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REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT AND FIRST LADY
AT ROUNDTABLE ON EQUAL PAY

Presidential Hall

1:53 P.M. EDT

MRS. CLINTON: Thank you and welcome to the White House. Please be seated. We are delighted to have you here this afternoon to help commemorate Equal Pay Day, which is tomorrow. I'm glad to see so many both new and old faces in the fight for equal pay. And we know that this is a struggle that has taken some time. We've made a lot of progress, but I hope that we'll eventually see the end of Equal Pay Day, because the goal will have been achieved and we won't have to have any sessions like this, where we continue to talk about it.

We know that women who walk into the grocery store are not asked to pay 25 percent less for milk. They're not asked by their landlords to pay 25 percent less for rent. And they should no longer be asked to try to make their ends meet and their family incomes what they should be by having 25 percent less in their paychecks.

Many people have worked for the goal of equal pay over the years, and I want to thank some who are here, starting with our wonderful Secretary of Labor, Alexis Herman; as well as a great advocate for equal pay and women's rights -- has nothing to do with the wife he has or the daughters he's raised -- but Senator Tom Harkin, who is a real champion. (Applause.) Also Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton is here with us. (Applause.) EEOC Chairwoman Ida Castro. (Applause.) And I want to thank two local officials who are here, Lewiston Mayor Callie Tara (phonetic) and Georgia Representative Sharon Beasley for their contributions, as well. (Applause.)

I also want to say a special word of appreciation to Linda Chavis Thompson in the AFL-CIO; Gail Schafer (phonetic) in the Business and Professional Women; Susan Bianci-Sand (phonetic) in the National Committee on Pay Equity. Together, these groups have helped lead the fight for pay equity, and they will be organizing hundreds of grass-roots events around the country tomorrow.

In a few minutes, we're going to hear from our four panelists. They will be able to tell you in their own words why they are here. But when you have heard from Professor Nancy Hopkins, Sanya Tyler, Carolyn Gantt and Patricia Higgins, you will appreciate -- as I think all of us who've ever been in the world of word do -- the struggles and the challenges and the victories that they have faced, and the way they represent so many other women.

One of my staff members was home for the holidays last week, and there was a cartoon stuck up on the refrigerator in her house. I mean, that's where everybody keeps all of their reminders, their namesakes, their children's drawings, and all the important documents, at least in my experience. And her mother, without knowing anything about this day and this particular commemoration, had cut out a cartoon which showed six people sitting around a conference room table, all in suits, all wearing glasses, all men. And one of them announces, gentlemen, we must cut our expenses in half, so I'm replacing each of you with a woman. (Laughter.)

Now, clearly, things are not as bad as the cartoon. You know, they have to exaggerate to get our attention. And things clearly have improved. As a recent Council of Economic Advisors report makes clear, the gap between women's and men's wages has narrowed since 1963. But women still bring home only about 75 cents for every man's dollar.

And I think it's important that, despite this long-time inequity, there are still those who claim that this is a made-up problem, that any wage gap between men and women can be explained away by the choices that women make. And we all know that individual women, thank goodness, make different choices -- that women, for personal reasons, or other professional reasons, may choose a particular career or work pattern that results in lower wages. But this is not an accurate finding, and those who promote it should look at the entire picture and the studies that have been repeatedly which demonstrate the contrary.

Women at all ages, when you adjust for differences in education, experience and occupation -- as a recent CEA study report reminds us -- there is still a sizeable gap between men's and women's salaries that can best be explained by one phenomenon, the continuing presence and the persistent effect of discrimination -- sometimes in very subtle ways. And we'll hear about some of that from one of our panelists.

In fact, recently, an important report issued by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology -- which one of our panelists will discuss -- looked at pay equity among tenured faculty and found that women at the School of Science were discriminated against in diverse areas, including hiring, awards, promotions, committee assignments and the allocation of resources such as lab space and research dollars. This report showed that even women who supposedly break through the glass ceiling and reach the highest echelons of their professions still find themselves bumping up against some gender discrimination.

So I think it's fair to say that when you have some of the best scientists in the world taking a look at this issue in one institution and coming to these conclusions, and then that, in turn, supports the broader findings that have been derived from looking at society at large, we know that we do have a wage gap that we have to address. And it's not just a gap in wages, it's a gap in our nation's principles and promises.

So it's a great pleasure for me to be here with the Secretary of Labor and the panelists whom you'll hear from, and it's a particular pleasure to introduce the President, who reminded Senator Harkin in my presence a few minutes ago that until he became President, I always made more money than he did, and the wage gap went the other direction in our family. (Laughter.) But since I've been a full-time volunteer now for six and a half years -- (laughter) -- the gap is narrowing, even in the Clinton family.

So, please join me in welcoming the President. (Applause.)

THE PRESIDENT: That is the truth. (Laughter.) But Hillary didn't tell you the rest of the story. Senator Harkin, whose wonderful wife, Ruth, was also a part of our administration for several years, she has often made more money than her husband. And so we decided that maybe we should become part of a small, but vocal radical caucus saying we shouldn't stop at equal pay; we like it when our wives make more money than we do. (Laughter.) We have enjoyed the benefits of that.

I would like to thank Senator Harkin and Eleanor Holmes Norton for being here and for being longtime champions of this cause. I thank Ida Castro, our EEOC Chair, the local officials who are here and Secretary Herman, who bares a lot of the responsibilities for what we are trying to achieve for her work.

I'd like to make just a few brief points. Hillary has made most of the points that need to be made, and we all know here we're preaching to the saved in trying to get a message out to the country. But I'd like to point out as I tried to do in the State of the Union that the time in which we are living now in terms of our economic prosperity is virtually unprecedented. We had 4.2 percent unemployment last month.

I remember a meeting I had and a huge argument I had in December of 1992 when I had been elected but not inaugurated President, about how low we could get unemployment before inflation would go up. And all the traditional economists said, man, when you get below six percent, you know, you will just see what will happen. And the American people turned out to be a lot more productive, a lot more efficient; technology turned out to be a lot more helpful; we were in a much more competitive environment. So now, we have 4.2 percent unemployment, lowest rate since 1970, lowest peacetime unemployment since 1957, 18 million new jobs.

