion people -- will soon be under the age of 15 -- and starting to enter their reproductive years.

Will they have the freedom and the information to make wise choices about their ^{and their} lives families? Will they have the opportunity to grow up healthy, ~~and~~ educated, and be able to live up to their God-given talents? Will we be able to end the spread of AIDS and other diseases? Will we be able to prioritize our resources to close the gaps in health, and education, and opportunity, that continue to threaten the progress of every nation? It's up to every one of us.

I want to end with a story about Kusum Singh, a young Indian girl who was married at the age of 13 to an abusive, illiterate husband. "At the age of 15, I decided I had no future," she said. So she decided to take more control of her life. When elections for community health workers were held -- she stood for election, and won. But to come out of her home and work in the village, she had to take a courageous step: take off her veil. She said the biggest challenge in her health care work was to get other women out of their homes. "First two joined, then four, and before your eyes, we became a group." She says she now has the capacity to mobilize 250 women "to walk with me" toward a healthier life.

It is up to all of us here -- government leaders, non governmental organizations, and advocates -- to help women like Kusum around the world to gain control over their lives, and fulfill their God-given promise. We have already come a very long way since Cairo and Beijing -- by walking down this path together. We used to come one by one, daring not to speak out or raise our voices. Now the hopes and dreams of women are recognized as never before; and in more and more nations, women are calling for their rights -- including reproductive rights -- to be recognized. But our work is not over until the day when every young person -- in every community -- can stand up and say "I have a future."

**FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
ADDRESS TO NGO FORUM
THE HAGUE
FEBRUARY 7, 1999**

Sam
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I want to thank Florence (Manguyu) for that kind introduction. I am pleased and honored to be here at the NGO Forum -- as you talk about the progress that's been made since Cairo -- and the challenges ahead. First I want to thank everyone here -- all 800 of you -- for the work you do every single day to make life better in your communities. That is the greatest contribution any one of us can ever make.

I know that many of you -- especially the young people -- are truly heartbroken that Ginger of the Spice Girls was not able to be here. I'm afraid I'm no substitute -- as singing isn't my strong point. But I would like to read you a poem I've just discovered by a woman poet from Surinam, because I think her words remind us of why we're all here today.

“Nothing rises so high
as a voice that calls out
in the middle of the day.

A voice so fine;
a voice so strong
it's never false,
even when the wind
blows hard.

Woman, you rise so high,
you inspire;
you abide;
in the midst of the battle
of every day.”

All of you here -- from every corner of the world -- represent the voices of women; women who are struggling to care for and educate their children; women who are seeking more control over their lives; women who want to contribute to the progress that’s being made in their communities, and in their nations.

Today, as I look out on all of you, and see extraordinary diversity in this room -- I am overwhelmed -- as I was in Beijing -- by the passion, commitment, and energy that you possess, and I’m inspired, once again, by the extraordinary work that you do. You are the vanguards of Cairo -- the ones who are making the ICPD Programme of Action a reality in people’s lives. And your presence here at The Hague is truly a reflection of a new reality in the world today.

No longer are the discussions about global challenges -- or their solutions -- decided upon by government officials and policy makers alone -- often behind closed doors. In a movement that was truly born in Cairo -- and then caught fire at the UN Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing -- non governmental organizations have finally taken their rightful place at the table, both in their own countries, and in international forums like this.

Finally -- the voices of ordinary citizens are being heard on critical issues that affect the lives of all of us. Finally, grass roots organizations and people working on the front lines in their communities are becoming part of the decision making process. Finally, the role that NGOs play in planning, and developing and monitoring programs and services that advance women and families is being recognized for the value that it brings.

Almost five years ago -- NGOs and governments helped forge an historic consensus around the challenges of global population growth, and its impact on families and nations. At the ICPD Conference in Cairo -- many of you said, let's stop focusing on lowering the numbers, and work instead on lifting up lives. You argued that women, children, and families must be at the heart of economic development efforts. You helped people understand that a far more comprehensive approach was needed -- an approach based on choice and opportunity -- not government control or coercion.

I've heard stories about how difficult it was to bring so many sides together - - and to reach a consensus not only on language of the final Programme of Action - - but its goals. I've heard that there were times when talks were at a standstill -- and that NGO leaders would come down from the balconies -- and out from side rooms -- to help people find common ground, and craft common language.

The level of NGO participation in Cairo -- and the energy it produced -- was unprecedented. It helped lay the ground for the NGO Forum in Beijing -- where for the first time, our voices and numbers were strong enough for us to say -- for

all the world to hear -- that women's rights are human rights, and human rights are women's rights.

I wanted to come here first to salute you. Not just for the invaluable work you did in Cairo -- but for the even more important work you've done since then to make the goals of that conference move from rhetoric to reality.

And progress is being made. Nations are making greater investments in family planning and reproductive health services, and developing more integrated approaches to economic and social development. And I know from my experience in my own country -- and in my travels around the world -- how vital you are to this march toward progress.

Just before I came here to The Hague -- I invited NGO leaders in my own country to the White House -- to talk about the challenges the United States faces in the area of family planning. These are the organizations who have placed the concerns of women and children at the top of our nation's agenda -- and who have fought tirelessly -- in the Hall of Congress, and in their own communities -- to ensure their needs are met. They are the ones who have pushed so successfully to increase the funding for family planning programs in the United States -- and to keep abortions in America safe, legal, and rare.

I've seen ^{young mothers who are learning how to care for their ~~newborns~~ ^{babies in their arms} & learn} ^{at the health centers you run} ~~extraordinary~~ work that you do. The health centers that you run in small villages and poor urban neighborhoods -- where family planning and reproductive health services are saving lives; and

^{young mothers learn}
I've seen ^{you} ~~the~~ ^{for} ~~ad~~ ^{ad} ~~rep~~ ^{repro} health services that are saving

helping women gain authority and dignity. And I've seen the programs you support to make sure more girls go to school -- and more women get the small loans they need to start their own businesses.

Yet even as we celebrate the progress that's being made by NGO's -- in my own country, and in countries around the world -- we recognize how far we still have to go. Many NGOs are still struggling to grow, and to be recognized. And some governments still stifle their valuable work. While many are powerful voices for change — others need advocacy and other skills training in order to have greater impact.

Today -- I challenge you to forge even stronger links with your government partners -- to ensure that the commitments made in Cairo are made real in every community.

Today -- I challenge you to keep sharing your stories -- so that word of what works and what doesn't work can help us scale up successful projects, and improve the quality of care for all citizens.

Today -- I challenge you to reach out — not only to your partners in government — but to new constituents. I'm so pleased that the Youth Forum has attracted so many young people who are making such contributions to the discussions here. I heard one young person say, "People finally have started talking *with* young people instead of merely *about* youth." And that's what we must do more and more. By next year -- nearly one billion adolescents -- the largest

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generation ever -- will be entering their reproductive years. Whether they have the reproductive information and services they need -- and the opportunities to lead productive, fulfilling lives -- depends on the actions we take together now.

I also urge the NGO community to reach out to fathers, and husbands. If progress is to be made in promoting family planning and gender equity -- or any of the other challenges before us today -- then men must become full and willing partners in the process.

My final challenge to you today is never, ever give up. Don't ever think that the work that you do, day in and day out, isn't having an impact on people's lives and futures. And don't ever think you are working alone. Look around you -- and feel the strength in your numbers and common purpose.

President Kennedy once said that on this earth, God's work is our own. And certainly what you do -- to improve the health and welfare of women and children; to save lives, and secure women's most basic rights -- is the most important work there is. Thank you for doing God's work.

FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
KEYNOTE ADDRESS TO THE HAGUE FORUM
THE HAGUE
FEBRUARY 8, 1999

It is a great honor to be here at this opening session of the Hague Forum -- and to join the ministers and other senior officials of over 170 nations in this global discussion on population and development. I am pleased that this gathering has also drawn so many NGO participants from around the world -- and that there are so many young people here. They represent the great promise of our collective future -- and its challenges. Their presence here among us lends even more urgency to our work -- as we explore together the progress we've made since the UN ICPD Conference in Cairo.

And what better place to gather for this global conversation than here, in this historic city, where people have come together on many occasions to work toward a more just and peaceful world. It was here -- 100 years ago at the Hague Peace Conference -- that world leaders came to devise rules for creating peaceful settlements of international disputes. It was here -- at the end of the last century -- that people gathered for an international exhibition on women -- and talked about the importance of motherhood, and education, and women's rights. And it was here -- in 1945 -- that the UN established its International Court of Justice -- to mediate disagreements among nations peacefully.

This week -- the international community gathers in The Hague again -- to talk about perhaps the greatest challenge of the 21st century -- how to continue to lift up the lives of individuals and families, and the fortunes of nations, during this period of extraordinary population growth around our globe.

When the world began this dialogue in Cairo -- representatives from almost 180 nations came together -- and made history, by agreeing -- for the first time -- that the issues of population and development can't be separated, and that women's reproductive health and empowerment are critical to a nation's sustainability and growth. The world agreed -- for the first time -- that smaller families and slower population growth depended not on control or coercion -- but on choice and opportunity. And the world agreed -- for the first time -- that respect for women's rights and personal dignity must be at the heart of our efforts to improve the quality of life for all of our citizens.

No one who was there in Cairo would say the process of developing that historic consensus was easy. Yet every nation committed to working toward the common goals laid out in the Cairo Programme of Action: that by the year 2015 -
- all governments must ensure universal access to a full range of reproductive health care and family planning services; all governments would work to reduce dramatically infant, child, and maternal mortality; and all governments would provide universal access to education -- with a particular emphasis on girls and women.

I'm here today to re-affirm my own country's deep commitment to carrying out the ICPD Programme of Action -- and our renewed determination to continue to work with governments and NGOs to meet its goals worldwide.

This week, we've come together to talk about how the actions and commitments that were made in Cairo are affecting people's lives. And to share stories about what's working in our communities that will help us reach the ambitious 20-year goals we have set for ourselves. I've had the privilege over the past five years of seeing firsthand some of the progress that is being made in many of your countries around the world -- where communities are investing more resources in family planning and reproductive health services -- and expanding other opportunities -- like education and jobs -- to improve the quality of people's lives.

In Uzbekistan -- an area where abortion rates are high -- I toured a new woman's wellness center, and visited with expectant mothers. Today, thanks to clinics like the one I visited -- women have greater access to health and reproductive care -- and the use of contraception has increased by a third to a half. The result: Abortion rates have declined dramatically.

In Indonesia, I'll never forget sitting under a tree in a small village, and watching young new mothers nurture their new babies -- while at the same time learning how to care for them -- and themselves. There are now thousands of village midwives in that country who have been trained in life saving skills -- so that both mothers and babies can live healthy lives.

At a small clinic in Nepal, I saw a safe home delivery kit that is given to expectant mothers. Inside is a bar of soap, twine, wax, a plastic sheet, and a razor blade. Its purpose is to reduce major causes of maternal and neonatal death -- by promoting clean hands, clean surfaces, and clean umbilical cord care. Part of the “Safe Motherhood” initiative, these simple kits teach us that women don’t have to die in childbirth. They don’t have to bleed to death or suffer from terrible infections. With these simple tools -- that cost 13 cents to make -- motherhood can be a safe and healthy experience for all.

I’m pleased to report that we’re making progress in my own country as well. Our government’s funding for family planning services has increased by \$12 million -- expanding access to family planning and reproductive care services to women and families across our country. We continue to work toward the goal of making abortion safe, legal, and rare. So I’m particularly pleased that the number of unintended pregnancies in America is declining, and abortions have fallen a full 12 percent. And through the National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy, we’re also seeing how comprehensive, community-based health programs are bringing down teen pregnancies and teen sexual activity.

Back in 1990, a small town in New York had one of the highest teen pregnancy rates around. The county’s family planning clinic and Catholic Charities decided to work together. They made the clinic free. They enlisted teens to talk to teens. They created a place for youngsters to go every Saturday night with adult supervision. And they brought in religious and business leaders to teach parents how to talk to their own children. Today -- they’ve almost reached their

goals of reducing teenage pregnancy rate by one third by the year 2000.

So yes. We've made progress around the world since the Cairo Conference, and I want to applaud the people here today -- both government and non-governmental leaders -- for forging ahead with new energy, and a new level of commitment and resources. In Yemen, whose delegation I met with yesterday, they have made great efforts since Cairo to expand access to health services and education. Yemen has seen girls' enrollment in village schools rise 100 - 300% since 1994. And I know that many nations have made progress as well toward the goals we have set. Yet as far as we've come — we must redouble our efforts -- every single day.

This is no time to cut back on our commitments to family planning -- when nearly 600,000 women still die every year — one every minute — from pregnancy related causes. This is no time to question our investments in education -- when there are still 960 million illiterate adults in the world today. And two thirds of them are women.

No nation can hope to succeed in our global economy if half of its people lack the opportunity and the right to make the most of their God-given promise.

No nation can move forward when so many women and children are still trapped in an endless cycle of poverty -- perpetuated by inadequate health care, poor access to family planning and limited education; or are trapped inside social or cultural customs that impoverish their spirits and limit their dreams.

If there is one achievement that I hope we can look back on -- in the year 2015 -- and that I believe would make the most difference in the quality of people's lives, and our ability to move forward as nations -- it would be that every child is wanted; that every pregnancy is planned; and that every woman is blessed with reproductive health, and every woman is in control of her life.

This is our challenge -- and it will take the work of all of us -- governments, ngos, and our young people -- to make that day a reality.

I recognize, as you all do, that there will never be full agreement on some of these issues -- particularly reproductive rights -- because they go to the heart of our personal, political, and religious beliefs. There are people of good faith on all sides of these issues. Yet I also believe that there is more that we hold in common than that which drives us apart. And I believe -- and Cairo confirmed -- that people with profound differences and backgrounds can work together in pursuit of common goals, and the greater good.

I hope we can agree -- first and foremost -- that government has no place in the personal decision a woman makes about whether to bring a child into the world. It's a decision that all individuals and couples should be able to decide freely and responsibly -- without government interference or coercion. Such tactics are an affront to our fundamental notion of respect for human dignity and personal integrity.

Every time we hear calls from those who would do away with family planning, or limit reproductive rights, I hope they will hear the voices of women who have suffered -- and died -- because governments were making decisions that women should have had the freedom to make. Our human history is filled with such examples of inhumanity, and abuse of power.

I hope we will remember the voices of the women in my own country who lined up around the block for hours in 1916, waiting for Margaret Sanger to open the nation's first family planning clinic in Brooklyn, New York. Before the police shut it down 10 days later -- the clinic managed to help hundreds of women, and they all had stories to tell: about miscarriages and illegal abortions, and their desperate struggles to feed and clothe eight, nine or ten children.

I hope we will remember the voices of women who suffered, often in silence, in Nazi Germany. For Aryan women, deemed "valuable" -- abortion facilities were prohibited -- and their miscarriages were investigated by the police. Jewish women, and gypsy men and women in concentration camps -- faced mass sterilization as part of the quest to prevent inferior children.

