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DOCUMENT NO. AND TYPE	SUBJECT/TITLE	DATE	RESTRICTION
001. schedule	Schedule for Hillary Rodham Clinton [partial] (1 page)	04/01/1998	b(6)
002. schedule	Schedule for Hillary Rodham Clinton [partial] (1 page)	04/02/1998	b(6)

COLLECTION:

Clinton Presidential Records
First Lady's Office
Melanne Verveer
OA/Box Number: 20032

FOLDER TITLE:

FGM [Female Genital Mutilation] Vital Voices

2013-0534-S

rc1522

RESTRICTION CODES

Presidential Records Act - [44 U.S.C. 2204(a)]

- P1 National Security Classified Information [(a)(1) of the PRA]
- P2 Relating to the appointment to Federal office [(a)(2) of the PRA]
- P3 Release would violate a Federal statute [(a)(3) of the PRA]
- P4 Release would disclose trade secrets or confidential commercial or financial information [(a)(4) of the PRA]
- P5 Release would disclose confidential advice between the President and his advisors, or between such advisors [(a)(5) of the PRA]
- P6 Release would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy [(a)(6) of the PRA]

C. Closed in accordance with restrictions contained in donor's deed of gift.

PRM. Personal record misfile defined in accordance with 44 U.S.C. 2201(3).

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- b(2) Release would disclose internal personnel rules and practices of an agency [(b)(2) of the FOIA]
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- b(4) Release would disclose trade secrets or confidential or financial information [(b)(4) of the FOIA]
- b(6) Release would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy [(b)(6) of the FOIA]
- b(7) Release would disclose information compiled for law enforcement purposes [(b)(7) of the FOIA]
- b(8) Release would disclose information concerning the regulation of financial institutions [(b)(8) of the FOIA]
- b(9) Release would disclose geological or geophysical information concerning wells [(b)(9) of the FOIA]

Clinton Presidential Records

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Assistant to the President and Chief of Staff to the First Lady
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FGM

- Vital Voices

Films

FINCA

- Microenterprise

Finland

First Ladies

First Lady's Conference – Chile

First Lady's Library

First Lady's Trip to North Africa

Arthur Fleming

FMLA

Food & Drug Agency

Food Stamps

Foreign

Foreign Affairs

Foreign Assistance

Foreign Assistance

Foreign Engagement

Foundations – A

- Philanthropy

ENCLOSURES FILED OVERSIZE ATTACHMENTS

20032

NARA 17236

Foundations II – B
- Philanthropy

France

France – Declaration of Human Rights

Frank Foundation Child Assistance International
- Philanthropy

1994 Frankel Winners – Bios

Fulbright Fund

Future Travel

Gag Rule

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Georgetown Women

Georgia Caucasus

Girls Education

Global Economy

PHOTOCOOPY
PRESERVATION

Vital Voices

FGM

The New York Times

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 18, 1999

Argentina Looks for a Way to Stem Illegal Immigrants

By CLIFFORD KRAUSS

BUENOS AIRES, Feb. 17 — With the economy slowing and street crime rising, President Carlos Saúl Menem has introduced a series of bills to Congress to stem the flow of illegal immigration from Bolivia, Paraguay and Peru.

Congressional debate on the legislation has not yet begun, but the bills have already created tensions between Argentina and its poorer neighbors. And they have prompted criticism from the hierarchy of the Roman Catholic Church and human rights groups that the Government is unleashing a xenophobic campaign to make scapegoats out of poor, defenseless people.

But by raising an issue with wide-

spread appeal, the ruling Justicialist party may succeed in putting the opposition on the defensive in a presidential election year.

The debate over the bills also highlights the growing rate of migration of peasants and workers across borders throughout South America, raising a potentially potent and divisive issue in not only Argentina, but also Chile, Uruguay and Venezuela.

The new laws would impose fines up to \$500,000 on individuals or companies who employ illegal aliens. They would give the Interior Minister the power to deport any alien sentenced to more than two years in prison. Anyone arrested for helping foreigners enter the country illegally would be subject to prison sentences

of 5 to 20 years.

Statistics about illegal immigration here are imprecise, and the Government and private groups disagree on the dimensions of the problem. But experts seem to agree that the Argentina has recently seen an increase in the immigration of poor Bolivians, Paraguayans and Peruvians, a phenomenon that dates from at least 30 years ago. Some analysts have estimated up to a million Peruvians live outside Peru, mainly in the United States, Argentina and Chile.

According to the latest Argentine census figures, the number of Paraguayans here increased, from 154,000 in 1960 to 250,000 in 1991. In that period, the number of Peruvians increased, from 5,100 to 16,000. Ex-

perts say the trend is accelerating as the regional economy slows in response to the Asian and Brazilian financial crises.

In the northern provinces, migrants frequently do backbreaking work like picking cotton and strawberries. In the cities they shine shoes and do other odd jobs. The alien migrants are rarely unionized, and they are generally paid much less than Argentines.

An opposition Congressman, Juan Pablo Cafiero, has called the move to tighten immigration laws "a racist campaign." He added, "What they are trying to do is blame our social problems on the immigrants."

According to Mr. Cafiero, the 70,000 or so immigrants in the Buenos Aires metropolitan region make up less than 2 percent of the workforce, so they cannot be blamed for an unemployment rate has risen slightly over the last month, after decreasing under the previous year. He said 2.5 percent of those found guilty of crimes were foreigners.

In explaining the need for new measures, Hugo Franco, a senior official in charge of immigration control, said the Government was merely interested in "protecting legal immigration and fighting illegality."

Officials said at least 60 percent of those arrested for petty crimes in Buenos Aires in recent months were foreigners. Critics contest that estimate and note that foreigners make up a much smaller percentage of the prison population.

President Hugo Banzer of Bolivia has publicly expressed concerns that the new proposals will generate anti-Bolivian feelings and asked for guarantees that the rights of Bolivian immigrants will be respected.

"We want Argentine authorities," Mr. Banzer said, "to prevent abuses and deportations."

8-Year Sentence in France for Genital Cutting

By MARLISE SIMONS

PARIS, Feb. 17 — A Paris court has sentenced an African woman to eight years in prison for cutting the genitals of 48 girls between the ages of a month and 10 years. The jury also convicted 27 parents, who received suspended sentences from three to five years.

The trial was the largest of its kind in France, which began to prosecute genital cutting in 1991.

Lawyers said the unexpectedly tough sentence was a new and clear warning to France's large African immigrant population that their painful tradition will not be tolerated here because it violates the law against "mutilation" of a minor.

The ritual cutting of young girls' genitals has become an issue throughout Western Europe as the number of African immigrants who practice it has grown, though France is the first country to take them to court. In this and previous trials, prosecutors have described the custom — widespread in some Muslim countries — as a barbaric habit that aims to control women by reducing or preventing their sexual pleasure.

The practice involves cutting off all or part of a young girl's clitoris and labia and sometimes stitching her vagina closed until marriage. Doctors testified in court that the procedure often causes infections and painful scars and may lead to lifelong health complications.

This case, on which the court ruled on Tuesday, has drawn much public attention because it was brought by a victim, Mariatou Koita, 23, a Parisian law student from a Malian family. She went to a Paris judge four years ago to accuse Hawa Greou, who she said had cut her and her sisters when they were children.

Ms. Greou, 53, who is also from Mali, acknowledged the cutting and apologized at the beginning of the trial, saying she had intended to perform a service, not to do harm. She charged \$30 to \$80.

The parents of the 48 children cut by Ms. Greou were tried as accomplices. Most were from Gambia, Mali, Mauritania and Senegal. Some argued that they had had their girls cut to make sure that they would get husbands when they grew up.

Handwritten signature or initials.

Major Israeli Writer Leads Protest on Orthodox Rally

By JOEL GREENBERG

JERUSALEM, Feb. 17 — Firing another shot in a culture war, the best-known author in Israel, Amos Oz, has signed up as a member of the Reform Jewish movement.

Mr. Oz showed his solidarity on Tuesday after a huge rally on Sunday by ultra-Orthodox Jews against Supreme Court rulings that they consider antireligious, including decisions that have given a measure of recognition to Conservative and Reform Judaism.

Responding to a newspaper appeal by Mr. Oz and other prominent intellectuals, hundreds of Israelis have contacted the offices of the Reform and Conservative movements to register as members, leaders of the groups said. The two movements are relatively small here, saying they have 25,000 dues-paying members.

The groundswell of sympathy is a backlash against the rally on Sunday, which many nonreligious Israelis saw as an assault on the judicial system and democratic institutions.

Mr. Oz, 59, a secular Jew with liberal views, is an influential voice among the nonreligious majority. "We wanted to show the Orthodox that there is another Judaism that is appropriate for us and to strengthen these movements, which are being

persecuted," said Mr. Oz's wife, Nily, who signed up with her husband and spoke for him because he was ill.

Through a series of legal battles, the Conservative and Reform movements have chipped away at the Orthodox rabbinate's control of religious affairs, winning court orders to register non-Orthodox conversions and to seat Conservative and Reform Jews on religious councils.

The inroads have brought a torrent of invective against the Supreme Court and Conservative and Reform Judaism from ultra-Orthodox rabbis and political leaders. The Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, Aharon Barak, has been labeled "an enemy of the Jews." Reform rabbis have been called clowns and leaders of a non-Jewish sect.

The ultra-Orthodox campaign, which culminated in the demonstration on Sunday, led Mr. Oz to muster other secular writers, academics and artists to publish an appeal on the day of the rally.

"Save Judaism from the enemies of democracy," the appeal said, urging Israelis to sign up with the Conservative and Reform movements as a show of solidarity. "The Judaism of these movements is closer to the positions of most of the democratic Jewish public."

Taliban Says Bin Laden Is Gone

By PHILIP SHENON

WASHINGTON, Feb. 17 — A top official of the Taliban, the armed religious group that controls most of Afghanistan, said today that Osama bin Laden, the world's most-wanted terrorist suspect, is no longer in Taliban territory.

"We do not know where he is," said the official, Abdul Hakeem Mujahid, a Taliban diplomat assigned to the United Nations who met today with senior American officials. "He decided himself to leave. He is not in the area of control of the Taliban."

An anti-Taliban alliance in Afghanistan said on Tuesday that its troops had sighted Mr. bin Laden in Afghanistan in recent days.