But we still have some significant long-term challenges in this country. We have pockets of America -- in rural America, in urban America; our medium-size industrial cities; our Native American reservations -- which have not felt any of the impact of the economic recovery. We still have substantial long-term challenges to Social Security, to Medicare. And we still have a significant fact of inequality in the pay of women and men.

And the central point I would like to make is that we should not allow the political climate or anything else to deter us from concentrating our minds on the fact that this is a precious gift that the American people have received, even though they have earned it. Countries rarely have conditions like this. If we can't use this moment to deal with these long-term challenges, including the equal-pay challenge, when will we ever get around to it?

That is the message I want America to send back to Washington. Yes, have your disagreements. Yes, have your fights. Yes, conduct your campaigns. Yes, do all this. But for goodness sakes, realize that this is, at a minimum, the opportunity of a generation, maybe more. And every single problem that we can take off the table for our successors and for our children is an obligation we ought to show them and get the job done. That's what this is about.

And those of us who are old enough to remember what the economy was like in the 1970s and the long gas lines, what it was like in the 1980s when we had the so-called bicoastal economy and my state and Senator Harkin's state had double-digit unemployment in county after country -- I'm telling you, when times get tough and then you go run and try to talk to people about problems like this, their eyes glaze over because even the people who would benefit, they're just trying to keep body and soul together. They're worried about holding on to what they have.

We have an opportunity now to make a better America for our children, for all of our children.

The second point I want to make is the one I made jokingly in the story about Tom and me having the privilege of living with women who make more money than we do. And that is that this is not just a women's issue. The women who are discriminated against often are in families, raising children with husbands who are also hurt if their wives work hard and don't have the benefits of equal pay. A lot of the women who are single mothers are out there working and they have boy children as well as girl children. This is not just a gender issue and men should be very interested in this.

I can say furthermore that I believe that it would be good for our overall economy. You know, you hear all these problems that they say it will cause the economy if you do this. All that stuff is largely not true. I mean, every time we try to make a change to have a stronger society, whether it's a raise in the minimum wage or cleaning up the environment or passing the Family Leave law, the people that are against it say the same thing. And we now have decades of experience in trying to improve our social fabric.

And America has had a particular genius in figuring out how to do these things in a way that would permit us to generate more economic opportunity and more jobs and more advancement. I'd like to note, too, a third point not in my notes, but Hillary made me think of it. There are all these people now who are out there saying, well, there really isn't much of an equal pay problem because it's almost exclusively confined to women who have children. And women who have children have to have more intermittent periods in the work place -- you've heard all the arguments -- and once you factor that out, well, there's no problem.

Well, I have two reactions to that. First of all, if you take that argument to its logical conclusion, we would be depopulating America before you know it. No one else has really figured out any way to bring children around, as far as I know. (Laughter.)

Secondly, if that is true, it still doesn't make it right. If you give the people the entire argument -- which I don't think the analysis supports -- but if you did, what does that mean? It means that an important part of the equal pay battle should be strengthening the Family and Medical Leave law, for example -- something I've been trying to do without success ever since we signed the first bill. It ought to apply to more companies, it ought to be more extensive, it ought to cover more situations. We've proved that we can do this without hurting the economy.

And if you believe that having children is a significant factor here, and if you believe as I do that's the most important work of any society, then why shouldn't we continue with something that's done so much good, this Family Leave Law -- to find other ways to do it, to find other incentives for flex-time, all kinds of things we could be doing if this is a problem.

Now, finally, let's talk a little bit about what I think we can do about this right now. Earlier this year, I asked Congress to pass two measures to strengthen our wage discrimination laws and to boost enforcement of existing ones. I asked Congress again to pass the $14-million Equal Pay Initiative that's in our balanced budget to help the EEOC identify and respond to wage discrimination, to educate employers and workers about their rights and responsibilities. You'll hear some pretty impressive people talk about that on our panel in a moment. And to help bring more women into better-paying jobs.

Again, I ask the Congress to pass the Paycheck Fairness Act sponsored by Senator Daschle and Congresswoman DeLauro, which would put employers on notice that wage discrimination against women is just as unacceptable as discrimination based on race or ethnicity. Under current law, those who are denied equal pay because of race can receive compensatory and punitive damages. This new legislation would give women the same right; it will make a difference. It would protect employees who share salary information from retaliation. It would expand training for EEOC workers, strengthen research, establishing an award for exemplary workers.

We can do more. Today, I'm pleased to announce that we want to strengthen our legislation by requiring the EEOC to determine what new information on workers' salaries they need to improve enforcement of wage discrimination laws, and to find a way to collect that information. The new provision would call on the EEOC to issue a new rule within 18 months to gather, in the most effective and efficient way possible, pay data from companies based on race, sex and national origin of employees.

Addressing wage discrimination takes courage, as our panelists can tell you. It takes courage as an employee to speak out, to gather evidence, to make the case. It takes courage as an employer to recognize problems in pay equity, and take steps to remedy them.

Just recently -- let me just mention the experience of one of our panelists -- we saw this courage among the administrators and women scientists at MIT, one of our country's most outstanding institutions of higher education. Together, they looked at the cold, hard facts about disparities in everything from lab space to annual salary. They sought to make things right, and they told the whole public the truth about it, which is a rare thing. And I appreciate what they did. I commend them. I hope their success and their example can be replicated throughout our country.

Now, again I say, this should not be a partisan issue. It should be an American issue. And as you argue through these matters this year, I ask you, every time you are in contact with any person in a position to vote on this in Congress or influence a vote in Congress, ask them this simple question: If we don't deal with this now, when will we ever get around to it?

Thank you very much. (Applause.)

SECRETARY HERMAN: Thank you, Mr. President and Mrs. Clinton for your stirring words; but, especially, we thank you today for your leadership. Once again, the First Family is putting families first. And I know that all of us would agree that the issues of equal pay and employment opportunity are clearly family issues. In my mind, my way of thinking about this issue, the whole question of the Equal Pay Day is really a day about paychecks and reality checks. And the reality is that we still have pay discrimination in our country.