I hope we will remember the voices of women from Romania. When I visited that country a few years ago, I spoke with women about what it was like before they had democracy. When they were taken against their will, once a month during their work hours, to a general holding facility, where they were physically examined to determine if they were pregnant -- stripping them of their dignity and humanity. As part of that nation's campaign to increase its population

-- family planning, sex education, and abortions were outlawed.

And I hope we will also listen to the voices coming out of China. Those voices now include many who are working to ensure that their country's family planning practices are voluntary and respectful. When I was there -- I heard about what the one-child policy had once meant for too many women -- including forced sterilizations and abortions. [Which is why -- in my speech at the UN Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995 -- I said that "It is a violation of human rights when women are denied the right to plan their own families -- and that includes being forced to have an abortion or being sterilized against their will."]

While I hope we agree that government has no place in these most personal decisions -- we know government plays a critical role in providing women and families the health services and tools of opportunities that can break the cycle of poverty and suffering -- and lead to full and productive lives. And the single most important step we can all take to meet that goal is to make voluntary family planning a top priority in every nation.

We know that by giving couples the freedom to choose the spacing and number of their children, women not only gain more control over their lives, they also can begin to contribute more fully to their communities -- and to the progress of their nations. And through family planning -- we not only lessen the number of unwanted pregnancies, we diminish the number of illegal and unsafe abortions that cause so many unnecessary deaths -- and so much unnecessary suffering.

I'll always remember going to a maternity hospital in Salvador de Bahia in Brazil, where I saw women get the information they needed to make wise choices about planning their families. I saw mothers cradling their new born babies in the hallways as they stood in line for their check-ups. I watched young people being educated on the most basic of reproductive facts. I saw young pregnant women, waiting for their pre-natal check ups, and I saw parents being taught what to feed their young children, and how to care for them.

But I also saw women who were hospitalized -- because they didn't have access to these family planning services -- and as a last desperate resort --had submitted to illegal or unsafe abortions.

When I met with the minister for health in that state -- he explained what all of us have always known. That the wealthy have access to the health care and reproductive care they need. And poor women do not. They are the ones who struggle to try to feed, clothe and educate more children than they could ever support. And they are the ones who suffer -- and often die -- because the only option they have to limit their families are illegal and unsafe abortions.

It's up to all of us here today to ensure that every woman -- in every community -- has access to voluntary family planning and reproductive health services. They are basic, fundamental rights.

In Cairo -- the world made commitments to ensure that women had greater access to those services -- and I want to applaud our host country — the

Netherlands — for living up to its financial obligations -- and being one of the strongest donor nations. The Dutch government has more than doubled its funding for population and reproductive health programs between 94 and 96.

Since Cairo -- American support for international population activities has also increased significantly. American foundations are now providing approximately \$150 million every year for population activities. Just a few months ago, I accompanied the heads of four major foundations to one of the poorest neighborhoods in Port au Prince, Haiti. The leaders of the Gates, Soros Summit and United Nations foundations sat with me around a small table -- as we watched young people perform a skit about how to say “no” to sex. I’m pleased that these private foundations are investing in programs like this one in Haiti that are working with young people to reduce teen pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases like AIDS.

The United States government -- through USAID -- is also making significant contributions to family planning efforts worldwide. Since Cairo, more than \$3 billion has been spent on programs in population and reproductive health in developing countries -- and \$2.5 billion on programs that promote women’s advancement in economic, social, legal, and political rights. Among the results of these efforts: well over 50 million couples are now using family planning, and tens of thousands of health workers are being trained in over 60 countries.

Yet while the United States was on target the first year with its financial commitment to Cairo for international population and reproductive health programs

-- reaching \$752 million in 1995 -- we've now fallen behind. While my husband -
- and this Administration -- has fought hard for increased funding -- Congress has
cut bilateral funding for family planning by 30%. And as all of you know so well -
- US funding for the United Nations Population Fund has been eliminated.

Along these lines -- I am pleased to announce that my husband has in his
budget for the year 2000 a proposed \$25 million voluntary contribution to the
UNFPA. This money would help women and couples all over the world have the
right --reaffirmed in Cairo -- to "decide freely and responsibly the number and
spacing of their children, and to have the information, education, and means to do
so." The restoration of US funding to UNFPA would send a strong signal that the
US continues to be committed to supporting the ICPD Programme of Action. The
over 170 countries who joined that consensus can't be wrong. I also hope that this
year -- we can work with Congress to untangle the issue of paying our debts to the
United Nations from the unrelated issue of family planning overseas. We must be
able to live up to those important obligations.

As important as it is that every country make these commitments to family
planning and reproductive health services -- we know that even that goal is not
sufficient to lift women and families out of the cycle of poverty and hopelessness
that so many remain trapped in today. Family planning alone is not enough. That
was the genius of Cairo. In order for people and nations to develop -- they need
education, and jobs, and the ability to participate fully in the political life of their
communities. And the single most important investment a country can make in its
future is in education for women and girls. You educate a woman, and you

educate a family. And the entire community benefits.

We've learned -- through experience -- that the better a woman is educated -- the lower the rates of infant mortality. And the better a woman is educated -- the few babies she has -- and the more able she is to feed, and clothe, and educate her children.

I visited a village in Bangladesh -- where people were so poor that children had to work in the fields -- and couldn't go to school. But when the government began a program to give families rice and other food -- so that they didn't have to force their daughters to go to work, I saw how pleased parents were to see their girls in a classroom -- instead of struggling in the fields.

In Thailand, I met with young girls who had contracted AIDS — after their families had sold them into prostitution. A number of NGOs were working with these girls and their families, and they explained how you could tell the families who had made this desperate decision. Their houses were bigger. But their daughters were dying. I tried to talk to these parents about the importance of educating their daughters, and how much more valuable they would be to themselves and to their parents instead of being sold into slavery. Education is an investment in the future. And no family -- and no nation -- can move forward without making that investment.

The issues of population and development are among the great challenges of the 21st Century. And it is up to all of us -- government leaders;

NGOs, businesses, citizens, and yes, -- our young people -- to provide both the resources and the political will to meet those challenges.

If we are to meet the goals set in Cairo -- then we must not only work within our own governments. We must forge stronger ties between governments and non governmental and civil society organizations.

I spoke yesterday at the NGO Forum. And as I have always been -- I was overwhelmed by the passion, commitment, and energy that they possess -- and inspired by the extraordinary work that they do in communities around the world. They have been at the forefront of the progress we've made -- by bringing the voices of women and the concerns of ordinary citizens into the decision making process. Long before Cairo -- advocacy groups and ngos have been working to expand access to health care and other desperately needed services -- and holding governments accountable for meeting those needs.

The contributions of NGOs were critical to building the consensus that was formed at Cairo. And the progress that we've made since could not have been made without their hard work and commitment. But let's not forget perhaps their greatest contributions. Strengthening the institutions of civil society that are so vital to our democratic freedoms.

The commitments we make here today are critical to the future of this

planet. We just have to look into the faces of the young people who are joining us here to see the extraordinary promise of that future -- and also its great challenge. One third of the world's population -- two billion people -- are now under the age of 15 -- and starting to enter their reproductive years. Another one billion are between the ages of 15 and 24 -- just beginning their reproductive lives.

Will they have the freedom and the information to make wise choices about their lives and their families? Will they have the opportunity to grow up healthy, educated, and be able to live up to their God-given talents? Will we be able to end the spread of AIDS and other diseases? Will we be able to prioritize our resources to close the gaps in health, and education, and opportunity, that continue to threaten the progress of every nation? It's up to every one of us to fulfill our promise.