State Department officials said they had no evidence to support the Taliban claim about Mr. bin Laden, who has been indicted in the United States in the bombing of two American embassies in Africa last August.

But American officials said they

were heartened by the willingness of the Taliban, which had long harbored Mr. bin Laden, to distance itself publicly from the Saudi multimillionaire.

Mr. Mujahid spoke with reporters here today after meeting with Karl F. Inderfurth, the Assistant Secretary of State for South Asian Affairs. Mr. Inderfurth met in Pakistan this month with other Taliban officials to demand that Mr. bin Laden be expelled from Afghanistan and brought to justice.

While the United States does not recognize the Taliban as the Government of Afghanistan, it maintains contact with it.

Taliban leaders are eager to gain diplomatic recognition from the United States, and to avoid a repetition of last summer's American missile attack on an Afghan base camp used in the past by Mr. bin Laden. That eagerness has given the Clinton Administration leverage in pushing for his expulsion from Afghanistan.

The New York Times

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 18, 1999

file FGM

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The New York Times

June 18, 1996, Tuesday, Late Edition - Final

SECTION: Section A; Page 23; Column 1; Editorial Desk

LENGTH: 708 words

HEADLINE: On My Mind;
\$1 Billion Less, Please

BYLINE: By A. M. ROSENTHAL

BODY:

The time has come for Israel to do itself and the U.S. a major political favor -- volunteer to take less American economic aid, or none at all.

That strikes me as such a good idea that I wrote it three years ago. Israeli economists were beginning to talk about it quietly. I thought a column would give the idea a push with the Labor Government and it did -- right into oblivion. The reaction I got from Rabin-Peres people was that it was a typical piece of troublemaking for Labor from a voice of the right.

Labor's refusal to act is Benjamin Netanyahu's opportunity, made to order for his beliefs and personality. Given the choice, the Prime Minister-designate would like to focus his leadership on his economic path for Israel -- rapid privatization of the economy, cutting the trade imbalance and deficit, selling land owned by government, reducing government and political involvement in business.

He won't have the luxury of focusing only on that kind of thing. Peace with security is why Israel elected him, and that will be his chief job. And from left to right are political and religious groups that count on government money; they like things as they are, only more so.

Some of his advisers say he has enough on his plate without passing up more than \$1 billion a year. Others tell him that reducing or eliminating American aid fits in with his own goals of capitalist self-sufficiency -- so do it.

Israel gets about \$3 billion a year from the U.S. About \$1.8 is military -- loans to buy American weapons and technology. This money, and the special pipeline that goes with it, are essential to Israel. Alone, it would be hard for Israel, perhaps impossible, to compete with the scores of billions the Arab nations can spend on arms from all over the world, including Chinese missiles, and the weapons they buy from the U.S.

In an important sense, the military component of the U.S. package for Israel allows Washington to keep up its continuous flow of arms to the Arab nations. A militarily weak Israel surrounded by militarily strong Arab nations would be a security disaster for America. Without the Israeli ballast, American military credibility would sink fast in the Mideast.

About \$1.2 billion of American aid is economic. It is a grant used by Israel to pay interest on past American military loans. In a way it is bookkeeping --

The New York Times, June 18, 1996

money from the U.S. to Israel and back to the U.S. But it is a very nice kind of bookkeeping for the borrower -- grants to pay interest on loans.

Mr. Netanyahu does not think the Israeli economy is as thriving as Labor likes to make out -- too much debt and regulation, per capita income nowhere near its potential. And the \$10 billion in U.S.-guaranteed loans that Washington denied to a Likud Government but allowed for Labor is running out.

Still, the only reason to give or accept any economic handout is dire need, for a nation as for a person. Happily, Israel is not in that position anymore.

No country has done more for Israel than the United States -- good times, bad times. The best way to say thank you is to say it -- and then show you don't need it anymore. I spent Father's Day weekend at the home of a son and his wife in New Jersey. He bought me a steak dinner in a nice restaurant, gave me a computer lesson, whipped up a barbecue the next night and sent me home in a limousine. It was worth all that tuition and we both knew it.

For Israel, giving up the billion would be more than a political gesture and excellent public relations. It would -- or should -- free up that much more money for those who need it a lot more: poor countries, political prisoners, refugees. Or women abused by their own societies -- \$1 billion spent fighting female genital mutilation could save millions of young women and girls, many not yet born, from that torture.

Maybe that would not happen. Maybe the money would just disappear into some American budget morass. Still, giving up that billion it could use, but does not vitally need, would be a pride for Israel, just fine for America and one more bond of respect between the two countries.

Going by his record and beliefs, I think Mr. Netanyahu will do this thing during his time in office. Early would be lovely.

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: June 18, 1996



U.S. AGENCY FOR
INTERNATIONAL
DEVELOPMENT

January 4, 1999

file FGM
V
Great!
B

INFORMATION MEMORANDUM FOR THE ADMINISTRATOR

FROM: AA/AFR, Vivian Lowery Derryck /s/

SUBJECT: A new law banning female genital mutilation in Senegal

Summary: The Senegalese Government has drafted legislation banning female genital mutilation (FGM) and the Council of Ministers has approved the draft law. The next step is passage by the National Assembly. Though the law will not end the practice if enacted, it will provide further political and psychological legitimacy to those working towards consensual banning of the practice in the local regions. A USAID/UNICEF-financed Senegalese NGO, created and directed by an ex-U.S. Peace Corps Volunteer, Molly Melching, is responsible for this bold move by the Senegalese Government. The law was proposed to the cabinet by a petition signed by women trained by Ms. Melching's NGO, Tostan.

Background: Tostan has been working for years to improve the lives of women through community development training programs. Banning FGM had never been a target of Tostan's program; however, in developing a training module on women's health, the subject of FGM became one of several health issues discussed along with family planning and AIDS. The women concluded that FGM was one of the traditional practices which was most damaging to their own health. This conclusion led them to convince a significant number of villages in the region to ban the practice. With Tostan spreading its work to several other areas of Senegal and gaining the support of some of the most respected religious leaders in Senegal, the women proposed the law to the Government, and the Government has now sent the law to the legislature for approval.

Attachments:

1. BBC report
2. AP report
3. IRIN report

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1. BBC report
2. AP report
3. IRIN report

Clearances:

AFR/WA:Harry Lightfoot	<u>SM</u>	date	<u>12/30/98</u>
DAA/AFR:Valerie Dickson-Horton	<u>SP</u>	date	<u>1/4/99</u>
ES:Ryan Conroy <u>sn</u>	<u>RC</u>	date	<u>1/1/12</u>

cc:

DAA/AFR:Carol Peasley
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Wednesday, December 23, 1998 Published at 20:26 GMT

World: Africa

Senegal bans female circumcision



Campaign: Unicef has sought to protect girls

Senegal has banned female circumcision - the deliberate mutilation of female genitalia on cultural or religious grounds.



The BBC's Jane Little: "This is a bold move by Senegal"

The ban, overturning centuries of tradition, comes after campaigning and education programmes by Unicef, the United Nations' children's programme, and anybody found practising circumcision on girls now faces up to five years in prison.

Unicef estimates that around 700,000 women, a quarter of the female population, have suffered some form of genital mutilation, normally carried out between early childhood and the age of 16.



Rite: Many see the practice as vital

Up to 100 million women may have been subjected to the practice worldwide, principally in parts of Africa, Asia and the Middle East.

Circumcision involves cutting away the external genitalia, the clitoris and labia minora. The vagina is often partially sewn up in a procedure performed without the use of anaesthetic.



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Rahamat
Mohammad,
International
Foundation for
Women's Health,
Research and
Development: This
will make a lot of
difference

Supporters of circumcision say it is a symbol of purification, a cultural rite of passage. But opponents, including US President Bill Clinton's wife Hilary, describe it as an extreme form of oppressing women.

The World Health Organisation estimates that thousands of women die from infections, haemorrhaging or during child birth because of mutilation.

Dozens of villages across Senegal have renounced the rite in the last year after being told of the health hazards it poses.

In October Togo banned female circumcision - backed by up to 10 years in prison for offenders.

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Senegal May Ban Female Circumcision

By Chikeluba Kenchuku

Associated Press Writer

Wednesday, December 23, 1998; 6:32 p.m. EST

DAKAR, Senegal (AP) -- Senegal's government has drafted a law banning female circumcision, a controversial traditional operation performed on about one-fifth of the girls in this West African country.

The decision was made Monday during a Cabinet meeting and is expected to be passed through the National Assembly early next year, a government spokesman said Wednesday. Under the proposed law, offenders could be sentenced up to five years in prison.

The practice, called female genital mutilation by critics and typically performed on girls before puberty, ranges from cutting the tip of the clitoris to removing all external genitals.

Health problems include difficult childbirth, bleeding, disease and sometimes death. The procedure is often performed with unsanitary methods.

Female circumcision is considered an important custom in dozens of countries across Africa, Asia and the Middle East, where girls may be seen as unclean and undeserving of marriage if they have not undergone it. Because sexual contact is often uncomfortable or even extremely painful for circumcised women, some husbands believe it prevents their wives from being unfaithful.

The new legislation was quickly praised by Senegalese women's groups. But Fatima Sall, a prominent human rights lawyer in Dakar, said it would be difficult to root out the custom from some ethnic groups.

"It is a custom that dates back to ancient times," Sall said. "It's certain that some people will defy the law and continue to perform female circumcision. The success of this law will depend on how it is enforced."

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ATT3

To: George R. Thompson@AFR.WA
From: "Anne O'Toole" <aotoole@rrs.cdie.org>
Cc:
Bcc:
Subject: IRIN Update
Attachment: Headers.822
Date: 12/30/1998 11:38 AM

ALL 2

See Page 2

George,

Here is the IRIN update that mentioned the Senegal FGM draft law. It doesn't say too much. Please let me know if you would like me to do some searching on this topic for you.

Take Care, Anne

IRIN-WA Update 366 of Events in West Africa

UNITED NATIONS
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Integrated Regional Information Network
for West Africa

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SIERRA LEONE: ECOMOG artillery pounds hills near Freetown

ECOMOG artillery pounded hills overlooking the Sierra Leonean capital, Freetown, today (Wednesday) after security forces received what turned out to be false reports that rebels were in the area, Information Minister Julius Spencer said on state radio. The reports said rebels were descending from Fourah Bay College on a hilltop overlooking the city, AFP reported. It said ECOMOG had set up checkpoints throughout the city.