It is wrong, as we go into the new century, for women to still earn 75 cents for every dollar that is earned by a man. And I must tell you, as the First Lady was making her opening comments, I couldn't help but think to myself, I have yet to go into a grocery store to pay a dollar for a loaf of bread and to have the store clerk look at me and say, "Oh, excuse me, you're a woman, you only have to pay 75 cents." It just doesn't work that way. I think we all know that.

The fact of the matter is, women in this country have to pay the same amount for goods and services, so we should be paid the same amount for the work that we do. We all know that we need to have stronger enforcement of our laws. And what the President has announced today will clearly put us on a more direct path to do that. But we also need to build awareness, because this is not an abstract challenge. This is a very real issue; it is as real as the women who are with us today, the stories that we will hear.

And I want to begin this dialogue, on behalf of the President and the First Lady, by asking each of our panel members today to give us a very brief comment as to why this issue is important to you, from your perspective. And I'd like to begin the dialogue with you, Nancy.

Nancy Hopkins is a professor from the Massachusetts Institute of

Technology.

PROFESSOR HOPKINS: Thank you very much, and thank you so much for this opportunity. I am a molecular biologist and a professor at MIT. And over the past five years, I was very fortunate to be involved with 15 other tenured women in the School of Science in an extremely successful and collaborative, and happy, effort to address the question of equity, including salary equity, for women.

And what was remarkable about it, as Mr. and Mrs. Clinton said, was that in contrast to many of these stories, they addressed it in a very positive way, turning people's lives around. And it has had an impact that we never thought about at all. We were just thinking about our own problem.

SECRETARY HERMAN: Thank you very much, Nancy.

Mrs. Gantt, can we turn to you? Carolyn Gantt is a clerk with one of our senior programs here in the nation's capitol.

MRS. GANTT: My name is Carolyn Gantt, and I am a retired mother of seven children. I found inequity in pay between men and women doing the same job, with the same education and experiences, have made it necessary in my golden years to work part-time in order to survive. I saw men who started out with me, at the same level. They received more promotions, more pay, and more training, than I did.

SECRETARY HERMAN: Thank you very much, Mrs. Gantt.

And Trish Higgins is here from Cleveland, Ohio. Trish is a nurse from Cleveland. Trish?

MS. HIGGINS: It's really, really great to be here. As you've just been told, I'm a nurse. I work in Cleveland; I've had 23 years of nursing experience, in geriatrics, pediatrics. I currently work in rehab nursing, primarily with spinal cord-injured patients, and the care of these patients and their families is complex. There are many medical and social issues, and that requires, from all of us nurses, a pretty extensive background of knowledge and skills, and we bring this to our work every day.

I think that the work we do is obviously key to the care hospitals provide. It can't be done without us, and yet I think that our work has been traditionally undervalued, and underpaid. And that's why I'm here today.

SECRETARY HERMAN: And lastly, Sanya Tyler. Sanya is the head of the women's basketball team, she's the coach at Howard University here in Washington, D.C. Sanya, thank you for coming in. (Applause.)

MS. TYLER: I must apologize, I'm very hoarse. I think it was the change in weather from California back to Washington. But in 1991, I filed a Title IX discrimination lawsuit against Howard University. And it's just not about Howard University. It's about being in an untraditional sport, and being a head coach and to have, at that time, an opportunity to be successful -- which we were -- and to not be rewarded for it.

Not only was I not rewarded for it, it was ignored. Ignored to the point of my counterpart being hired and being paid four times the salary that I was making. And I think somehow I made the same excuses that many women make when they're too embarrassed to identify with inequity. We somehow feel it's our fault or something we didn't do, or some accomplishment we didn't reach, or some value we didn't possess. But that's not the case.

And I'm here today with my hoarse voice because this is so important an issue not just to coaches, but to the nation, to women; not just a protected population, but all population. And we have a real issue -- the President has indicated that we have a real national issue that has to be addressed. I addressed it, and as a result of the lawsuit I had the landmark decision, an award by jury of $2.39 million. Fortunate for me I'm still at the same institution and the situation is so much better now. (Laughter and applause.)

THE PRESIDENT: I would like to just start. We're going to do a little roundtable and just give the participants a chance to answer a few questions and amplify on their remarks. And taking account of Sanya Tyler's voice problems, I still want to ask her one question, because obviously the situation at Howard and the situation at MIT were resolved in different ways.

After you won the lawsuit, did you feel that the administration treated you and other people who were in the same situation fairly? Did you feel like that the work environment was worse, and did you believe that the program also began to get more support, as well as on the wages? Was Title IX and the other efforts you made, did you get more support for the program as well as for income?

MS. TYLER: Well, I can say and I'm very proud of what Howard University has done since the lawsuit. We did take the push to get us on our feet. But since then, the administration, even though it has changed, did begin a process of healing itself. And we added new sports, we fortified the sports that existed. We came into a new era under our current president who, clearly, from day one made it exceptionally clear to all that women had a place in his administration, that females at his campus had a significant role in the development, growth and the leadership pattern of the university. And our program has grown. I have grown as an employee of the university, and we have now reached what I consider to be a plateau of footing.

Are we where we should be? I don't think there is an institution in the nation that is where they should be. But we are so much further down the line than we were at that time.

MRS. CLINTON: I'd like to follow up on that, since we're talking about higher education, and ask Dr. Hopkins, could you describe how this came about? You know, when both the President and I were speaking, we said that there are some who say that these are all choices and that there is no institutional, really, basis for considering pay equity as a problem, other than individual preferences. And once you've made that decision what you did during these five years and your recommendations and the results --

PROFESSOR HOPKINS: Yes. Well, I think that in terms of is this the result of choices that people make, I think what's unusual about our group of women is we had only 15 tenured women at the time we started five years ago. So after 25 years of affirmative action in the School of Science -- which is six departments -- there were 15 tenured women and 194 tenured men. So this was not terrific, okay? (Laughter.) But one of the things was that about half these women didn't even have children, so that certainly wasn't an issue. Many were not married, they had made a choice to have this particular life for whatever reason. So that really wasn't the thing.