I want to end with a story about Kusum Singh, a young Indian girl who was married at the age of 13 to an abusive, illiterate husband. "At the age of 15, I decided I had no future," she said. So she decided to take more control of her life. When elections for community health workers were held -- she stood for election, and won. But to come out of her home and work in the village, she had to take a courageous step: take off her veil. She said the biggest challenge in her health care work was to get other women out of their homes. "First two joined, then four, and before your eyes, we became a group." She says she now has the capacity to mobilize 250 women "to walk with me" toward a healthier life.

It is up to all of us here -- government leaders, non governmental organizations, and advocates -- to help women like Kusum around the world to gain control over their lives, and fulfill their God-given promise. We have already come a very long way since Cairo and Beijing -- by walking down this path together. We used to come one by one, daring not to speak out or raise our voices. Now the hopes and dreams of women are recognized as never before; and in more and more nations, women are calling for their rights -- including reproductive rights -- to be recognized. But our work is not over until the day when every young person -- in every community -- can stand up and say "I have a future."



Noa A. Meyer

02/10/99 08:44:47 AM

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TALKING IT OVER

BY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON

RELEASE: WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 1999, AND THEREAFTER

A typical week for me -- if any week can be called "typical" -- is filled with different activities and challenges. But some weeks, like this one, are interrupted by the unexpected -- in this case, the loss of an admired leader.

I was en route to a United Nations conference in the Netherlands when I learned of the death of Jordan's King Hussein. Because of my husband's and my esteem for the King and his family, I immediately traveled to Amman to meet the President for the sad duty of paying our last respects, visiting with our friend Queen Noor and meeting the new King, Abdullah.

I was moved by all I saw on that memorable day. Hundreds of thousands of Jordanians left their homes to line the city's streets to pay a final tribute to their beloved monarch. Leaders from around the world, including my husband and former Presidents Ford, Carter and Bush, joined together to honor a courageous champion of peace.

As I contemplated this extraordinary occasion on my way back to The Hague, I was struck by the fact that, in a strange way, these two events -- the funeral and the U.N. conference -- were connected. King Hussein will always be remembered for his ability to imagine a new and different future -- a future of peace in the Middle East. This will always be one of his enduring legacies.

I saw the same feat of imagination at work in The Hague, where leaders from nearly 180 nations gathered to envision a new and better future for people all over the world. They had come to this history-filled Dutch city to talk about the progress we've made in the five years since the 1994 United Nations International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo, Egypt. There, countries had put aside often profound differences and agreed upon common goals for the year 2015 -- including reducing child and maternal mortality and guaranteeing universal access to family planning and education.

At this week's conference, I heard about the important steps being taken to reach Cairo's goals, despite the great challenges that remain.

I met with delegates from Yemen -- where the number of girls going to school has tripled in some villages in the last five years. I listened to young people from around the world talk passionately about what they were doing to end domestic violence and help stop the spread of AIDS. And I heard

story after story about loan programs that are giving women a chance to turn dreams into successful businesses, about health clinics that are teaching women how to care for their newborns, and about family planning services that are reducing abortions and saving lives.

I brought news of what the United States has done to fulfill the *commitments we made in Cairo -- most significantly in our efforts to reduce* teen pregnancy. Finally, today, fewer American teens are getting pregnant, engaging in sexual activity and having abortions.

And yet, too many are still not getting the message. I'm always stunned when I meet pregnant girls who assure me that as soon as their boyfriend gets a job or gets out of jail, they'll be a family, and everything will work out just fine. No one has ever told these young women that teen pregnancy is too often a one-way ticket to shattered dreams.

We know that young women get pregnant for a whole host of reasons. Some don't understand why it's a bad idea. Some are coerced by older boyfriends. Others can't cope with school or family and see motherhood as a way out. Whatever the reason, we will only address the problem if we work to create a new and better future for all young people.

This administration's teen pregnancy prevention strategy includes everything from abstinence education to more after-school programs and family planning. In cooperation with the non-profit National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy, we are seeing comprehensive, community-based health programs reduce teen pregnancies and sexual activity.

Most of all, we have to listen to our children. When asked what parents could do to prevent their own children from becoming pregnant, one young man from Texas answered: "Don't leave us alone so much." His message was clear: We need to fill our young people's lives -- with love and guidance, a solid education and productive activities they enjoy.

Striving to imagine and to create a better future for the world is not only the work of leaders like King Hussein and those who were in The Hague this week. It is a job all of us share.

To find out more about Hillary Rodham Clinton and read her past columns, visit the Creators Syndicate web page at www.creators.com.

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Message Sent To: _____

FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
KEYNOTE ADDRESS TO THE UN POPULATION FORUM
THE HAGUE
FEBRUARY 8, 1999

It is a great honor to be here at this opening session of the UN Population Forum -- and to join the ministers and high level representatives of over 180 nations in this global discussion on population and development. I am pleased that this gathering has also drawn so many ngo participants from around the world -- and that there are so many young people here. They represent the great promise of our collective future -- and its challenges. Their presence here among us lends even more urgency to our work -- as we explore together the progress we've made since the UN Conference in Cairo was held almost five years ago.

And what better place to gather for this global conversation than here, in this historic city, where people have come together through the ages to work toward a more just and peaceful world. It was here -- 100 years ago at the Hague Peace Conference -- where world leaders came to work out the rules of creating peaceful settlements of international disputes. It was here -- at the end of the last century -- when people gathered here for an international exhibition on women -- and talked about the importance of motherhood, and education, and women's rights. Many of the same concerns we are still grappling with today. It was here -- in 1945 -- where the UN established its International Court of Justice -- to mediate disagreements among nations.

This week -- the international community gathers in the Hague again -- to talk about perhaps the greatest challenge of the 21st century -- how to continue to lift up the lives of families, and the fortunes of nations, during this period of extraordinary population growth around our globe.

We began this dialogue almost five years ago, in Cairo -- at the UN International Conference on Population and Development. Like today, representatives from 180 nations came together -- and we made history. We agreed -- for the first time -- that the issues of population and development can't be separated, and that women's reproductive health and empowerment are critical to a nation's sustainability and growth. We agreed -- for the first time -- that smaller families and slower population growth depended not on control or coercion -- but on choice and opportunity. And we agreed -- for the first time -- that respect for women's rights and personal dignity must be at the heart of our efforts to improve the quality of life for all of our citizens.

No one who was there in Cairo would say the process of developing that consensus was easy -- and surely disagreements remain. Yet every nation committed to working toward the common goals laid out in Cairo's Programme of Action: that by the year 2015 -- all governments must ensure universal access to health care -- including reproductive health care services; all governments would work to dramatically reduce infant and maternal mortality; and all governments would provide universal access to education -- with a particular emphasis on girls and women.

I'm here today to re-affirm my own country's deep commitment to carrying out the ICPD's Programme of Action -- and our renewed determination to continue to work with governments and ngos to meet its goals worldwide.

This week, we've come together to talk about how the actions and commitments that were made in Cairo are affecting people's lives. And to share stories about what's working in our communities that will help us reach the ambitious 20-year goals we have set for ourselves. I've had the privilege over the past five years of seeing firsthand some of the progress that is being made in many of your countries around the world -- where communities are investing more resources in family planning and reproductive health services -- and expanding other opportunities -- like education and jobs -- to improve the quality of people's lives.