ECOMOG could not be immediately reached for comment.

A humanitarian source in the city told IRIN today that residents were anxious and the atmosphere was tense, especially in the heavily populated eastern section. The source said thousands of IDPs and Liberian refugees in a camp at Waterloo, 30 km south of Freetown, had fled following a rebel attack and some had reached Freetown.

Missionaries evacuate Makeni for first time

Elderly Xaverian missionaries in the Roman Catholic diocese of Makeni have been evacuated as a precaution because of a recent rebel presence 160 km to the east, missionary sources said yesterday. However, younger missionaries and the local clergy are to remain in the administrative centre together with the bishop of the area, Monsignor Biguzzi. The sources said two Xaverian missionaries, the Reverend Kasanzikie Kamanzi from Congo and the Reverend Jose-Angel Aguirre Abaitua from Spain, are missing from the Parish of Christ the King at Binkolo, about 10

. km. east of Makeni. Bishop Biguzzi said that the two probably took shelter following an evacuation plan adopted recently.

Three opposition politicians of l'Union des forces democratiques are being held in Boumdeit, a remote area 500 km east of Nouackhott, the Mauritanian capital. Human rights sources in Mauritania told IRIN today that the fate of the three men was likely to be decided at a ministerial council, which meets weekly. They have not been charged. The three, Ahmed Ould Daddah, Mohameden Ould Babah and Mohameden Ould Icheddou, were arrested on 16 December for saying at a mass rally that the government wanted to accept Israeli nuclear waste for dumping.

Lawyers in Nouackhott have gone on strike demanding the release of Icheddou, who is a lawyer, the sources said. The sources said the men had been denied access to their lawyers and family and Amnesty International said in a statement yesterday it feared the men risked ill-treatment because they were being held in an unofficial place of detention.

GUINEA: Official investigation opens into Conde's arrest

The Guinean government announced yesterday (Tuesday) that it was opening an investigation into the arrest of Alpha Conde, the chief opposition leader, who was detained last week, the French radio station RFI reported. Police accuse him of trying to cross the border into neighbouring Cote d'Ivoire which had been closed during presidential elections. The government said Conde would continue to be under house arrest in safe conditions adding that the criticism from various quarters of Conde's arrest was uncalled for. Conde is the leader of the assemblément du Peuple de la Guinee (RPG).

[REDACTED]

Senegal's Council of Ministers has approved a draft law to ban female circumcision which affects 700,000 women in the country, UNICEF officials told IRIN today. A petition advocating the ban was brought before the council, which approved the draft yesterday, by village women fighting to end the age-old practice. The draft has to be approved by the National Assembly before becoming law. Under the draft published in an official communique, AFP reported, people engaging in female circumcision - the removal of the clitoris and sometimes the labia - would be imprisoned for five years.

An effort to make the rural population aware of the dangers of the practice was begun two years ago by the NGO [REDACTED] under a UNICEF-supported social and literacy project in Malicounda, a village 70 km east of Dakar, the Senegalese capital.

WEST AFRICA: IFRC launches US \$157 million appeal

The International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) has appealed for 207.5 million Swiss francs (about US \$152.7 million) in 1999 for 23.5 million people in 60 countries needing humanitarian help, the Geneva-based body said in a statement received today (Wednesday) by IRIN. Of this amount 13.2 million Swiss francs (US \$9.7 million) would fund the repatriation and resettlement of 1.8 million Sierra Leonean and

Liberian refugees in Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone.

[ends]

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2 June 1998

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USIS GENEVA - MEDIA REACTION

News & commentary of US interest, translated from local media

BERHANE RAS-WORK: VOICE OF AFRICAN WOMEN

By Myriam Mewwly for Le Temps - 2 June 1998

A noble Ethiopian raised in an atmosphere of ritual and tradition, Ras-Work's resistance to being told what to do was her salvation. A product of two cultures, she heads the Inter-African Committee against female sexual mutilation, based here in Geneva.

"I never dared to speak of excision with my mother. Nor to speak of sexuality, or even worse, of pleasure. I would have been ashamed. Furthermore, our code of conduct forbade it."

At 58 years old, Berhane Ras-Work still doesn't know if, at birth, she was subject to "suna" -- the least-invasive excision, practiced in the mountains of north Ethiopia: a needle-hole in the clitoris, just deep enough to cause a drop of blood to appear. No mutilation, but at the age of 7 days, it is nevertheless a sexual aggression against "that which man defies" in a woman. She doesn't have confirmation, but she is quite sure she didn't escape: "The tradition is still alive today. So at that time, you can imagine ..."

Ras-Work has lived in Geneva for 28 years and, for the past 14 years, has volunteered as president and coordinator for the Inter-African Committee -- 26 member states working on African soil, with Africans, to eradicate the traditions of mutilation that victimize millions of women today. It is she who visits Cairo and Beijing, and of course New York and Geneva, to make sure these women's views are heard in the large international organizations.

"In the African villages I visit, I dress as I should, with the boubou and the turban, and I sit among them on the floor, my legs crossed." Then she asks, why do we do this to our girls? If the information campaign hasn't yet reached that village, the leaders take umbrage, the women turn their heads, and the midwife-excisers make signs of exorcism. If the good word has already

arrived, the locals respond in chorus: "We are now against this practice. Before, we thought it was for their good" -- for "hygiene", to take away "the masculine part of the girls", to protect a future baby from a potentially "fatal" injury, to assure "the girls' fertility". And above all, so that the girls have "less desire, and remain faithful to their husbands".

Here, Berhane doesn't mince any words: "Throughout history, and everywhere, men have tried to control women's sexuality."

Educated in the European way, Ras-Work didn't ask herself too many questions about the ancient tradition. But one day in 1972 or 1973, a couple of years after arriving in Switzerland, she saw a TV report that talked about excision, showed the barbarous act, and allowed the screams of suffering to travel the airwaves. "That tradition was part of my values. I was angry, shocked. Then I said to myself, 'We don't need to do this.'" She had found her battleground.

Injustice, in fact, has always troubled Ras-Work. She was born to a noble, Christian family of warrior patriots, rebels of the emperor Haile Selassie. "We had land but, due to imperial politics, no power," she recalls. Her father died during the conflict with fascist Italy, and she was raised to respect tradition by her mother and maternal grandfather, himself a chief warrior. "It was a moral authority, highly respected. I was afraid of him, I dared not look him in the face."

The family lived well, thanks to lands given over to farming. "One day, I recall, a woman farmer couldn't pay her rent because her husband had died. 'You must leave,' my mother said. I broke into tears and begged my mother to keep this woman. My mother agreed -- but told me that I really wasn't acting the way I should."

This child, unique among her siblings, was the last that remained to a mother anchored in custom. Four other children died very young, then the oldest at 13, of an early arranged marriage. That's what saved Berhane. "I asked to go to school in Europe. I was 8 years old. In order to keep me, my mother said yes. My grandfather gave his assent. Thus I became a

child of two cultures.”

Earlier, her mother had taught her rituals and traditions, and she learned to read via religious books. But now little Berhane started discovering the modern world. At 15, she headed for Addis Ababa and the boarding school created by the empress Mennen, “who believed in the virtues of education for girls”. Then she attended Jesuit university – 10 girls vs. 400 boys – with the goal of becoming a teacher. “We were very much in demand!” she remembers, laughing.

It was Terrefe Ras-Work, a young Ethiopian engineer educated in the United States, who would steal the heart of the beautiful Berhane. “My mother had to admit that the era of arranged marriages was over. But it wasn’t easy.” The couple settled in the capital, with Berhane opening new horizons for her young students. Then they had children of their own, two boys and a girl.

What about the “suna”? “I gave birth at the hospital, I was too afraid of traditional births,” says Berhane. “At the hospital, there was no question of rituals, nor of excision for Melaye.” Cut off from the family, Berhane started working for the Association of Ethiopian Women, participating in international meetings, and preparing herself, unwittingly, for her future mission. “By traveling, I was able to see that women’s problems are more or less the same worldwide.”

Berhane was 30 when she arrived in Geneva, where her husband had landed a job at the International Telecommunications Union – “for two years”. That was 28 years ago. Today her children are emancipated, and she is the joyful grandmother of little Yared, 13 months old. “He was born shortly after my mother’s death and helped me get through the grief. She had been the foundation that kept me standing.”

It’s clear to see that this Ethiopian has profound nostalgia for her country. She goes back whenever she can, despite the tense political climate. “That’s where I recharge,” she says, laughing. “I have a small house in Addis Ababa. There I meet my relatives, and we sit cross-legged

and drink coffee” – the national drink – “and speak of the past. I feel at home.”

She takes flour to make “injera”, the sour Ethiopian bread, which is eaten with “wat”, the spicy chicken dish tempered with yogurt and enjoyed with the fingers. It’s a national dish that expatriated Ethiopians enjoy melancholically.

But this well-off exile, like her compatriots, hasn’t managed to penetrate Geneva soil. “Here, one never gets in,” she laments. After arriving, nevertheless, she frequented the Institute for Development and eventually obtained a diploma; she was a founding member of the forum for career women; and she rubs shoulders with Genevans working at the U.N., even though no door to friendship with them has ever opened. “Perhaps it’s normal. The Swiss feel so attacked by our presence, and try to protect themselves,” she tries to explain.

So it’s no surprise that her best friend, Hiewot, is also Ethiopian. Hiewot married a perfectly cosmopolitan Swiss man who sings in the Grand Theatre chorus. Together, the two women study Geneva bistros to see which serves the best coffee, while talking of Ethiopia, laughing, discussing Mandela – “the hope of Africa” – whom Berhane admires more than anyone. Together they shop, like all women, and observe the Geneva street life. The other day, rising above their ancestral sense of modesty, and yielding to the encouragement of the most audacious, they took a big step: They went to see “The Full Monty”. And they really had a good time.

A LIFE IN THE DAY OF

The first call to Allah wakes me at 5am, when it may still be dark. I rouse my family and we go outside to the prayer mat. I pray to improve my life and the lives of other women in my village. Then I prepare breakfast. Only a few years ago, we would eat the remainder of the previous night's dinner, then walk for nearly a mile to collect water from the well and return carrying it on our heads — today we have a water pump close to our house. Afterwards I rub cocoa butter lotion into my skin and put on my *boubou*, a traditional dress that means I am very respected. I use henna to decorate my hands and nails.