And so the question was, you know, how did this come about and how did we get started. And what happened is that these women are so serious about science that they really didn't have much time for anything else. They were very unpolitical people. And the other thing is they're enormously successful. So if you were to look from the outside at these people you'd say, well, what's wrong here, because many of these women are members of the National Academy of Sciences, the American Academy -- 40 percent of them are, in fact. So these are the top of the line, so you wouldn't think there was a problem.

And most young women entered MIT as junior faculty believing there was no problem. And people, even myself, thought civil rights and affirmative action solved all that. So it was a very slow awakening of these 15 people as they progressed through their careers at MIT that something wasn't quite right. And what it was was a very subtle thing, you could hardly point to a single incident and say, that's it.

But what happened was that myself, one day I got very upset about a particular incident, and finally, after 15 years of watching what was happening to other women you finally realize something was wrong and it was this, it was this gender thing. And so I wrote a very strong letter to our president and I said, you've got to do something about this. And it was so strong that I thought I better run it by another woman and get her opinion -- (laughter) -- have her just delete a few of those extreme statements I tend to make sometimes by mistake.

So she read this letter and she said, I'd like to sign that letter and I'll go with you to see the president. And I said, you will? Wow. So then, I thought that was really -- so we decided we'd go and poll the others -- there were only were 15 of them, so it was pretty easy to do the polling. (Laughter.)

And when we went to poll them, to our amazement, we'd start the story and they'd say, where do I sign, before we finished. So something was wrong. But what I think, then, was amazing to us was, we then, being scientists, wanted to collect data to see whether the data would support what we sort of had really come to realize through our life experience to be true. But we didn't know whether it would, you know.

But the next thing we did that was really helpful was, we went to the higher administration of MIT and asked them to help us do this. And that was a very tense moment, and that was the defining moment. So there were two key moments: one was the group having power, this group of women, because this was all they had, this was us. And then the question was, how would the administration respond. And President Vest (phonetic) and Dean Birgeneau who was supposed to be here, but his plane was cancelled, he was going to come -- were just fantastic and supportive. And they said, just do it.

So I think it was a group of scientists as administrators and a group of women approaching a problem in a similar way. We went out, we got all the data, we measured everything up, we got the space, the lab space, the resources, we added data tables full of tables, lots of data. (Laughter.) And we had -- the President said to me the other day, he said, we're scientists, we looked at the data -- what could we say, but go with the data? (Laughter.)

So it is a very remarkable story. As soon as they have the data down in writing, down on the table, Dean Birgeneau immediately began to fix things and very quickly changed these people's lives. I mean, it was so easy to do once you had this thing happen. And you sort of wonder why didn't we do this before, and can this be a model for the rest of MIT, which is what MIT is now looking at.

MRS. CLINTON: You know, one of the reasons why the MIT story is so important and the way Nancy just described it is so telling is that a lot of these issues that we're talking about really are subtle, and they aren't immediately apparent. It's just that sense of unease or unfairness that you can't quite shake off, but you're almost embarrassed to follow up on what some of the other panelists have said to raise it because it is so subtle and you can't quite put your finger on it.

So the kind of work that was done by the 15 women scientists, with the support of the MIT administration, made a very important contribution to this whole debate, because they were able, with their scientific method, to get below the surface and really figure out what it is that was going on.

And I really want to commend MIT for doing that. And I hope it serves as a model not only for the rest of higher education, but for employers in all kinds of institutions around the country.

THE PRESIDENT: You know, the question that I wanted to ask, because this MIT thing is so unusual, is, do you believe that they knew it was going on before? And if they didn't know it was going on before, but all the women you went to had immediately related in the same way you did and signed up, how did it happen? Because I think this is something that data may not tell you. But I think this is what is really important, because there may be a lot of organizations out there where this sort of just creeps in, but the people now running these organizations don't know it.

And what I'm hoping is that -- it's not like -- it may not be as overt as it was when Carolyn was in the work force, so how do you think this happened? It's very impressive that the President said, okay, let's go do the right thing. But that raises the question of how did it happen in the first place?

PROFESSOR HOPKINS: Great question. And if everybody could understand what you just said, you would advance the cause of women a decade. And, in fact, I mean I think this is the last frontier of the civil rights/affirmative action process. We all thought that was going to take us to the top. And it didn't. It got us in the door, and took us to a certain point, but at the top, where the power really resides in these organizations, women haven't broken into that. And it's true in the universities, and it's true in the law firms, I believe, and it's true in many areas of life that we've heard from the people responding to us, which was overwhelming.

So I think, absolutely, it wasn't conscious, and I think part of it -- even the women themselves weren't aware of it. So, in our case, you know, you have one woman in your department, how can you judge what happens from a single case? Everything looks like her specific problem. It was when you had 15 who had lived through it, and the Dean of Science, who is Dean Birgeneau, who looked over the six departments and looked at these 15 -- he could see the pattern. When he talked to the individual department head, they couldn't see the pattern, because they were just dealing with an individual, because the numbers were so small.

But it's a really subtle thing, and it's a sort of unconscious gender bias that is small in each instance, but it accumulates to real pay. So even though it was very subtle, it added up to 20 percent pay.

THE PRESIDENT: Let me ask a specific question. Do you think -- if there was no deliberate policy to hire all these people at a lower salary, and then not to raise them at some point to a comparable salary -- and there was never a systematic policy, do you believe -- here's what I'm trying to get at -- is there a still, sort of in the minds of at least the men who are making these hiring or pay decisions, this notion that there's a marketplace out there, and it's a big deal for a woman to be a tenured professor at MIT? And, therefore, this was a market-based decision, this is what I can get this talent for, and this is what I'm going to pay? Is that what you think happened? And if not, what is it that you think happened?

PROFESSOR HOPKINS: I think that when that man goes into that room and determines those salaries, that he has a different view of it than if you put a woman in the room and determine the salaries. You have to have women share the power and determine the salaries with the men. (Applause.)

MRS. CLINTON: I want to move from MIT and Howard, and the world of higher education, to the world in which most women are working, and that is in jobs that are not often as well-paid or well-respected, and are not given the kind of support that the women who hold them deserve.