In Uzbekistan -- an area where abortion rates are high -- I toured a new health clinic -- only a few simple rooms -- and visited with expectant mothers. Today, thanks to clinics like the one I visited -- women have far greater access to health and reproductive care -- and the use of contraception has increased by a third to a half. The result: Abortion rates have declined dramatically.

In Indonesia, I'll never forget sitting under a tree in a small village, and watching young new mothers nurture their new babies -- while at the same time learning how to care for them -- and themselves. There are now thousands of village midwives in that country who have been trained in life saving skills -- so that both mothers and babies can live healthy lives.

At a small clinic in Nepal, I saw a safe home delivery kit that is given to expectant mothers. Inside is a bar of soap, twine, wax, a plastic sheet, and a razor blade. Its purpose is to reduce major causes of maternal and neonatal death -- by promoting clean hands, clean surfaces, and clean umbilical care. Part of the "Safe Motherhood" initiatives, these simple kits teach us that women don't have to die in childbirth. They don't have to bleed to death or suffer from terrible infections. With these simple tools -- that cost 13 cents to make -- motherhood can be a safe and healthy experience for all.

I'm pleased to report that we're making progress in my own country as well. Our government's funding for family planning services has increased by \$12 million -- expanding access to family planning and reproductive care services to women and families across the country. We continue to work toward the goal of making abortion safe, legal, and rare. So I'm particularly pleased that the number of unintended pregnancies in America is declining, and abortions have fallen a full 12 percent. We're also seeing comprehensive, community-based health programs are bringing down teen pregnancies and teen sexual activity.

Back in 1990, a small town in New York had one of the highest teen pregnancy rates around. The county's family planning clinic and Catholic Charities decided to work together. They made the clinic free. They enlisted teens to talk to teens. They created a place for youngsters to go every Saturday night with adult supervision. And they brought in religious and business leaders to teach parents how to talk to their own children. Today -- they've almost reached their goals of reducing teenage pregnancy rate by one third by the year 2000.

So yes. We've made remarkable progress around the world since the Cairo Conference, and I want to applaud the people here today -- both government and non-governmental leaders -- for forging ahead with new energy, and a new level of commitment and resources. Yet as far as we've come — we must never, ever slacken our efforts -- even for a moment.

This no time to cut back on our commitments to family planning -- when nearly 600,000 women still die every year — one every minute — from pregnancy related causes. This is no time to question our investments in education -- when there are still 960 million illiterate adults in the world today. And two thirds of them are women.

No nation can hope to succeed in our global economy if half of its people lack the opportunity and the right to make the most of their God-given promise.

No nation can move forward when so many women and children are still trapped in an endless cycle of poverty -- perpetuated by inadequate health care, poor access to family planning, limited education; or are trapped inside social or cultural customs that impoverish their spirits and limit their dreams.

If there is one achievement that I hope we can look back on -- in the year 2015 -- and that I believe would make the most difference in the quality of people's lives, and our ability to move forward as nations -- it would be that every child is wanted; that every pregnancy is planned; and that every women is blessed with reproductive health and freedom. This is our challenge -- and it will take the work of all of us -- governments, ngos, and our young people -- to make that day a reality.

I recognize, as you all do, that there will never be full agreement on some of these issues - particularly reproductive rights -- because they go to the heart of our personal, political, and religious beliefs. There are people of good faith on all sides of these issues. Yet I also believe that there is more that we hold in common than that drives us apart. And I believe -- and Cairo confirmed -- that people with profound differences and backgrounds can work together in pursuit of common goals, and the greater good.

I hope we can agree -- first and foremost -- that government has no place in the personal decision a woman makes about whether to bring a child into the world. It's a decision that every couple should be able to decide freely and responsibly -- without government interference or coercion. Such tactics are an affront to our fundamental notion of respect for human dignity and personal integrity.

Every time we hear calls from those who would do away with family planning, or limit reproductive rights, I hope they will hear the voices of women who have come before us who have suffered -- and died -- because governments were making decisions that women should have had the freedom to make. Our human history is filled with such examples of inhumanity, and abuse of power.

I hope we hear the voices of the women in my own country who lined up around the block for hours in 1916, waiting for Margaret Sanger to open the nation's first birth control clinic Brooklyn, New York. Before the police shut it down 10 days later -- the clinic managed to help hundreds of women, and they all had stories to tell: about miscarriages and illegal abortions, and their desperate struggles to feed and clothe nine and ten children.

I hope we hear the voices of women who suffered, often in silence, in Nazi Germany. For Aryan women, deemed "valuable" -- abortion facilities were prohibited -- and their miscarriages were investigated by the police. Jewish women, and gypsy men and women in concentration camps -- faced mass sterilization as part of the quest to prevent inferior children.

I hope we hear the voices of women from Romania. When I visited Romania a few years ago, I spoke with women about what it was like before they had democracy. When they were taken against their will, once a month during their work hours, to a general holding facilities where they were physically examined to determine if they were pregnant -- stripping them of their dignity and humanity. As part of that nation's campaign to increase population -- birth control, sex education, and abortions were outlawed.

And I hope we will also listen to the voices coming out of China. Those voices now include many who are working to ensure that their country's family planning practices are voluntary and respectful. When I was there -- I heard about what the one-child policy had once means for too many women -- including forced sterilizations and abortions. Which is why -- in my speech at the UN Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995 -- I said that "It is a violation of human rights when women are denied the right to plan their own families -- and that includes being forced to have an abortion or being sterilized against their will."

While I hope we agree that government has no place in these most personal decisions -- we know government plays a critical role in providing women and families the health services and tools of opportunities that can break the cycle of poverty and suffering -- and lead to full and productive lives. And the single most important step we can all take to meet that goal is to make voluntary family planning the top priority in every nation.

We know that by giving couples the freedom to choose the spacing and number of their children, women not only gain more control over their lives. They can begin to contribute more fully to the life of their communities -- and to the progress of their nations. And through family planning -- we not only lessen the number of unwanted pregnancies. We diminish the number of illegal and unsafe abortions that are causing so many millions of unnecessary deaths -- and so much unnecessary suffering.

I'll always remember going to a maternity hospital in Salvador de Bahia in Brazil, where I saw women getting information they would need to enable them to make wise choices about planning their families. I saw mothers cradling their new born babies in the hallways as they stood in line for their check-ups. I watched young people being educated on the most basic of reproductive facts. I saw young pregnant women, waiting for their pre-natal check ups, and I saw parents being taught what to feed their young children, and how to care for them.

But I also saw women who were sick, and in pain, and many who were dying -- because they didn't have access to these family planning services -- and as a last resort -- and in desperation -- they had submitted to illegal or unsafe abortions.

When I met with the minister of health in that city -- he explained what all of us have always known. That the wealthy have always had access to the health care and reproductive care they've needed. And poor women have not. They are the ones who struggle to try to feed and clothe and educate eight, nine, or ten children. And they are the ones who suffer -- and often die -- because the only option they have to limit their families are illegal and unsafe abortions.

It's up to all of us here today to ensure that every woman -- in every community -- has access to voluntary family planning and reproductive health services. It's a basic, fundamental right. And it's critical to our nations' futures.

In Cairo -- we all made commitments to ensure women had greater access to those services -- and here -- I want to applaud our host country -- the Netherlands -- for living up to its financial obligations -- and being one of the strongest donor nations. The Dutch government has more than doubled its funding for population and reproductive health programs between 94 and 96. I'm also proud of my own country's record. I've already mentioned an increase in America's domestic spending on family planning.