We walk to the fields where we women work on the crops that we sell at the market. As president of the Women's Association, I organise the planting of onions, potatoes, cabbage, lettuce, peppers and fruit trees.

We help our husbands with the maize, millet, peanuts and corn, but the rains have been slow to come in recent years, so our crops have been poor. Now I often have to buy rice from the village shop.

About 12.30pm, women will bring rice and fish to the fields for lunch, which we'll all eat from a bowl. We used to have one big bowl of water in which everybody washed, but as we use our right hand to eat and our left hand after the toilet, and we had no soap, this was a health risk. Now we use two bowls of water at home, and if we're in the fields we pour water over our hands.

For the past two years we women have taken part in an education programme supported by Unicef and Tostan [a small local agency; the word means "breakthrough"]. It has taught us everything from reading and writing to information about hygiene: the importance of using soap and immunising our children, as well as the health risks involved in female circumcision. I had never been to school before, and this has taught me my rights as a woman.

Tostan's director is an American called Molly Melching. The arrival of Molly and the education programme was like a magnificent piece of fruit which became ripe just at the right time. Before, we always followed our husbands and did what they wanted us to do and said what they wanted us to say. If we earned any money we had to give it to them. Now we have equality with men, and we can spend our money on our families.

Pam-
les Melanne ✓
Theresa Wan
Holly C
M

Maïmouna Traoré, 61, is head of the Women's Association in Malicounda, a tiny fishing village in Senegal. Last February the women declared, in the Oath of Malicounda, that they would no longer accept female circumcision, still performed on 20% of their countrywomen. The protest gathered momentum and, with the backing of President Abdou Diouf, legislation to make it illegal is going through. Maïmouna has 10 sons and two daughters by her late husband, Ebrahim, to whose cousin Abdullah she is now married

Parts of our village used to be very dirty — especially behind the houses where we used to throw garbage — and we didn't go to the doctor when our children were ill. Over the years I've seen many children die because of diarrhoea. I lost one of my baby sons when he got measles. Now we've learnt about disease and malnutrition, and that to be healthy you need to be clean and wash with soap.

We used to circumcise our daughters; it was the tradition of the ancestors, but now we've learnt what it takes away from women. We thought it was for the best, because if girls weren't circumcised they were thought of as impure and would not get married.

Girls from our village would be taken to a special hut where a professional cutter, of the blacksmith caste, would use a razor blade and some black soap to cut off the clitoris and the upper and lower lips. The razor could be used on as many as six girls, which we didn't realise could cause infection. The wound would be sealed with dried blood and the girl would rest for about 40 days, until she was healed.

I was circumcised; it's very painful. The cutter told me not to cry, and I did my best. Most girls don't cry, as it brings great shame to your family. I didn't have any problems afterwards, nor did my daughters. Some men could not open their brides themselves on their wedding nights, so the cutter would return. Having sex in a wound is painful.

Aid workers used to come and tell us to stop FGM [female genital mutilation] and I'd say, "Never!" What right had white people to tell us what to do? But through our classes we have realised it can be very dangerous. Many

mothers whose daughters haemorrhaged when they were cut kept it a secret. But we know some died. We discussed such intimate things in our classes.

Some of the young women came to me and said they had decided they must stop female circumcision. These women are like my daughters, and I thought they were right. I told our village imam and said, "Fooling people is not the answer; we must tell the truth." He agreed, but some of the husbands objected. They didn't like seeing their wives portrayed as radical revolutionaries.

★ The women put on a play about the dangers of female circumcision, based on stories we knew. We played in the village centre and took it to other villages. Last April we were invited to meet Madame Clinton in Dakar. One woman's husband forbade her to go, but now he has seen the error of his ways. We went to Dakar, and went in an elevator for the first time. Madame Clinton said, "Where are the women from Malicounda?" She asked us to stand, and people applauded. We were on TV. Everyone who saw it was astonished. It was a triumph — a moment we will never forget.

After lunch I may rest, for the sun can be very hot. Later we women will make Chinese tea with mint leaves and sugar. In the afternoons we may celebrate a baptism or have a meeting with another village, which also means music and dancing, and I'll wear my special dress. When I was younger I loved to dance, but now my knees get sore.

At 2pm and 7pm and 8.30pm we pray to Allah. After the 7pm prayers we have

dinner, maybe couscous and fish, which my daughters-in-law cook over wood stoves. Then we'll have mangoes and papayas. Women eat with women, men with men; our children used to eat separately but now we eat with them to make sure they're getting enough.

After dinner, women may come to ask my advice — perhaps about our soap-making project, or about our momentous decision to say no. People who support female circumcision say I was paid by western aid workers and the media. But President Diouf supports us, which makes us very proud.

I go to bed about 11pm. I sleep well, happy that we women of Malicounda are stronger and more independent than ever before.

Interview by
Ann McFerran.
Photograph by
Robert Grossman

file FGms

crusaders ●

Mercy Mission

To help eradicate female circumcision, Waris Dirie painfully recounts her own

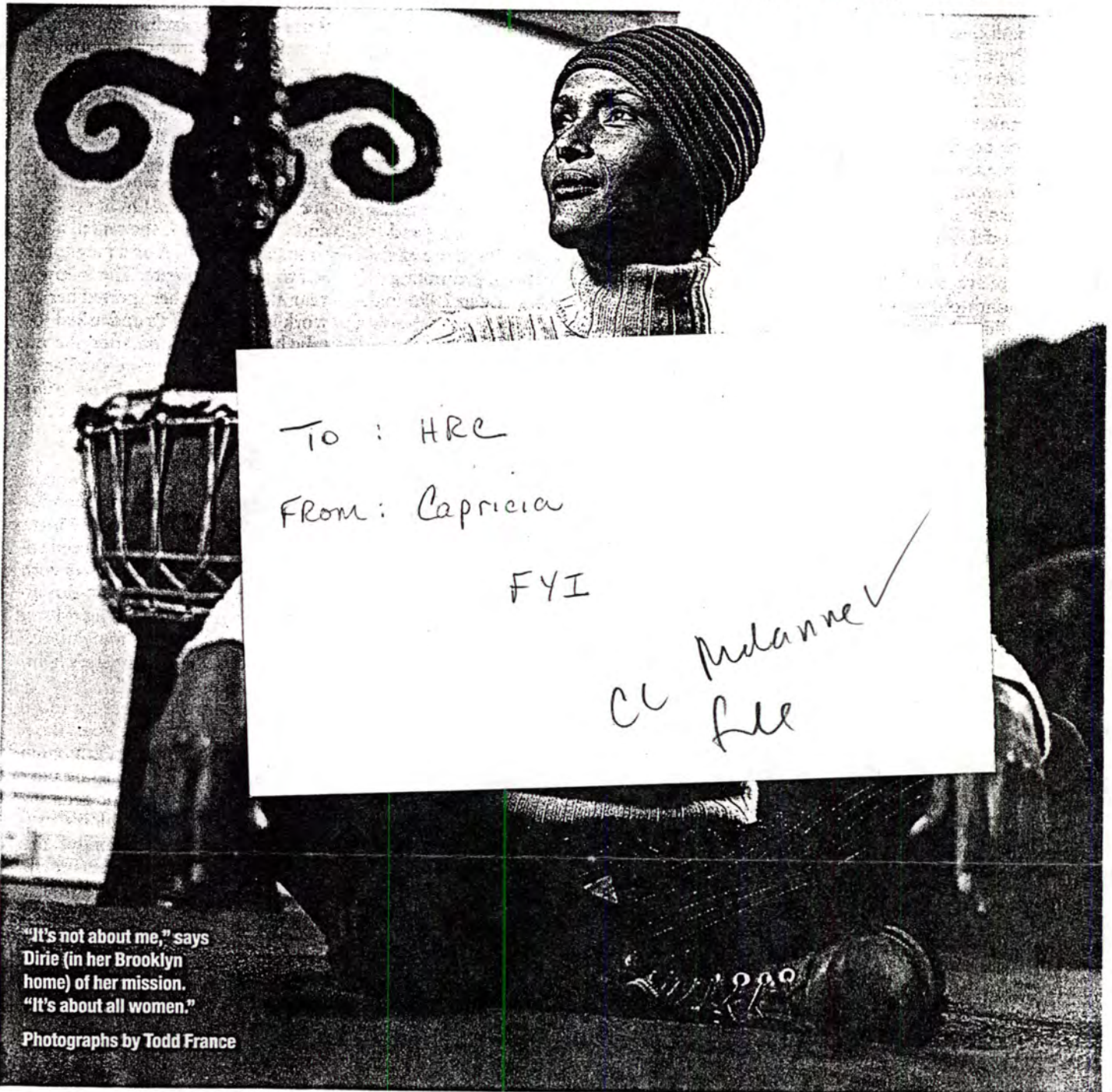
Waris Dirie was just an innocent, unknowing child of 5 when she begged her mother to let her be circumcised like virtually all females in Somalia. "When you've been told over and over that,

until this happens, you're filthy and no man would ever marry you, you believe what everybody says," Dirie explains. "I just wanted to be like the other girls."

Months later her awful wish came true. As her mother held down the crying, blindfolded Dirie, a gypsy performed the circumcision using a dirty, dull razor and no anesthetic. She sewed the ragged wound with thorns and thread. "It's not a pain



Dirie (right, with the UN's Dr. Nafis Sadik) met the press after her appointment in '97.



To : HRC

From : Capricia

FYI

CC Melanne ✓
file

"It's not about me," says Dirie (in her Brooklyn home) of her mission. "It's about all women."

Photographs by Todd France

● crusaders

you forget," says Dirie, in a whisper. She was left with only a tiny opening, and urinating became torture. Later, menstruation was so unbearable that Dirie routinely fainted.

Now 31 and a top fashion model, Dirie is speaking out against female genital mutilation. "To be here, through all the ups and downs in my life, there's got to be a reason," says Dirie, who was named a United Nations special ambassador in September 1997. "I think God gave me a voice to speak for other little girls."

Though Dirie's story is painful to hear, "those who don't usually pay attention to ambassadors have been fascinated by her," says Dr. Nafis Sadik, executive director of the UN's Population Fund. Dirie has put her career on hold to lecture at health conferences and testify before lawmakers. She has also been promoting her memoir *Desert Flower: The Extraordinary Journey of a Desert Nomad*, which Elton John plans to turn into a movie. "Being a super-model is not important to her," says Dana Murray, 27, her boyfriend of three years and father of their 17-month-old son Aleke. "This is her calling."