And so I wanted to ask Mrs. Gantt, you said in your opening remarks that you could see or you now know that throughout your working life men with the same or lesser qualifications, doing the same or a lesser job were given more salary and benefits than you were. Could you explain that to us and how you came to be aware of that?

MS. GANTT: Well, I had been on the particular job, the first one that I'm thinking about, I had been on that job for a couple years. I worked in the community so I knew a few of the people that were in power, the boards, what have you. And a couple of them showed me data, like they were, see what we do, this is what we do when we go to meetings. And, of course, I'm the nosey kind, so I read everything. (Laughter.)

So I read it and in those days they used to put your name down and your salary -- not the position, your name. So immediately once I looked at that -- and it was a small organization -- I knew, hey, he and I started together, I know his background and everything, and how come he -- huh? I'm doing the same thing, you know. (Laughter.) You know, you go through it. And that's how I really discovered the truth.

But then, like they say, when you get it, you don't really know what to do with it at first. You think about it and you sort of internalize it, and what am I doing wrong, maybe I need to go back to school, maybe I need to do this.

But eventually -- it took me about -- I was raising Cain, believe me. I was talking about it all the time. But I just got to the point where I actually insisted on going to the full board, since management wasn't doing anything, and saying, hey, I've been here, I did what you asked me to do, I did some things you didn't ask me to do, but they turned out beneficial to this organization -- and I wanted to know why I hadn't had a raise, promotion or anything and, yet, I see people come in -- and I don't like to knock anybody, but I know some of them are not doing what I'm doing and they're getting more money. Why?

And I got the promotion. But they you get to realize these people I'm talking about were five years ahead of me. Plus that, I became a pariah. And then when I went to another organization later on, in the District government, it happened, too. And it's very subtle in the District government. You really have to look at it hard. (Laughter.) And they try to make you think. You know, like, we have all these people here and all these women and they're not -- why are you. You know, like I'm something wrong? There's nothing wrong with me. I can understand. (Applause.)

THE PRESIDENT: Let me just this remarkable woman's case as an illustration of a point I made in my remarks, that this is something that imposes great economic cost on the society as a whole.

You have seven children, right?

MS. GANTT: I still have seven, but they're grown. (Laughter.)

THE PRESIDENT: And you're still working part-time? And how old are you?

MS. GANT: Do you really want me -- (Laughter.)

THE PRESIDENT: Let me ask you this. Let me ask you another question. You are -- I know I shouldn't have asked. (Laughter.) The reason I ask you is because you look so much younger than you are. (Laughter.) But let me ask -- the point I wanted to make is, she has been for sometime eligible for Social Security. Here's the point I want to make about the issue. You know we're having this big Social Security debate here now, and we're in an argument in the Congress about how to save Social Security. Why? Because the number of people over 65 are going to double between now and the year 2030. And the trust fund runs out of money in 35 years.

And for it to be stable, it needs to last for 75 years, but in addition to that, we need to lift the earnings limit for people who work when they're over 65, I think, so they can still draw their Social Security, number one. And number two, we need to have a remedial program to deal with the fact that the poverty rate among single elderly women is twice, almost twice the general poverty rate among seniors in this country.

Why? A lot of it is because of stories like this. So you've either got people like this remarkable lady who is healthy enough and, as you can see, more than quite alert, and on top of things, an energetic to continue to work on and on, or you have people who can't do that, and they are twice as likely to be living in poverty even when they draw Social Security.

This is another of the consequences of this. And so the rest of you are going to have to pay to fix this unless you just want to let it go on, and I don't think since we have some money to fix it now, I presume none of us want to let it go on, and we'd like to fix it.

But we should understand that none of this -- this kind of discrimination is not free to the rest of us as well. Just because you haven't felt it directly doesn't mean that you're not weakened and lessened because of the quality of life, the strength of your society, the fabric of it is not eroded by this. And that's the point I wanted -- I didn't want to embarrass her about her age, but I think it's important that you understand that this is a cost imposed on the whole society. And one of the big efforts we're going to make this year in this saving Social Security is to do something about this dramatic difference in the poverty rate. And it would be much, much lower if no one had ever had the experiences you just heard described.

SECRETARY HERMAN: Mr. President, if I could just add to that, as you talk about the pension gap, when you talk about 75 cents for every dollar, but the reality is when we look at the pension dynamics, you're talking about half of that. I mean, if you're lucky enough as a woman to have a pension -- by the way, only 40 percent of women have pension coverage -- you're only getting half of what a man gets if you're lucky enough to even get a pension. And so it's a very important issue, as you pointed out.

MRS. CLINTON: I'd like now to move to Mrs. Higgins, who has been a nurse for 23 years and I know from the work that I've done and my own experience with nursing that the nurses are often the ones on the front lines who determine the outcome of patient care. And we've seen a lot of cutbacks and downsizing when it comes to nurses, we've seen a lot of trained nurses being replaced by much less trained personnel. So there's been a big turmoil going on in the nursing world, and you add to that the difficulties that confront many nurses in terms of the pay and the respect that they deserve for the job they do for the rest of us.

It's a very complicated situation, and I'd appreciate it, Mrs. Higgins, if you could share your experience and observations about that.

MS. HIGGINS: One of the things that just struck me, listening to Professor Hopkins, I knew when I came here today that my issues were not my issues, they were bigger issues. But the similarities in our stories are really remarkable, really striking.

And I've talked a lot about this over the last couple days, thinking about this discussion today. I went into nursing with a lot of idealism, and it certainly wasn't to get rich. I never expected it. And it was only after years of kind of looking at subtle things, and realizing over time that -- here I am with two bachelor's degrees, and quite a bit of training, on-the-job training, and ongoing education, and really much of what we do on a daily basis. I mean, the nurses in my hospital are on Lifelight. They're in the emergency room. They're in intensive care. They're in labor and delivery.

I happen to be in rehab, we're at the other end of the spectrum, but those issues, with increased acuity levels in hospitals tend to involve more complex medical issues than they did. And of course, in spinal cord injury, we're dealing with a very devastating, life-changing event that affects not just one person, but the whole family and, in many cases, the workplace, and we're dealing with a disabled individual who then has to go on with their life.