Since Cairo -- support for international population activities have also increased significantly. American foundations are now providing approximately \$150 million every year for population activities. Just a few months ago, I accompanied the heads of four major foundations to one of the poorest neighborhoods in Port au Prince, Haiti. The leaders of the Gates Foundation, the Soros Foundation, the Summit Foundation, and the UN fund -- sat with me around a small table -- as we watched young people perform a skit about how to say "no" to sex. I'm pleased that these private foundations are investing in programs like this one in Haiti that are working with young people to reduce teen pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases like AIDS.

The United States government -- through USAID -- is also making significant contributions to family planning efforts worldwide. More than \$3 billion to programs in population and reproductive health in developing countries -- and \$2.5 billion to programs that promote women's advancement in economic, social, legal, and political rights. Among the results of these efforts: well over 50 million couples are now using family planning, and tens of thousands of health workers are being trained in over 60 countries.

Yet while the United States was on target the first year with a financial commitment to ICPD for international population and reproductive health programs -- reaching \$752 million -- we've now fallen behind. While my husband -- and this Administration -- has fought hard for increased funding -- Congress has cut bilateral funding for family planning by 30%. And as all of you know so well -- US funding for the United Nations Population fund has been eliminated.

Along these lines -- I am pleased to announce that my husband has in his budget for the year 2000 a proposed \$25 million voluntary contribution to the UNFPA. This money would help women and couples all over the world have the right --reaffirmed in Cairo -- to “decide freely and responsibly the number and spacing of their children, and to have the information, education, and means to do so.” The restoration of US funding to UNFPA would send a strong signal that the US continues to be committed to supporting internationally agreed approaches to population growth. I also hope that this year -- we can work with Congress to untangle the issue of paying our debts to the United Nations from the unrelated issue of family planning overseas. We must be able to live up to those important obligations.

As important as it is that every country make these commitments to family planning and reproductive health services -- we know that even that goal is not sufficient to lift women and families out of the cycle of poverty and hopelessness that so many remained trapped in today. Family planning alone is not enough. That was the genius of Cairo. In order for people and nations to develop -- they need education, and jobs, and the ability to participate fully in the political life of their communities. And the single most important investment a country can make in its future and the future of its people is in education -- particularly for women and girls. You educate a woman, and you educate a family. And the entire community benefits.

We’ve learned -- through experience -- that the better a woman is educated -- the lower the rates of infant mortality. And the better a woman is educated -- the few babies she has -- and the more able she is to feed, and clothe, and educate her children.

I visited a village in Bangladesh -- where people were so poor that children had to work in the fields -- and couldn’t go to school. But that country understood the importance of education -- particularly for girls. So the government began a program to give families rice and other food -- so that they didn’t have to force their daughters to go to work. I saw how pleased parents were to see their girls in a classroom -- instead of struggling in the fields.

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These are the great challenges of the 21st Century that face us all. And it is up to all of us -- government leaders; ngos, and yes, -- our young people -- to provide both the resources and the political will to meet those challenges. If we are going to make the commitments made in Cairo a reality -- then we must not only work within our own governments. We must forge stronger ties between governments and non governmental and civil society organizations.

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I met yesterday with the delegation of international ngos here -- and as I always have been -- I was overwhelmed by the passion, and commitment, and energy that they possess -- and the extraordinary work that they do in communities around the world. They have been at the forefront of the progress we've made -- by bringing the voices of women and the concerns of ordinary citizens into the decision making process. Long before Cairo -- advocacy groups and ngos have been working to expand access to health care and other desperately needed services -- and holding governments accountable for meeting those needs.

The contributions of the ngos were critical to building the historic consensus that was formed at Cairo. And the progress that we've made since could not have been made without their hard work and commitment. But let's not forget perhaps their greatest contributions. Strengthening the institutions of civil society that are so vital to our democratic freedoms.

If we are to meet the goals of Cairo -- and advance the lives of women and families around the world -- then we can only do so walking down this path together -- as partners. Governments, ngos, grass roots advocates -- and especially our young people.

The commitments we make here today are critical to the future of this planet. We just have to look into the faces of the young people who are joining us here to see the extraordinary promise of that future -- and also its great challenge. One third of the world's population -- two billion people -- will soon be under the age of 15 -- and starting to enter their reproductive years.

Will they have the freedom and the information to make wise choices about their lives families? Will they have the opportunity to grow up healthy, and educated, and be able to live up to their God-given talents? Will we be able to end the spread of AIDS and other diseases? Will we be able to prioritize our resources to close the gaps in health, and education, and opportunity, that continue to threaten the progress of every nation? It's up to every one of us.

I want to end with a story about Kusum Singh, a young Indian girl who was married at the age of 13 to an abusive, illiterate husband. "At the age of 15, I decided I had no future," she said. So she decided to take more control of her life. When elections for community health workers were held -- she stood for election, and won. But to come out of her home and work in the village, she had to take a courageous step: take off her veil. She said the biggest challenge in her health care work was to get other women out of their homes. "First two joined, then four, and before your eyes, we became a group." She says she now has the capacity to mobilize 250 women "to walk with me" toward a healthier life.

It is up to all of us here -- government leaders, non governmental organizations, and advocates -- to help women like Kusum around the world to gain control over their lives, and fulfill their God-given promise. We have already come a very long way since Cairo and Beijing -- by walking down this path together. We used to come one by one, daring not to speak out or raise our voices. Now the hopes and dreams of women are recognized as never before; and in more and more nations, women are calling for their rights -- including reproductive rights -- to be recognized. But our work is not over until the day when every young person -- in every community -- can stand up and say "I have a future."

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For the first time, "the basic rights of all couples and individuals to decide freely and responsibly the number, spacing and timing of their children" were affirmed as universal human rights.

Out of this new framework came a bold, activist agenda -- challenging each participating country to meet specific goals over the next 20 years. Cairo's Plan of Action called on governments to ensure universal access to health care -- including reproductive health care services -- by the year 2015; to dramatically reduce infant and maternal mortality; and to provide universal access to education -- with a particular emphasis on ensuring girls participation in school. Reaching these goals -- it was agreed -- would have the most impact on a woman's ability to freely control her life -- to make wise choices -- and to be able to contribute more fully to the life of her family, her community, and her country. *life*

And I'm here today to re-affirm my own country's deep commitment to reaching the goals of the Cairo Conference.

Cairo placed ngos-- and civil society -- at center of this work. The 4,000 ngos attending Cairo vastly increased their visibility and participation -- bringing those representing civil society into the center of discussions. They helped set the agenda; and craft the language of the Plan of Action. Their participation was viewed -- and continues to be seen -- as the single most important ingredient in fulfilling the goals of the conference.

Perhaps most importantly, participants in Cairo developed a common language, and common vision. And it's that consensus -- around some of the most difficult issues we face -- that has enabled us to make important strides forward. Cairo -- even as it grappled with the most difficult of personal and political issues -- was seen as synonymous with spirit of inclusion, cooperation and consensus. The conference recognized the importance of creating an ethical framework of justice and opportunity, which led to a broad vision that places human rights and human dignity -- not demographic goals and numbers -- at the top of the agenda. Its principles were grounded in a strong sense of community and common purpose; and an aversion to the tactics of coercion and force. And it was built on a universal agreement that all people have the right to social justice and equality -- and that it's everyone's responsibility to ensure citizens basic human rights. *around the women's reproductive rights* *Share opportunity* *reproductive health services play a pivotal role in achieving their goals*

At the closing of the Cairo Conference -- the Honorable Gordon N. Billney, MP from the Australian Delegation noted: "Our actions here will change the world." And he was right.