After 15 years apart, Dirie (left) and her mother were reunited in Ethiopia in 1995.

Each year an estimated 2 million girls face circumcision. Most of these brutal rites of passage take place in 28 African countries, though they are also performed in the Middle East and Asia. Emigrés to the U.S. have brought the practice with them (a recent report commissioned by Rep. Louise M. Slaughter estimates that more than 160,000 girls and women here have been or are at risk of being circumcised), prompting Congress to pass a law in 1996 making female circumcision on a minor a

felony; four states have banned the practice on females of any age. Next year, when Dirie makes her first official visit to Africa, she won't argue cultural beliefs with tribal chiefs and mothers—she'll argue health. "It's a medical matter," says Dirie, who had surgery in London at 20 to have her vagina reopened. "It's inhumane."

One of 12 children of nomadic parents in drought-ravaged Somalia, Dirie and her family (a sister died from infection after her circumcision) moved constantly in search of water for their camels, cows and goats, on which they depended for milk. At 13, Dirie was sold by her father into marriage to a man four times her age in exchange for five camels. But before her betrothed could claim her, Dirie ran away. After a desperate journey across the desert, she arrived at the Mogadishu home of an aunt, where she stayed on as a maid. She soon moved to London, where she worked for an uncle for four years. On her own and illiterate at 18, she rented a room at the YMCA and taught herself to read and write. The following year a photographer spotted her at work in McDonald's and asked to take her picture. Soon after, she was appearing on the runways in Paris and Milan. Photo spreads for *Allure* and *Mademoiselle* followed, as did a part in the 1987 James Bond movie *The Living Daylights*.

In 1993, Dirie moved to New York City. Two years later she saw jazz drummer and producer Murray perform at a club. They've been together ever since and now live with their son in a four-bedroom Brooklyn apartment. "I'd be lying if I said I didn't wish she were home more," Murray says. "But what she's fighting for is so important."

Dirie has little patience for those who disagree. During a Voice of America call-in show, an Ethiopian man berated her for modeling but seemed unfazed by female genital mutilation. "Do you think it's all right for you to slice my body? You think that's okay?" she demanded. "I'm going to cut you off now—goodbye!" As she composed herself, the crew burst into applause.

- Christina Cheakalos
- Eve Heyn in New York City

"I swallowed my dignity a long time ago to speak," says Dirie (at home with Aleke).



UNCLASSIFIED

Classification

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT
TRANSMITTAL FORM

*file
Senegal
FGm*

S/S 9906580
DATE April 24, 1999

FOR: Mr. Glyn T. Davies
Executive Secretary
National Security Council
The White House

REFERENCE:

TO: Hillary Rodham Clinton
FROM: Abdou Diouf
DATE: March 12, 1999
SUBJECT: Adoption by the Senegalese National Assembly of
of law penalizing the practice of female circumcision

WH Referral Dated: _____
NSC ID# (if any): _____

XX The attached item was sent directly to Department of State.

ACTION TAKEN:

_____ A draft reply is attached.
_____ A draft reply will be forwarded.
XX _____ A translation is attached.
_____ An information copy of a direct reply is attached.
_____ We believe no response is necessary for the reason cited below.
_____ The Department of State has no objection to the proposed travel.
_____ Other (see remarks).

REMARKS:

APR 26 8:33

UNCLASSIFIED

Classification

Soodia Soule
Office of the
Executive Secretary

**U.S. Department of State
Office of Language Services
Translating Division**

LS No. 0491278-A
ALK/JF
French

**Republic of Senegal
Office of the President of the Republic**

Dakar, March 12, 1999

No. 02358 ME.MSAP/DIPLO.2

The Minister of State for
Presidential Services and Affairs

Mr. Ambassador:

Please transmit to Mrs. Hillary Rodham Clinton, First Lady of the United States of America, the enclosed communication, No. 2188 PR/CAB/DIPLO.2, dated March 8, 1999, from His Excellency Abdou Diouf, President of the Republic of Senegal.

An information copy of the communication is also enclosed.

Accept, Mr. Ambassador, the assurances of my high consideration.

By authority of the Minister of State:

[Signature]

Babacar Carlos Mbaye
Secretary General of Presidential Services

[Stamp of the Office of the President]

His Excellency
Dane Smith, Jr.
Ambassador of the United States of America to Senegal,
Dakar.

March 8, 1999

[Handwritten: "information copy"]

No. 02188 PR/CAB/DIPLO.2

Dear Mrs. Clinton:

I am most grateful for the kind words you addressed to me on the occasion of the adoption, by the Senegalese National Assembly, of the law penalizing the practice of female circumcision.

I should like to express my profound gratitude for your very thoughtful gesture and tell you again how gratified I am by your sincere commitment to the strengthening of the friendship between the American and Senegalese people.

On behalf of my wife, and in my own name, I should like to extend warm regards to you and President Clinton and to avail myself of this opportunity to reiterate our best wishes for your health and happiness.

Accept, Mrs. Clinton, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Abdou Diouf

[Stamp of the Office of the President]

Her Excellency
Hillary Rodham Clinton
First Lady of the United States of America,
Washington.

PRESIDENCE DE LA REPUBLIQUE

N° 0 2 3 5 8 ME.MSAP/DIPLO.2

Dakar, le

*Le Ministre d'Etat
Ministre des Services et
des Affaires Présidentielles*

12 MARS 1999

Monsieur l'Ambassadeur,

Je vous saurais gré de bien vouloir transmettre à Madame Hillary Rodham Clinton, Première Dame des Etats-Unis d'Amérique, le pli n° 2188 PR/CAB/DIPLO.2 du 8 mars 1999, en annexe, que lui adresse Son Excellence Monsieur Abdou DIOUF, Président de la République du Sénégal.

Ci-joint, pour votre information, copie de la lettre contenue dans ledit pli.

Je vous prie de croire, Monsieur l'Ambassadeur, à l'assurance de ma haute considération.

Pour le Ministre d'Etat
et par délégation

Le Secrétaire Général
des Services Présidentiels



Babacar Carlos MBAYE

_/-)

Son Excellence

Monsieur Dane SMITH, Jr

Ambassadeur des Etats-Unis d'Amérique au Sénégal

DAKAR

08 MARS 1999

*Copie
Information*

N° 02188 PR/CAB/DIPLO.2

Madame la Présidente,

J'ai été particulièrement sensible aux propos aimables que vous avez eu la délicatesse de m'adresser, suite à l'adoption, par l'Assemblée nationale sénégalaise, d'une loi pénalisant la pratique de l'excision.

Je voudrais vous exprimer ma profonde gratitude pour votre geste si généreux et vous redire mon appréciation la plus positive de votre attachement sincère à la consolidation de l'amitié entre les peuples américain et sénégalais.

En Vous transmettant, ainsi qu'au Président William Jefferson CLINTON, les chaleureuses salutations de mon épouse comme de moi-même, Je saisis cette opportunité pour vous renouveler nos vœux les meilleurs de santé et de bonheur.

Je vous prie de croire, Madame la Présidente, à l'assurance de mes hommages les plus déferents.



/-)
Son Excellence
Madame Hillary Rodham CLINTON
Première Dame des Etats-Unis d'Amérique
WASHINGTON

Abdou DIOUF

file FGM/Senegal

Melanne
FYI
Alice

APRIL 24, 2000

MEMORANDUM FOR FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON

FROM: ALICE PUSHKAR
FIRST LADY'S CORRESPONDENCE

CC: MELANNE VERVEER

SUBJECT: E-MAIL FROM MOLLY MELCHING

Attached is the latest memo from Molly Melching describing the *Niodior Declaration to Abandon Female Genital Cutting*. I believe that Molly may have discussed this with you when she was here. It is a wonderful accomplishment for Tostan.



Molly Melching <melching@telecomplus.sn>

04/24/2000 05:13:11 AM

Record Type: Record

To: Alice J. Pushkar/WHO/EOP

cc:

Subject: Corrections - The Niodior Declaration

THE NIODIOR DECLARATION
TO ABANDON FEMALE GENITAL CUTTING

APRIL 7, 2000

Thursday night everyone was praying that the winds would not start up and that the ocean tides would remain calm for the morning of Friday April 7, 2000. Women, men and children representing twenty-six islands located in the Sine-Saloum river in Senegal, West Africa had already canoed in to the island of Niodior Thursday afternoon to participate in the historic decision to publicly end the ancient practice of female genital cutting (FGC) the next day. They were worried that the many guests they had invited to witness this important declaration would have trouble making the morning crossing from the embarkation point at Djifeer to reach Niodior Island in the enormous canoe rented for this special occasion. Although the islanders were accustomed to the wild waves and turbulent winds that often accompany them during crossings between islands, they knew that newcomers might not be able to withstand the trip. So when April 7 dawned calm and windless, smiles lit up the faces of the hundreds gathered to participate in the festivities. "God is happy with our decision!" exclaimed the president of the women's group, Rockaya Diene.

The Sine-Saloum islands are mostly populated by members of a sub-group of Serrers - the Serrer Niominka - who have close ties with the Soce and Mandinka groups that have always practiced FGC. Other members of the Serrer group (14% of the population of Senegal) do not practice FGC. Some Serrer-Niominkas live in Bambara villages on the mainland that already declared an end to FGC on February 14, 1998. After participating in the Tostan Basic Education Program (funded by UNICEF Senegal) and learning more about human rights and women's health, Serrer-Niominka women from the village of Samba Dia decided to inform their relatives and friends who live in villages on these islands of the Sine-Saloum river of the reasons for their historic decision. From August to September, 1999, Ami Bana Diouf (president of the Samba Dia women's group), Yaka Diameye (a former traditional cutter) and Cheikh Traore (a Tostan trainer), all canoed from island to island to discuss this formerly taboo topic at public meetings. Initially reluctant to criticize an important part of their Serrer-Niominka traditions, the island women eventually broke an unspoken vow of silence and

began relating experiences of pain, lifelong health problems and even death related to FGC. The three sojourners encouraged dialogue and related what they themselves had learned: that the operation violates a girl's and woman's basic human rights to life, to health and to bodily integrity. That certain health problems they had experienced were not those of all women, but rather linked to the operation they had undergone at a very young age. That the practice is not a religious obligation as they had formerly believed. They explained that the public declaration at Diabougou on February 14, 1998 had allowed many Senegalese Bambaras to all stop together, thus assuring that their daughters would not be ostracized and discriminated against, especially when it was time to marry. Now they were hoping that many in their own ethnic group, the Serrer-Niominka, would make the same decision so that all their children could have a brighter, healthier future and not fear being rejected as marriage partners in the future.