And I think we as nurses are very much on the front line, not only dealing with acute issues, but with the long-term education issues and support issues that families need. And I just have, as I've gotten older and raised my own children and looked at their futures and my husband and I think about retirement -- gee, I don't have that much socked away.

I've begun to realize, why shouldn't I be compensated for what I do at the same rate that men are for similar jobs with similar backgrounds and similar responsibility? It's kind of a scary thing to do at first. It went against everything that I was trained as a nurse to believe -- we did this out of dedication. Well, dedication is great, but, you know, the bottom line is I've got a mortgage and I've got a family and I've got a daughter who has now chosen to go to nursing school. And I would love to see something better for her. She's a heck of a kid. She'll be a wonderful nurse. But I'd like her to be recognized for what she does. (Applause.)

SECRETARY HERMAN: One of the other questions that I wanted to ask, Mr. President, you raised earlier what's going on today in terms of the mind-set inside many of our institutions And one of the things that we know is the oftentimes we have policies in place today -- that's the good news, we didn't have that 20 years ago.

But what we're finding is that the practices inside these institutions don't necessarily support the policies and procedures. And so a lot of people have blinders on because they know now they have policies and procedures there that didn't exist before. So they think it's all working. But we know from the work that we're doing that the procedures aren't really being followed. And so it's the practices. And that's why the leadership from MIT and other institutions, to get in there and to do these self-audits to see how they line up is very, very important.

But maybe one final question that would be helpful, one of the things that we're proposing in the legislative effort is also tightening up on that it's okay to share salary information and not to have fear of reprisals from employers because of that. To what extent was this an issue for you, Sanya, for others who have talked about just how you got the data. The First Lady asked the question about how all of this got started -- but how much is the fear of actually sharing of the data and getting the information, how much does that still play into it? And what we're proposing legislatively, do you think that's going to make a big difference?

MS. TYLER: I do know that in my case the information was never really revealed until we went to court. I knew that the kind of individual that came in had to have an attractive salary because he came from the NBA. And I didn't really look at the comparison between he and I as being plateaued to college and professional until I was told that I had not played in the NBA. (Laughter.) And I said, well, is this the Wonder Woman syndrome, because if I did I would have had to have been the only one. (Laughter.) And if I had to be the only, then what are we talking about.

I found that fair-minded people make fair-minded decisions, but the one thing no institution is really kept sacred from is the mind-set of people who work there. If they bring those limited thoughts -- the limited scope, the lack of vision, the discriminatory, the biases -- they will bring them in and they will taint the most sacred of institutions.

And what I was doing with them -- you have to understand, I'm an alumnus of my school. You cut me, I will bleed blue and white. (Laughter.) The First Lady will bleed blue and white now, too. (Laughter.) That's right.

But I wasn't going to let them -- the individuals involved -- be my institution. I knew I was dealing with people issues. I knew once the umbilical cord was cut, that we were looking at real issues, employment issues. I didn't have to play in the NBA. I was a college coach. His NBA experience was not going to garnish him anything at the collegiate level.

I found that many of these people who came from professional ranks needed to be reoriented, because you can't waive college players. You can't cut them like that. You know, you have to retrench their thinking about education. We're building, at Howard, leaders for America and the global community. I took that sacredly.

So I'm not building NBA players, and neither are our men. What we're building is people who can go out and make a difference, whatever they do. And I felt that because I had been successful -- and I don't have the average program. Women's basketball at my institution is the most successful program at that institution, and has been from day one. (Applause.)

All I wanted -- for the first time, I used the word, I hadn't used it since I was a child -- and it was fair. You know, when you're playing tag, you can't cheat when you're little, because it's not fair. What was happening wasn't fair, and I couldn't find an adjective, a descriptive phrase, that could say it any better. What you're doing is not fair. And once fair was not going to be addressed and I wasn't going to get into a mud-slinging, I don't think going to the media and raining all over the place that you are is the answer, I felt that everybody has a respect for an institution. And I took them to the institution I thought they respected most, and that was the court. (Laughter and applause.)

But I can clearly tell you this in defense of Howard, because Howard is just a microcosm of what's happening in the real world. There were so many coaches, Mr. President, that benefitted from this lawsuit. There were many who kept their jobs, there were many who were allowed to practice at Howard that weren't extreme, like early in the morning or late at night. There were student athletes whose ratio with their coach was reduced from 15 to 1 to three to five to one. There were coaches who now did not have to rely on handshake or how their boss felt that morning as to whether they can stay employed; they now have contracts and have benefits in their contracts.

They now have incentives in their contracts. For the first time, athletics at major institutions across the nation was an employment practice. We no longer had to go with the practices of people, but the employment practices of institutions. And if that lawsuit generated anything, it generated more than concern, more than awareness, it generated real dollars. (Applause.)

SECRETARY HERMAN: Well, I think anything on the note of real dollars is a good way to end what's been a very stimulating panel discussion. I said at the beginning it's about paychecks and reality checks, and I think, Mr. President, we've had very important reality checks here today in the presence of these distinguished women and their stories. (Applause.)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much. Let me say on behalf of all of us, we're delighted that you're here. We especially thank Senator Harkin and Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton for their leadership, and we thank our panelists. They were all terrific. Thank you very much. (Applause.)

END 2:50 P.M. EDT

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release April 7, 1999

NATIONAL EQUAL PAY DAY, 1999

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BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

A PROCLAMATION

We live in a time of remarkable promise. Our Nation's economy is the strongest we have experienced in a generation, creating more than 18 million new jobs since 1993 and the fastest growth in real wages in more than two decades. American women have contributed greatly to this record of success; unfortunately, they have not enjoyed an equal share in the prosperity they have helped to create.

The typical woman who works full-time year-round earns approximately 75 cents for every dollar the typical man earns. An African American woman earns just 65 cents and a Hispanic woman earns 55 cents for each dollar that a white man earns. In the course of a week, this pay gap can mean one less bag of groceries, skipping a trip to the doctor, missing a rent payment, or not being able to pay for day care. Over the course of a working lifetime, it can mean thousands of dollars, a smaller pension, and fewer savings to provide for a comfortable retirement. And when a working woman is denied equal pay, it doesn't just hurt her; it also hurts her family. In more than 10 million American households today, the mother is the only breadwinner.