Here today, almost five years later, we celebrate what we've accomplished. Most nations -- thanks in large part to the involvement and participation of ngos -- no longer accept targets, incentives, or coercion. Instead, they are using integrated approaches that make services, education, and quality of care central elements. (India dropped numerical targets -- and is working on major project in north that integrates family planning with maternal and child health services. Several countries -- particularly in Africa -- have reorganized reproductive health programs to reach more young people.)

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(Susan Davis)

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As a result of this work, millions more couples around the world have adopted family planning. Thousands more health workers are active worldwide. Fewer mothers are dying as a result of pregnancy related complications. And thanks in large part to ngos -- governments from Denmark to India, the Netherlands to Uganda -- are increasing their financial investments in women's health -- including reproductive health services.

We are also making strides in empowering women, and giving them the tools to advance in society. More and more women are getting small loans -- and starting up their own businesses. Women's rights are being strengthened; laws against domestic violence are being passed; and women's participation in the political process is moving forward -- reflected in the dramatic rise in women being elected to office in countries where their voices have long been silent.

I've seen firsthand how these efforts are changing women's lives and children's lives for the better. I've have had the opportunity to visit health centers all over the world -- where family planning is saving lives -- by decreasing the abortion rate -- and helping women gain authority and dignity in their own lives. I've also seen firsthand how programs that expand educational and economic opportunities for girls and women improve the quality of life not only for their families, but for their villages, and for their nation.

** I'll always remember going to a maternity hospital in Salvador de Bahia in Brazil, where I saw men and women getting information they would need to enable them to make wise choices about planning their families. I saw mothers cradling their new born babies in the hallways as they stood in line for their check-ups. I saw young pregnant women, waiting for their pre-natal check ups, and infants getting their immunization shots. I saw parents being taught what to feed their young children, and how to care for them. And I saw those who were sick, and in pain, or were dying -- because they had not received quality health care. Even here, in a predominantly Catholic country, there is a growing recognition that family planning saves lives.

** At a small clinic in Nepal, I saw a safe home delivery kit that is given to expectant mothers. Inside is a bar of soap, twine, wax, a plastic sheet, and a razor blade. Its purpose is to reduce major causes of maternal and neonatal death -- by promoting clean hands, clean surfaces, and clean umbilical care. Part of the "Save Motherhood" initiatives, these kits teach us about the importance of investing in prevention.

** Just a few months ago, in Antigua, Guatemala, I announced a new program -- between the minister of education and the United States -- that will expand girls education in Guatemala -- particularly among the Mayan population. Another program that gives small scholarships to girls -- about \$5 a month -- has resulted in a dramatic decline in the dropout rate for girls -- only one percent -- compared to the national dropout rate for girls of 30 percent.

We know that investments in education are the single most important investment a country can make in its future, and the future of its people. Among other benefits, higher levels of women's education are strongly associated with lower infant mortality and lower fertility. And in poor countries, every additional year of a woman's schooling is associated with a 5-10% decline in infant deaths.

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Every country here should strengthen its commitment to expanding access to education for women and girls. Progress is simply not possible without that investment.

** We've also seen how efforts to build democracy around the world can lead -- among other things -- to a greater understanding of fundamental human rights. I met some villagers in Senegal who were beginning to learn about democracy by acting out skits. They learned how to stand up, give an opinion, discuss it, and then take a vote. The rudiments of democracy. That led them to talk about the importance of health and education for themselves and their children -- and how they wanted to end female circumcision. They took a vote -- and voted against that practice. And two men began going from village to village, telling people the Koran doesn't mention this rite, and it has no place in their children's lives. They petitioned the President. And now fgm is banned in Senegal. And other countries have joined them as well.

Success stories: We know that when governments and nogs support reproductive health programs and give women information and the tools to advance in society -- that lives are saved; and the quality of life improves. We know what works.

** In Uttar Pradesh, one of the poorest states in India, 10,000 new health workers are being trained to go door to door, to provide alternative contraceptive methods in order to cut down on the dependence on sterilization.

** In Kasakistan, Uzbekistan, and Kkyrgyz Republic -- where abortion rates are high -- there's now greater access to health care -- and use of contraception has increase by a third to a half. During the same period -- abortion rates have declined by as much as one half.

** In Indonesia, thousands of village midwives have been trained in life saving skills and innovative post-partum outreach programs. More mothers and babies are now leading healthy lives.

** In Bolivia, a program that trains women in remote provinces to identify birth-related problems has caused the death rate among newborns to drop to less than half its previous levels.

** In Malawi -- a community based program increased girls' primary school enrollment from 50 to 80 percent -- and the proportion of girls enrolling in secondary school rose by 27 %. Just a few months ago, Yemen adopted a national strategy for girls' education -- including eliminating school fees for girls.

** In Nigeria -- women's health organization shave formed over 60 "100 Women's Groups" -- which in turn have mobilized over 120,000 women to vote -- while at the same time increasing their use of family planning and reproductive health services.

** In Nepal last year -- more than 85,000 women have completed legal rights and advocacy training -- and as a result, nearly 1,000 advocacy groups have been formed.

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** In Thailand, a vigorous campaign involving brothels raised condom use to over 90% -- and the number of patients with STD and AIDs has dropped dramatically.

In Kenya, Ghana, and some South American countries -- male-only clinics are beginning to appear -- making joint decision making about families and health a more common occurrence. And I want to underscore here how important it is that decisions about family should be made by couples together, and I hope that these pioneering programs that encourage men to get involved will spread far and wide.

There's been Progress in United States as well.

** I'm also pleased to report successes in my own country. After moving in the wrong direction for years -- we're making headway. Thanks to broad-based strategies and community-based programs, teen pregnancies and teen sexual activity is going down. Unintended pregnancies are down. Abortions are down by a full 12 percent.

** We know that contraception reduces the probability of having an abortion by 85% -- and every year, US family planning programs prevent 1.2 million unintended pregnancies -- and over 500,000 abortions in America. And we have seen the same results the world over.

** Title X -- our government's funding for family planning services -- has increased by \$12 million -- and we're continuing to work with a wide range of groups and advocates to make abortion safe, legal, and rare.

** We've also been leaders -- over the past 30 years -- in providing international support for family planning and other activities that promote women's health and status around the world.

Since Cairo -- support for population activities and programs have increased significantly. In 1995 -- foundations provided approx \$88 million for international population activities. Since Cairo -- USAID has committed more than \$3 billion to programs in population and reproductive health in developing countries -- and \$2.5 billion more to programs that promote women's advancement in economic, social, legal and political rights. As a result -- well over 5 million couples in developing world now use family planning; thousands of health workers are being trained in over 20 countries; and there's been a dramatic reduction in infant mortality rates.

** I'm also proud that we've passed a violence against women act. Domestic violence is the most rampant violation of human rights in the world -- and we must do everything we can to end it. We're also working with governments of Italy and the Ukraine -- and as a result of a 1998 presidential directive -- to strengthen our response to trafficking of women and children.

But we face major obstacles as well. Millions of Americans aren't covered by health insurance -- and can't afford basic health care -- including family planning. While the CHIP program is seeking to cover up to 5 million uninsured children -- millions more are not covered -- and go without basic care.

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We know what works. It's our job to make sure successful programs are working in every community; in every country around the world. We must continue to press for the resources necessary to do the job. We must continue to build partnerships -- and bridges to further the goals of Cairo. And we must continue to reach out and expand the circle of leaders and advocates who will promote the goals of the Cairo Conference.

The challenges ahead are daunting -- even as we make progress in so many fronts.

500,000 women still die every year -- one every minute -- from pregnancy related causes.