Following these initial island visits, representatives from each island met on Niodior Island on November 16, 1999 to discuss the issue of ending female genital cutting as a united community. Fifty-six people including the presidents of women's groups, traditional cutters, local government authorities and religious and traditional leaders held a day-long encounter during which they made an important decision: It is time to end, together, the practice of female genital cutting in the islands of the Sine-Saloum. They expressed the desire to make this a joyful celebration of women's health and positive Serrer-Niominka traditions. All the representatives then went back to their island to discuss the decision with their fellow villagers so that everyone would be aware and involved.

The Director of UNFPA, Essan Niangouran, Aida Dia from UNICEF, government officials, a member of the Senegalese National Assembly, Tostan staff and partners, as well as sixteen journalists and a crew from the award-winning CNN series, People Count, including producer Barbara Pyle, all made the ocean crossing to Niodior on Friday morning April 7 in a colorfully painted fisherman's "pirogue". They neared the landing dock

to the rhythmic clapping and dancing of Serrer drummers and dancers, while the presidents of the island women's groups and traditional, religious

and government authorities joyfully greeted the arrival of the boat. The guests climbed on to the quay and joined in the dancing as they wound through shell-covered island paths to the public school where hundreds of people waited in anticipation.

The site was breathtaking. Each group of women of the same age had dressed in similar African garb forming bright patterns of green, blue, red and brown throughout the crowd. The women had set up tables where local produce and items they sell to make a living were displayed: sea shells, oysters, dried fish, casava, oil from the island palm trees and other plants used for traditional healing or cooking purposes.

Before the ceremony began, different troupes of Serrer singers and dancers entered the area covered with all varieties of shell necklaces, carrying miniature pirogues and dancing to the appreciation and wild applause of their fellow islanders.

The village chief of Niodior began the ceremony by welcoming everyone present. The President of the Rural Council then spoke with pride of the important decision made by the people, particularly the women, that he

represents. The head doctor for the district, chosen by the women to discuss the medical aspects of female genital cutting, told the assembly why this practice can bring such harm to girls and women - causing pain, infection, hemorrhaging, sterility, fistulas, and even death. Demba Diawara, a leading spokesman for the movement to end FGC throughout Senegal, received a rousing ovation when he took the microphone to speak of Islam's position related to FGC. He emphasized that it is not a religious obligation and that the Muslim religion seeks the physical and mental well-being of everyone, both men and women, above all else. He also represented a group of more than 30 participants from former declarations who had come to welcome the villagers into the growing movement of Senegalese struggling to achieve better health for girls and women by ending FGC. He recalled that the first declaration was held on July 31, 1997 and that since then, 173 other villages have now decided to end the practice through a public declaration. Then Rockaya Diene, representing all the women's groups of the 26 participating islands, took the microphone:

"At a certain point, we women realized that this practice could no longer continue. We met together and spoke of this as a problem that is sapping our society and poisoning our life. We admitted we've had real health problems, we women who have already been cut. And we found a solution together - to forever end this butcher-like practice.

Before the operation, we had to consult the "marabout" and he would tell you what sacrifices were to be made. Then one day, you took your daughter, uninformed and fearful, wrapped in a black piece of material to the forest. After the operation, one of the girls would become ill. But no one linked this to the actual cutting. The illness might last for months. It was very dangerous. So many risks were involved in this traditional practice.

This is the greatest day of our lives.

And today, the men are happy because this practice also diminished our sexual pleasure. This will no longer be the case. It is their celebration also."

The children of the Niodior school presented a well-rehearsed play in Serrer and Wolof in which girls are taken off to be cut and two girls fall ill afterwards, one hemorrhaging, the other contracting tetanus. In the play both girls die. The girls included fellow boy classmates in the play to show the importance of involving males in the process to put an end to this traditional practice.

At the end of the play, a sixteen-year-old girl solemnly read the official Niodior declaration of 26 participating islands to end female genital cutting to the unanimous approval of all present.

In a solemn procession and dressed in dark blue indigo cloth, the traditional cutters from the 26 islands marched on to the scene. They spread a cloth on the ground and together placed their cutting knives in a traditional straw basket, symbolizing their commitment to end the genital cutting. Because the knives they used are considered mystical and bearing supernatural powers, they had wrapped them in coarse cotton threads to hide them from the public eye. They then began the traditional initiation dance and incantations where, on hands and knees, they rhythmically pounded the ground to the drumming of large round gourds. One of the cutters explained that this dance was done during initiation ceremonies to awaken their ancestors from their eternal sleep and request their presence during the rites. Today, she explained, they were calling the ancestors to tell them why they must now end this practice.

The Prefet of the department, the director of FNUAP, the representative of UNICEF, the Director of Tostan, and the locally elected official from the National Assembly then responded with congratulations and admiration for the islanders who had organized this very special declaration. The women gave each guest a necklace they had prepared from the shells that wash up daily on their shores and presented the Director of Tostan with a beautiful, hand-made traditional doll.

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During the next days, radio reports in local languages announced the public declaration to the Senegalese nation and numerous newspaper articles recounted the events of the ceremony. Tostan received calls from groups throughout the country expressing an interest in learning about the process which leads to the declarations to end FGC that have occurred in the past two years throughout the country and requesting the six month course.

Tostan now hopes to open classes in the Serrer language on Human Rights education, problem-solving, hygiene and women's health in the 26 participating island villages. These classes will serve as a follow-through to the declaration and will be implemented to reinforce this historic decision of the women and men. Such education will also allow them to continue the process of spreading the word to others, leading to new declarations and a rapid and universal end to FGC throughout Senegal.

NOTE: This account of the Niodior declaration was written by Molly Melching, Director of Tostan, a non-profit organization dedicated to grassroots education in national languages in Africa, particularly for women and adolescents. Tostan's non-directive and participatory approach to women's health, using a human right's approach, have led to successful and concrete results in all areas of thousands of women's lives in villages throughout Senegal.

The program is now being experimented in Mali and the Soudan with support from the Wallace Global Fund.

Since the first declaration to end FGC in Malicounda Bambara in 1997, Tostan, Unicef and Unifem have supported villagers in their social mobilization efforts to end FGC as well as their village meetings and public declarations. Many individuals in the United States and Canada have also joined in this effort to assure that the movement by the villagers themselves continues and that the harmful practice of cutting young girls' genitals will soon be a vestige of the past.

✓ cc Melanne
file
file FGM
Senegal

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

APRIL 24, 2000

MEMORANDUM FOR FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON

FROM: ALICE PUSHKAR *Alice*
FIRST LADY'S CORRESPONDENCE

CC: MELANNE VERVEER

SUBJECT: E-MAIL FROM MOLLY MELCHING

Attached is the latest memo from Molly Melching describing the *Niodior Declaration to Abandon Female Genital Cutting*. I believe that Molly may have discussed this with you when she was here. It is a wonderful accomplishment for Tostan.



Molly Melching <melching@telecomplus.sn>
04/24/2000 05:13:11 AM

Record Type: Record

To: Alice J. Pushkar/WHO/EOP

cc:

Subject: Corrections - The Niodior Declaration

THE NIODIOR DECLARATION TO ABANDON FEMALE GENITAL CUTTING

APRIL 7, 2000

Thursday night everyone was praying that the winds would not start up and that the ocean tides would remain calm for the morning of Friday April 7, 2000. Women, men and children representing twenty-six islands located in the Sine-Saloum river in Senegal, West Africa had already canoed in to the island of Niodior Thursday afternoon to participate in the historic decision to publicly end the ancient practice of female genital cutting (FGC) the next day. They were worried that the many guests they had invited to witness this important declaration would have trouble making the morning crossing from the embarkation point at Djifeer to reach Niodior Island in the enormous canoe rented for this special occasion. Although the islanders were accustomed to the wild waves and turbulent winds that often accompany them during crossings between islands, they knew that newcomers might not be able to withstand the trip. So when April 7 dawned calm and windless, smiles lit up the faces of the hundreds gathered to participate in the festivities. "God is happy with our decision!" exclaimed the president of the women's group, Rockaya Diene.

The Sine-Saloum islands are mostly populated by members of a sub-group of Serrers - the Serrer Niominka - who have close ties with the Soce and Mandinka groups that have always practiced FGC. Other members of the Serrer group (14% of the population of Senegal) do not practice FGC. Some Serrer-Niominkas live in Bambara villages on the mainland that already declared an end to FGC on February 14, 1998. After participating in the Tostan Basic Education Program (funded by UNICEF Senegal) and learning more about human rights and women's health, Serrer-Niominka women from the village of Samba Dia decided to inform their relatives and friends who live in villages on these islands of the Sine-Saloum river of the reasons for their historic decision. From August to September, 1999, Ami Bana Diouf (president of the Samba Dia women's group), Yaka Diameye (a former traditional cutter) and Cheikh Traore (a Tostan trainer), all canoed from island to island to discuss this formerly taboo topic at public meetings. Initially reluctant to criticize an important part of their Serrer-Niominka traditions, the island women eventually broke an unspoken vow of silence and

began relating experiences of pain, lifelong health problems and even death related to FGC. The three sojourners encouraged dialogue and related what they themselves had learned: that the operation violates a girl's and woman's basic human rights to life, to health and to bodily integrity. That certain health problems they had experienced were not those of all women, but rather linked to the operation they had undergone at a very young age. That the practice is not a religious obligation as they had formerly believed. They explained that the public declaration at Diabougou on February 14, 1998 had allowed many Senegalese Bambaras to all stop together, thus assuring that their daughters would not be ostracized and discriminated against, especially when it was time to marry. Now they were hoping that many in their own ethnic group, the Serrer-Niominka, would make the same decision so that all their children could have a brighter, healthier future and not fear being rejected as marriage partners in the future.