Americans have always believed in justice and equality. We have always believed that those who work hard should be able to provide a decent living for themselves and their children. If we are to live up to those ideals, we must ensure that women do not suffer wage discrimination. We must continue vigorous enforcement of existing laws, such as the Equal Pay Act and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act, so that no employer undervalues or underpays the work performed by women. To strengthen Department of Labor and Equal Employment Opportunity Commission efforts to end wage discrimination and expand opportunities in the workplace for women, my Administration has included a $14 million Equal Pay Initiative in my proposed balanced budget for fiscal year 2000. This initiative will provide more resources to identify wage discrimination, to educate workers and employers about their rights and responsibilities, and to bring more women into better-paying jobs. We will also work with the Congress to pass the proposed Paycheck Fairness Act -- legislation designed to strengthen laws that prohibit wage discrimination.

As we observe National Equal Pay Day, let us reaffirm our commitment to justice and equality in the workplace, and let us build a Nation for the 21st century where the talents, efforts, and hard work of American women will be rightly appreciated and fairly rewarded.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, WILLIAM J. CLINTON, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim April 8, 1999, as National Equal Pay Day. I call upon Government officials, law enforcement agencies, business leaders, educators, and the American people to recognize the full value of the skills and contributions of women in the labor force. I urge all employers to review their wage practices and to ensure that all their employees are paid equitably for their work.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this seventh day of April, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-nine, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-third.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

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THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release April 7, 1999

PRESIDENT CLINTON AND FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
HOLD ROUNDTABLE ON EQUAL PAY AND URGE PASSAGE OF
PAYCHECK FAIRNESS ACT WITH NEW WAGE COLLECTION PROVISION

April 7, 1999

Today at the White House, President Clinton and First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton will host a rountable with working women and business leaders to discuss the need to ensure that every working American receives equal pay and equal opportunity. A recent report of the President's Council of Economic Advisors found that, although the gap between women's and men's wages has narrowed substantially since the signing of the Equal Pay Act in 1963, there still exists a significant wage gap that cannot be explained by differences between male and female workers in labor market experience and in the occupation, industry, and union status of jobs they hold.

The President will reiterate his call for prompt passage of the Paycheck Fairness Act, which would strengthen wage discrimination laws and provide for additional training and public education efforts on equal pay. The President also will announce that Senator Tom Daschle, the chief sponsor of the Paycheck Fairness Act, will include a new data collection provision in the bill. That provision will direct the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) to: (1) determine what additional data is needed to enforce the federal wage discrimination laws effectively and efficiently, and (2) issue a regulation to provide for collecting this data. Finally, the President will urge Congress to provide the $14 million he requested for the Equal Pay Initiative in his Fiscal Year 2000 budget.

Paycheck Fairness Act with New Data Collection Provision

The President again will urge Congress to pass the Paycheck Fairness Act, legislation introduced by Senator Tom Daschle and Congresswoman Rosa DeLauro, which would strengthen laws prohibiting wage discrimination. The legislation will be reintroduced with a new data collection provision added. This legislation includes:

New Pay Data Collection Provision. This provision would require the EEOC to complete a survey of data currently available for use in enforcing federal wage discrimination laws and to identify additional data collections that would enhance enforcement of these laws. In addition, the provision would call upon the EEOC to determine the most effective and efficient means possible to collect pay information from employers and issue a regulation, within eighteen months, to collect pay data identified by the race, sex, and national origin of employees.

Increased Penalties for the Equal Pay Act (EPA). The legislation would provide full compensatory and punitive damages as remedies for equal pay violations, in addition to the liquidated damages and back-pay awards currently available under the EPA. This proposal would put gender-based wage discrimination on an equal footing with wage discrimination based on race or ethnicity, for which uncapped compensatory and punitive damages are already available.

Non-Retaliation Provision. The bill would prohibit employers from punishing employees for sharing salary information with their co-workers. Many employers are currently free to take action against employees who share wage information. Without the ability to learn about wage disparities, it is difficult for employees to evaluate whether there is wage discrimination.

Training, Research, and Pay Equity Award. The bill would provide for increased training for EEOC employees to identify and respond to wage discrimination claims; research on discrimination in the payment of wages; and the establishment of an award to recognize and promote the achievements of employers in eliminating pay disparities.

Equal Pay Initiative

Previously, the President announced a new $14 million Equal Pay Initiative as part of his Fiscal Year 2000 budget. The initiative includes $10 million for the EEOC to increase compliance with equal pay laws by providing training to EEOC employees to identify and respond to wage discrimination, increasing technical assistance to businesses on how to meet legal requirements, and launching an equal pay public service announcement campaign to inform employers and employees alike of their rights and responsibilities. The initiative also includes $4 million for the Department of Labor, primarily for a program to assist contractors in recruiting and retaining qualified women in non-traditional occupations.

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The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Thursday, April 15, 1999

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EEOC FOCUSES ON PAY EQUITY AT MEETING IN PHILADELPHIA

WASHINGTON -- In a rare forum outside the nation's capital, the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) held its monthly meeting in Philadelphia on Tuesday, April 13, to hear testimony from individuals representing a broad range of interests on the issue of discrimination in the payment of wages.

The public Commission Meeting marked another step in EEOC's on-going effort to solicit feedback from agency stakeholders and to share information in a constructive manner. "EEOC is committed to educating employers, employees, and the public about their rights and responsibilities in order to promote voluntary compliance and create workplaces which are free of discrimination," said EEOC Chairwoman Ida L. Castro.

Last year, EEOC received 6,200 charges alleging wage discrimination, accounting for 8 percent of all charges filed with the agency. Since 1992, the agency has received a total of 42,000 charges of wage bias. "Women and minorities deserve equal pay for equal work," Ms. Castro said. "We plan to step-up our efforts in this area through stronger enforcement of the laws covering wage discrimination, coupled with increased education, enhanced outreach, and better customer service."