20 million unsafe abortions occur every year -- resulting in tens of thousands of deaths -- and millions of disabilities.

AIDs in 2020 will be the single largest cause of adult death from infectious diseases. In Botswana today -- life expectancy has dropped from 61 years to 47 years. More than 8 million children have lost one or both parents to AIDS since the epidemic began.

Of the 960 million illiterate adults in the world today, two-thirds of them are female.

No nation can hope to succeed in our global economy if half of its people lack the opportunity and the right to make the most of their God-given promise.

Too many women and children are still trapped in an endless cycle of poverty -- perpetuated by inadequate health care, poor access to family planning, limited education; or trapped inside social constructs that impoverish their spirit and limit their dreams.

Too many women are unable to participate in the economic lives of their countries because they cannot get credit on their own to start small businesses;

Too many women live in fear of violence at the hands of family members; for them, home provides no refuge, the law no protection; the public opinion no sympathy.

Too many women, especially those who are poor and less educated, are unaware of their legal rights in the workplace; their rights to own and inherit property; their rights to vote and choose their leaders.

Daunting challenges -- but their solutions are in plain view. I know that the focus of this Conference is to assess where we are -- and figure out how to expand programs that work. I'd like to make a few suggestions as part of that ongoing dialogue.

First -- we must ensure our governments live up to the financial commitments they made in Cairo five years ago. I want to applaud our host country -- the Netherlands -- for being one of the strongest donor nations. The Dutch government has more than doubled its funding for population and reproductive health programs between 94 and 96. My own country -- while on target the first year with a financial commitment to ICPD for international population programs

reaching \$540 million -- has now fallen behind. We remain the leading donor nation -- but in 1998 -- all US funding for the UN Population fund was eliminated. And domestically -- federal funding for reproductive health services has fallen in real terms.

Along these lines -- I am pleased that my husband, President Clinton, has in his budget for the year 2000 a proposed \$25 million voluntary contribution to the UN Population fund. This money would help women and couples all over the world have the right --reaffirmed in Cairo -- to "decide freely and responsibly the number and spacing of their children, and to have the information, education, and means to do so." I believe that the restoration of US funding to UNFPA would send a strong signal that the US continues to be committed to supporting internationally agreed approaches to population growth. 179 countries (who joined the consensus in Cairo) can't be wrong.

Second, we must focus those often limited resources in places where they can do the most good. Perhaps the most neglected dimension of reproductive health worldwide is the unacceptable number of deaths related to pregnancy. Despite successes under the more than a decade of work of the "Safe Motherhood Initiative" -- in the last 12 years some seven million women or more have died from pregnancy complications, and millions more lives have been ruined unnecessarily. It is not acceptable that so little funding has been invested in ending this ongoing tragedy -- or that that the political will for change remains virtually non-existent. The fact that 600,000 women die every year due to pregnancy related causes is only made more tragic by the fact that we know how to prevent these deaths and injuries. We must also recognize that maternal mortality points up the enormous health disparity between rich and poor countries -- and should give urgency to our work in ~~improving economic development initiatives.~~

Third, investing in civil society must remain a top priority if we are going to make progress on any of these fronts. Unfortunately, too many governments still stifle the work of non governmental agencies. The experience in my own country demonstrates the invaluable work they do not only in expanding health services to those who need them -- but to promote the well-being of women and children. We could not make the progress that I've talked about today without their support.

Each government here today was encouraged to bring an NGO representative as a member of its delegation. I'm pleased to know that most have done so. But I would challenge those of you who did not to understand that not listening to the voices of your citizens will only add to the difficult talks ahead -- even for wealthy nations -- to provide the services your citizens need to survive and thrive, and for your nations to move forward. To those who have make strong partnerships with ngos -- I hope you use this conference to continue to strengthen those alliances, and to share your experiences with others committed to the plan of action.

Perhaps our greatest challenge is to continue to strengthen the common ground upon which we can all stand, as we push for greater access to reproductive rights -- and strengthen the movement toward universally recognized human rights across the globe.

I recognize, as you all do, that there will never be full agreement on some of these issues, because they go to the heart of our personal, political, and religious beliefs. And that there are people of good faith on all sides of these issues. Yet I also believe that there is more that we hold in common than what drives us apart.

First, I think we can all agree -- and Cairo confirmed -- that governments and ngos have a basic responsibility to give their citizens the tools of opportunity to lead full, productive lives -- tools like education, health care, and job opportunities. But I think we could also agree that there is also a basic right of couples to decide freely and responsibly -- without government interference or coercion -- to bring a child into the world. Coercive methods -- whether it's forcing women to have children -- or denying them the right not to -- are not, in the end, effective strategies. But more importantly, they are an affront to our fundamental notion of respect for human dignity and personal integrity.

Second -- I think we can all agree -- and Cairo confirmed -- that violence, harassment, and intimidation have no place in our health care agenda -- or in our lives. In my country, that means, in part, that we must end the violent attacks on abortion clinics -- and the doctors who perform them. But there is a more universal principle as well. That there should be an end to forced abortions or sterilizations. An end to fgm practices. And an end to domestic violence and all other forms of violence against women. Depriving women of their basic rights to reproductive health -- including family planning -- is a violation of their human rights -- and does violence to women's ability to make informed, free decisions about their lives and the lives of their family.

And third. I know that we can all agree -- and Cairo confirms -- that all children brought into this world should be wanted and cared for. That means that we should do everything in our power to make access to reproductive health universal -- and abortions rare. But more -- we should commit ourselves to opening up the doors of opportunity and freedom that ensures every citizen the opportunity to live up to his or her God-given promise.

Our efforts to date -- and over the next 15 years -- are critical to the future of this planet. As we stand at the end of a century, and the birth of a new millennium; and as we celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; let's renew our commitment to the advancement of all people -- and the securing of fundamental human rights for every citizen of the globe.

I want to end with a story about Kusum Singh, a young Indian girl who was married at the age of 13 to an abusive, illiterate husband. "At the age of 15, I decided I had no future," she said. So she decided to take more control of her life. When elections for community health workers were held -- she stood for election, and won. But to come out of her home and work in the village, she had to take a courageous step: take off her veil. She said the biggest challenge in her health care work was to get other women out of their homes. "First two joined, then four, and before your eyes, we became a group." She says she now has the capacity to mobilize 250 women "to walk with me."

It is up to all of us here -- government leaders, non governmental organizations, and advocates -- to help women like Kusum around the world to gain control over their lives, and fulfill their God-given promise. We have already come a very long way, by walking down this path together. We used to come one by one, daring not to speak out or raise our voices. Now our hopes and dreams are recognized as never before; and in more and more nations, women's rights -- including reproductive rights -- are recognized as universal human rights. But our work is not over until the day when -- no young woman or man -- anywhere in the world -- will be able to say "I have no future."

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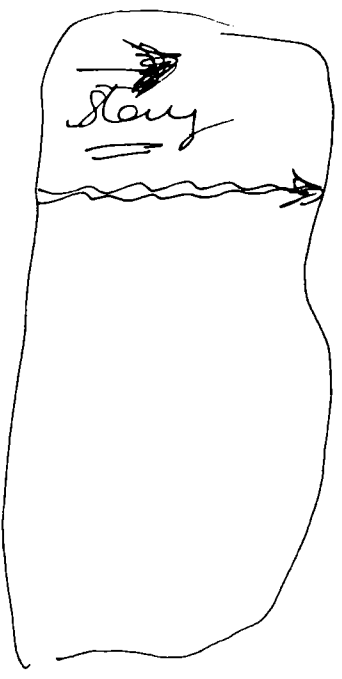
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