Following these initial island visits, representatives from each island met on Niodior Island on November 16, 1999 to discuss the issue of ending female genital cutting as a united community. Fifty-six people including the presidents of women's groups, traditional cutters, local government authorities and religious and traditional leaders held a day-long encounter during which they made an important decision: It is time to end, together, the practice of female genital cutting in the islands of the Sine-Saloum. They expressed the desire to make this a joyful celebration of women's health and positive Serrer-Niominka traditions. All the representatives then went back to their island to discuss the decision with their fellow villagers so that everyone would be aware and involved.

The Director of UNFPA, Essan Niangouran, Aida Dia from UNICEF, government officials, a member of the Senegalese National Assembly, Tostan staff and partners, as well as sixteen journalists and a crew from the award-winning CNN series, *People Count*, including producer Barbara Pyle, all made the ocean crossing to Niodior on Friday morning April 7 in a colorfully painted fisherman's "pirogue". They neared the landing dock

to the rhythmic clapping and dancing of Serrer drummers and dancers, while the presidents of the island women's groups and traditional, religious

and government authorities joyfully greeted the arrival of the boat. The guests climbed on to the quay and joined in the dancing as they wound through shell-covered island paths to the public school where hundreds of people waited in anticipation.

The site was breathtaking. Each group of women of the same age had dressed in similar African garb forming bright patterns of green, blue, red and brown throughout the crowd. The women had set up tables where local produce and items they sell to make a living were displayed: sea shells, oysters, dried fish, casava, oil from the island palm trees and other plants used for traditional healing or cooking purposes.

Before the ceremony began, different troupes of Serrer singers and dancers entered the area covered with all varieties of shell necklaces, carrying miniature pirogues and dancing to the appreciation and wild applause of their fellow islanders.

The village chief of Niodior began the ceremony by welcoming everyone present. The President of the Rural Council then spoke with pride of the important decision made by the people, particularly the women, that he

represents. The head doctor for the district, chosen by the women to discuss the medical aspects of female genital cutting, told the assembly why this practice can bring such harm to girls and women - causing pain, infection, hemorrhaging, sterility, fistulas, and even death. Demba Diawara, a leading spokesman for the movement to end FGC throughout Senegal, received a rousing ovation when he took the microphone to speak of Islam's position related to FGC. He emphasized that it is not a religious obligation and that the Muslim religion seeks the physical and mental well-being of everyone, both men and women, above all else. He also represented a group of more than 30 participants from former declarations who had come to welcome the villagers into the growing movement of Senegalese struggling to achieve better health for girls and women by ending FGC. He recalled that the first declaration was held on July 31, 1997 and that since then, 173 other villages have now decided to end the practice through a public declaration. Then Rockaya Diene, representing all the women's groups of the 26 participating islands, took the microphone:

"At a certain point, we women realized that this practice could no longer continue. We met together and spoke of this as a problem that is sapping our society and poisoning our life. We admitted we've had real health problems, we women who have already been cut. And we found a solution together - to forever end this butcher-like practice.

Before the operation, we had to consult the "marabout" and he would tell you what sacrifices were to be made. Then one day, you took your daughter, uninformed and fearful, wrapped in a black piece of material to the forest. After the operation, one of the girls would become ill. But no one linked this to the actual cutting. The illness might last for months. It was very dangerous. So many risks were involved in this traditional practice.

This is the greatest day of our lives.

And today, the men are happy because this practice also diminished our sexual pleasure. This will no longer be the case. It is their celebration also."

The children of the Niodior school presented a well-rehearsed play in Serrer and Wolof in which girls are taken off to be cut and two girls fall ill afterwards, one hemorrhaging, the other contracting tetanus. In the play both girls die. The girls included fellow boy classmates in the play to show the importance of involving males in the process to put an end to this traditional practice.

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FGM
file Molly Melching

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

MARCH 20, 2000

MEMORANDUM FOR FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON

FROM: ALICE PUSHKAR *Alice*
FIRST LADY'S CORRESPONDENCE

SUBJECT: MOLLY MELCHING MEETING

At this morning's meeting, Molly will present to you a copy of the report on the microcredit projects funded by the *It Takes A Village* funds that you donated to Tostan. You have already seen this report and I have attached a copy to this memo. Molly also has a thank you card prepared by the women who were the recipients of the Tostan grants. She may present this card to you as well. CNN will be present to tape the presentation.

Molly will be accompanied by Malick Diagne (don' yā) who is Senegalese and is working here in Washington. He returns soon to Senegal. He may be wearing traditional Senegalese dress which I believe is called a "booboo".

TOSTAN-IT TAKES A VILLAGE

**REPORT ON REVOLVING
CREDIT PROGRAM
FOR VILLAGE WOMEN**

JANUARY 1999 – JANUARY 2000

INTRODUCTION

In January, 1999, Mrs. Hillary Rodham Clinton awarded a grant of \$5000 (five thousand US dollars) to Tostan, a Non-Governmental, not-for-profit Organization founded in 1991 and working principally in the West African country of Senegal. Tostan has developed a nonformal education program which has reached more than 500 villages throughout the country. Based on principles of participation and empowerment, the program uses materials that draw inspiration from Senegalese culture and oral tradition. As a result of this innovative education program, women in one village, Malicounda Bambara, decided to end the practice of female genital cutting (FGC) in their entire village in 1997 and as a result of their initiative, the men and women of 147 other communities have now declared publicly that they have also ended this harmful tradition.

Mrs. Clinton visited the Tostan program in 1997 and also met with the men and women leaders of the movement to end Female Genital Cutting during her April, 1998 trip to Senegal. The grant from the proceeds from her book – *It Takes A Village and Other Lessons Children Teach Us* - was given to Tostan in order to promote micro-credit programs in villages which had made the important decision to abandon FGC and to help women and their families having participated in the education program to achieve better living conditions through income-generating projects.

This grant came at an opportune moment: Tostan had already begun to assist communities in planning profitable small businesses and income generating activities to reinforce and use the knowledge and skills acquired by participants during the basic education program. Thus, the five thousand dollars provided by Mrs. Clinton allowed Tostan to help the women to implement the projects they were planning.

PROJECT ACTIVITIES FEBRUARY 1999 – JANUARY 2000

Tostan received the funds from this grant in February 1999 and chose five villages where women participants have been active in promoting human rights in their communities, including the villages of Malicounda Bambara, Ngeurigne Bambara, and Saam Njaay in the region of

Thiès, and the villages of Médina Chérif and Saare Mody in the southern region of Kolda,. One hundred dynamic women (20 per village) in these five villages benefited from this grant. During the months of March and April, the Tostan micro-credit coordinator, Malick Pouye, whose salary is funded by the Wallace Research Foundation, held preliminary meetings with the women to receive their input on project implementation and to identify different income-generating activities relevant to their needs and realities. During the Tostan program, the women had learned how to do a feasibility study before implementing a project, as well as leadership and management skills necessary to assuring successful projects.

In May and June 1999, the Coordinator organized trainings related to technical aspects of the revolving credit system. This system is inspired by the example of the Grameen Bank and is best suited to the socio-economic context of Senegalese villages. The system allows for an efficient use of funds and takes into account the difficult socio-economic conditions of participants in these villages by setting low interest rates and allowing deferred repayment of loans. For this program, Tostan, in collaboration with the villagers, decided to establish the repayment of loans for an eight month period and to charge no interest to the borrowers. This is mainly due to the fact that the religion of the majority of the participants, Islam, prohibits charging interest. Thus, each participant pays an original adherence fee of 1,000 CFA (approximately \$1.50), which goes to the village operating fund and a fee of 1,500 CFA (approximately \$2.25) which goes into the participant's personal savings account.

In this first experimental program, one hundred women paid adherence fees of 1,000 fcfa each for a total of 100,000 FCFA (\$166) plus 1,500 FCFA for their personal savings fund, totalling 150,000 CFA (\$250).

Mrs. Clinton's grant of \$5,000 was converted at the rate of 573 FCFA per dollar totalling 2,865,000 FCFA. Of this money, 2,500,000 CFA was used for village loans, with each of the five villages receiving 500,000 CFA. The remaining 365,000 FCFA was used for transportation costs for the coordinator whose salary was paid for by the Wallace Research Foundation. Thus, each of the 100 women received a loan of 25,000 CFA (\$43) to be used for income-generating activities they had already identified in collaboration with the Tostan coordinator such as animal fattening projects and agricultural activities.

The following five tables show the small projects implemented by the women of the five participating villages and the expected benefits of these projects. The villages in the Thies region received their funds at an earlier date than the women in the Kolda region and thus we

were able to calculate their profit at this present date.

1. Village of Saam Njaay (Thiès Region)

Investments	Profit Potential	Impact	Comments
- 7 Manioc fields = 9 hectares cultivated	* Harvest in 5 months * Minimum value estimated @ 900,000 CFA	*In 5 months, economic empowerment *Amelioration of nutrition	A viable and profitable activity
- 5 Fields planted with peanuts = 1.5 hectares cultivated	*Good harvest to be sold in 2 months *Estimated @ 85,000 CFA for the fodder and 130,000 CFA peanuts = total 215,000 CFA	* In 2 months, economic empowerment * Amelioration of nutrition for people and livestock	A viable enterprise

3 Animal fattening projects	3 healthy sheep destined for sale at the Muslim holiday in March	* Increased revenues for the families	Progressing well
5 Small businesses started up	Profits: - 22,500 CFA - 12,500 - 12,500 - 15,000 - 17,500 = 80,000 CFA	*80,000 CFA in savings *Needs of families met	Good progress
*20 activities financed with 500,000 CFA in Saam Njaay	*Minimum estimated PROFIT = 1,195,000CFA (\$2,085)	*Positive impact on several levels: socio-economic, nutritional, and health-related issues	Extremely encouraging results

2. Village of Ngeurigne Bambara (Region of Thies)

Investments	Profit Potential	Impact	Comments
*2 peanut fields planted: 1 hectare cultivated	*Good harvest to be sold in 2 months *Minimum estimated value: - peanuts=70,000 - fodder= 35,000 Total= 105,000 CFA	* Increased revenues for the families *Improvement of nutrition for people and livestock	Viable activities
* 17 small businesses begun: - Sale of vegetable oil - Retail sales of cloth - Sales of supplies and prepared foods - Ice cream sales	Profits: 15,000 17,500 14,000 7,500 7,500 5,000 5,000 10,000 15,000 12,000 10,000 20,000 35,000 15,000 20,000 15,000 <u>121,500</u> <u>102,000</u> Total: 223,500 CFA	* Increased economic power for those concerned *Diversification of economic activities *Promotion of creative entrepreneurship	Very positive results
* With the initial loan of 500,000 CFA, 19 activities were begun in Ngeurigne Bambara	*Minimum projected PROFIT: 328,000 CFA (\$572)	* Appreciable results with a positive impact on the socio-economic level	* Highly encouraging results