During the meeting, the Commission heard testimony from two panels representing civil rights advocates, the legal community, economists, policy analysts, and victims of discrimination in the payment of wages. The first panel included: Janice Fanning Madden, Professor of Urban Studies and Sociology, University of Pennsylvania; Diana Furchtgott-Roth, Resident Fellow, American Enterprise Institute; and Molly Perdue, former women's basketball coach and sports administrator at Brooklyn College, the City University of New York. While the panelists agreed that wage discrimination in the workplace still exists, they differed in their views about the extent of the problem and the reasons underlying the gender pay gap.

Professor Madden advanced her theory that co-workers and consumers play a direct role in creating the motive for employers to engage in wage discrimination. "Gender and race matter in the workplace and cause wage disparities," she said, adding that government enforcement is necessary to ensure that employers do not succumb to the pressures of worker and consumer prejudice.

Ms. Furchtgott-Roth, co-author of *Women's Figures: An Illustrated Guide to the Economic Progress of Women in America*, disputed figures which point out that female workers earn 74 cents on average for every dollar earned by men.

"Such claims do not accurately describe women's compensation in the American workplace," Ms. Furchtgott-Roth said. Rather than widespread discrimination, the gender wage gap is caused by the differences in personal, professional, and educational career choices that women make, including whether to have children, she asserted.

Ms. Perdue pointed out the disparities in funding for men's and women's college sports coaches by describing her firsthand account of wage discrimination. Even though Ms. Perdue's job as women's basketball coach and sports administrator at Brooklyn College was substantially equal to a combination of two jobs held by men, she was paid thousands of dollars less than her male counterparts. Moreover, she received lower retirement benefits and worse terms and conditions of employment. After suing her employer, Ms. Perdue received a favorable jury verdict and award in 1997, and a court award in 1998. "It is difficult for individuals to prove wage disparities," she said in reflecting on her ordeal. "Better policies are needed so that victims of discrimination don't have to resort to lawsuits."

The second panel included: Mark Dichter, management attorney, Morgan, Lewis & Bockius LLP; Patricia Folino (president, Philadelphia chapter), 9-to-5 National Association of Working Women; Robert Sorrell (director, Philadelphia office), National Urban League; and Sara Rios, director of litigation, Puerto Rican Legal Defense and Education Fund. The panelists made the following recommendations to strengthen enforcement of the pay discrimination laws:

- Increase systemic litigation as well as individual suits filed under the Equal Pay Act of 1963 (EPA) and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.
- Highlight best-practices and pro-active efforts by employers to encourage compliance.
- Expand public education and outreach through partnerships with community and advocacy groups at the national and grassroots levels, as well as through media campaigns.
- File more Commissioner charges on behalf of workers who are unaware of their rights due to language or cultural barriers, or who are afraid to come forward because they fear retaliation.
- Monitor the pay practices of employers by categories of workers to deter biased practices.
- Encourage the use of mediation and lower the average charge processing time.

In addition to the EPA, which protects men and women who perform substantially equal work in the same establishment from sex-based wage discrimination, EEOC enforces other statutes which prohibit discrimination in the payment of wages based on race, color, religion, gender, national origin, age, and disability. These laws include Title VII, the Age Discrimination in Employment Act, and the Americans with Disabilities Act. Further information about the Commission is available on the agency's web site (www.eeoc.gov).

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The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission

DOL-EEOC NEWS RELEASE

U.S. Department of Labor
Office of Public Affairs

U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission
Office of Communications and Legislative Affairs

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
April 7, 1999

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U.S. LABOR DEPARTMENT AND EEOC AGREE TO BOOST ENFORCEMENT OF PAY DISCRIMINATION LAWS

WASHINGTON -- The U.S. Department of Labor and the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission have approved two Memoranda of Understanding that will enable them to better enforce the laws prohibiting discrimination in the workplace, particularly laws that prohibit discrimination in compensation.

The memoranda establish better coordination and communication between the two agencies and provide for training to increase staff awareness of potential compensation discrimination cases. These efforts will increase both the efficiency and effectiveness of investigations by both organizations.

"Our economy is the strongest it has been in a generation and yet a pay gap still exists between men and women," said Secretary of Labor Alexis M. Herman. "A woman earns only 75 cents for every dollar that a man earns. For minority women it's worse. African American women earn just 65 cents and Hispanic women earn 55 cents for each dollar that white men earn. The closer working relationship between our agencies will ensure equal pay, equal opportunity and equal dignity for working women."

"These memoranda will strengthen the ability of the Labor Department and EEOC to work together for the fair and effective enforcement of the federal EEO laws while also eliminating unnecessary burdens on the business community," said EEOC Chairwoman Ida L. Castro. "I am particularly pleased that the MOUs will help us in the extremely important effort to eradicate pay discrimination from the workplace."

The first MOU will strengthen enforcement of compensation discrimination cases by providing for the cross-training of agency staff on the equal pay laws, as well as facilitating referral and sharing of information on pay discrimination cases. Cooperation between DOL and EEOC is essential because each agency enforces laws which address discrimination in compensation.

The second MOU updates a longstanding agreement between the agencies on the processing of discrimination complaints based on race, color, sex, national origin, and religion, including pay discrimination cases, that fall within their joint jurisdiction. This MOU will ensure the efficient processing of complaints and avoid duplication of effort.

In addition, the second MOU will allow DOL's Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP) to seek monetary damages in the voluntary resolution of discrimination complaints involving federal contractors. This will eliminate the current need for complaining parties to file with EEOC to obtain damages. Only EEOC, however, will have authority to pursue damages through litigation.

EEOC enforces Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibits employment discrimination on the bases of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin, and the Equal Pay Act of 1963, which prohibits discrimination in pay on the basis of sex.

The Department of Labor's Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs enforces Executive Order 11246, which prohibits federal contractors from discriminating on the bases of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin, and requires affirmative action to ensure equal opportunity in the workplace. The Department of Labor's Wage and Hour Division enforces the Fair Labor Standards Act and other laws establishing minimum wage and labor standards.

Today, the MOUs have been transmitted to the Federal Register for publication. They take effect upon publication in the Federal Register. Both MOUs will then be available on EEOC's web site (www.eeoc.gov) and DOL's Employment Standards Administration Home Page (www.dol.gov/dol/esa). The text of the MOUs is available on the web sites today along with a three-page fact sheet.

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