C. Ngaparou Village (Region of Thies)

Investments	Profit Potential	Impact	Comments
2 peanut fields planted, nearly 1 hectare in cultivation	*Good harvest 1st field: sale of harvest in 1 month Minimum estimated value - peanuts: 45,000 - fodder: 25,000 2nd field: sale assured; advance used for health care: 10,000 CFA	*In 5 months: increased economic power for the families concerned *Improved nutrition Family health needs have been met	Useful and profitable activity
*13 small businesses started up including : - Market stalls - Cloth retail sales - Wood sales - Fruit sales - Jewelry sales - Sales of bread and coffee	*Profits: 14,000 75,000 51,000 51,000 30,000 35,000 50,000 16,500 55,000 70,000 <u>20,000</u> TOTAL 467,000	*Increase of families' economic power *Diversification of activities and creativity *Improvement in meeting the needs of families	Profitable and viable activities
* 3 knitting operations were begun * 1 fishing enterprise	Profits: 82, 500 CFA	* Economic empowerment * Meeting of personal needs	Developing--to be encouraged

* 19 activities financed with 500,000 CFA begun in Ngaparou	* Minimum estimated PROFITS: 630,000 CFA (\$1,050)	* Positive impact on the socio- economic and nutritional aspects	Excellent and encouraging results
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D. Médina Chérif Village (Region of Kolda)

Investment	Profit Potential	Impact	Comments
10 small business activities begun, with one failure due to illness 9 are well launched	- with the profits, one goat and four hens were bought - medical care was paid for - household goods were procured - field labor was hired 42,000 CFA put into savings	- purchase of another goat 4 hens - steady field labor supply - health and household needs met - in 2 months, 42,000 CFA put into savings	a very productive activity, one which augurs well for the future
11 goats were bought of which 4 are pregnant 5 are healthy 2 have kids	- shortly, 4-8 kids should be born 3 kids have already been born	3 kids added to the stock	project is going as planned
2 sheep bought, both pregnant	2-4 lambs should result		ongoing project

5 loans made to other farmers	reimbursement may be made in cash or in goods --the borrowers have good farms	reimbursement in goods which may then be sold will allow trade to continue during the dry season	
2 investments in agricultural products	the farms are doing well	the farms are doing well	a good investment
1 gasoline-selling operation	4 times @2000CFA= 8000 CFA profit since inception	solution to scarcity of fuel in this area	an activity which shows promise

D. Sarré Mody Village (Region of Kolda)

Investment	Profit Potential	Impact	Comments
22 goats were bought, 14 of which were pregnant, 2 of which had kids-- 6 more are in good health	14 pregnant goats should produce around 22 kids - two of the goats have already produced 3 kids	3 more kids during the 2-month period	The project is positive and viable
9 sheep were bought, 5 of which were pregnant, the other 4 in good health	the offspring of the 5 pregnant sheep		Quite hopeful about the project

• 4 small business projects	• with the profits, bought one sheep and one goat • also invested in farm labor • 1500 CFA and 1000 CFA went into savings	• family needs were met • farm labor was assured • health of the family was enhanced • nutrition enhanced • two animals bought • 2500 CFA went into savings	• viable project
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As can be noted in the above tables, many diverse activities were begun with a small amount of money under the Clinton grant, leading not only to profit for all 100 women participants, but also increased business and credit experience for all of the women. The project coordinator also noticed increased confidence of the women as their projects developed and were successful. Tostan believes this confidence and experience will help the women to sustain their activities and become better businesswomen in the future.

At the end of the 8 months,, each village will have increased its start-up capital and will then repay the original loan. These funds will be used to repeat the process with other villages, thereby ensuring the continuation of capital creation. It is estimated that 500 women will benefit from the initial \$5,000 Clinton grant in the next five years and by extension, 500 families and approximately 3,500 people.

CONCLUSION

Tostan has long been aware that an educational program cannot be truly successful in an environment of extreme poverty. We had therefore dreamed for many years of supporting the women through developing sustainable systems for economic and social development. Mrs. Clinton's grant has allowed us to actually begin this process with surprisingly positive and extremely encourageing results,

These highly encouraging results have also validated the relevance of the

Tostan basic education program and have motivated our organization to form partnerships with other villages so that they may also benefit from the program which has been so successful in the first five villages.

This quest for a better life and a more hopeful future for our people, one which is brought to life by the courage, creativity, and hard work of the villagers themselves, is a moving and thrilling one. It is our dream that these programs will continue to grow in the future, providing new hope for the elimination of poverty through education and income-generating activities for these village women.

SCENESETTER: FLOTUS MEETING ON FGM

Mrs. Clinton will meet with a cross-section of Senegalese on April 2, time TBD, at the Meridien Presidential Hotel. Molly Melching, an American who runs the TOSTAN (Wolof word for breakthrough) Project in the model village of Malicounda (pronounced Ma'-lee-cun'-da), Senegal, will moderate the event. A list of participants is attached. Participants will put on a skit during the meeting.

Teaching the dangers of female genital mutilation (FGM) is part of TOSTAN's basic education program. The Program receives funding from UNICEF, U.S. Embassy Democracy Funds for self-help projects, and American Jewish World Services.

Female genital mutilation is not practiced by the Wolof, Senegal's largest ethnic group, but it is practiced by a number of smaller groups. Between 5-20% of Senegalese females undergo this procedure each year. The Government has not yet outlawed the practice, but President Diouf has spoken out against it. It is not practiced in government hospitals and clinics. In 1997, the village of Malicounda, where the practice was prevalent, voluntarily agreed to stop FGM as a result of a donor-sponsored education program. The community recognized the harmful physical and psychological effects of FGM, and this village now serves as a model for other villages.

Xerox

All

PARTICIPANTS IN FGM DISCUSSION WITH MRS. CLINTON

Mata Sy Diallo, (addressed Madame Djal'-lo) Vice Speaker of the National Assembly.

Aminata Mbengue Ndiaye, (addressed Madame N'-jiy') Minister of Women, Children and the Family.

Sidibe Kadidia Aoudou, (addressed Madame Ow'-du) a Malian activist who fights harmful traditional practices.

Marianne Ndiaye Sidibi, (addressed Madmae See'-dee-bee) with a Senegalese NGO which combats FGM practices.

Marie Belane Sylla, (addressed Madame Sill'-la) works with an NGO which does research and projects on FGM. She has written two books on the subject.

Cheikh Traore, (pronounced Shake Tray'-or-ay) and Demba Diawara, (pronounced Dee-a-wah'-ra) two 66 year old men who walk from village to village discussing the health dangers and harmful consequences of FGM.

Maimouna Traore, (addressed Madame Tray-or'-ay) President of Women's Group, 20 women from Malicounda.

The Imam (pronounced Ee'mom) religious leader of Malicounda.

Awa Thiam (pronounced Chem') from the University of Dakar who produces a magazine distributed throughout Senegal on dangers of FGM and presses for its abolition.

Mrs. Judith Smith, wife of Ambassador Dane Smith.



**FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION
(FGM)**

This paper is prepared primarily to provide information about female genital mutilation (FGM) practices to asylum adjudicators.

Female genital mutilation is the cutting or removal of all or a portion of the female genitals, as part of a ritualistic practice deeply rooted in culture and tradition. It is based on long held beliefs, superstitions, women's social role, and the belief FGM will suppress and control the sexual behavior of women and girls. It is often such a deeply held conviction that some girls desire it to conform to and be a part of society. Many women, however, increasingly view it as a way to control and subjugate women.

Experts put the number of females who have been genitally mutilated at 115 million to 130 million worldwide. Two million girls are at risk each year of being mutilated.

FGM is most prevalent in Africa where it is practiced in at least 28 African countries. It also occurs in several Middle Eastern countries including Egypt, Oman, Saudi Arabia, The Republic of Yemen and the United Arab Emirates. It is found in India and Pakistan among a small group of Bohra Muslims and is reported to occur in small groups in Indonesia and Malaysia (rural ethnic Malay Muslims where it more closely resembles a symbolic prick). It is also reported to be found within small indigenous groups in Eastern Mexico, Brazil and Peru. Some immigrants practice FGM in other parts of the world, including countries in Europe, the United States, Canada, Australia and Israel where the Ethiopian Falashas have immigrated. The United States has recently enacted legislation specifically outlawing FGM practiced on a person under the age of 18.

The origins of FGM are unknown. The practice existed before the beginning of Christianity and Islam. It is not required by the Koran or the Bible. FGM crosses religious lines. It also crosses ethnic and cultural lines.

A number of international organizations and conferences have expressed strong positions on the dangers of FGM and their support to eradicate the practice. The United Nations Commission on Human Rights raised the issue of FGM for the first time in 1952 and has followed up with conferences, seminars etc. throughout the years. The UN's Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing, China in September 1995, recognized FGM as a harmful traditional practice against women and girls and as part of its platform, called for action by governments and other organizations to eliminate FGM and provide education about its harmful effects. The International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), held in Cairo, Egypt in September 1994

condemned FGM as a harmful practice and urged governments to prohibit the practice and to give vigorous support to efforts among nongovernmental organizations and religious institutions to eliminate the practice. The World Health Organization (WHO) has assured governments of its readiness to support national efforts against FGM, as well as to continue research and distribution of information on FGM.

WHO has consistently maintained, since its formal statement in 1982 to the UN Human Rights Commission, that FGM must not be institutionalized (medicalized), nor should any form of FGM be practiced by any health professional in any setting, including hospitals and other health establishments. The Inter-African Committee on Traditional Practices Affecting the Health of Women and Children (IAC), which has chapters in most African countries, works to encourage governments to adopt clear national policies to abolish FGM and to intensify educational programs about the harmfulness of FGM.

The State Department and the U.S. Agency for International Development are working with community organizations and governments overseas to address the issue of female genital mutilation.

TYPES OF FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION

Some people refer to the practice of female genital mutilation as "circumcision". However, circumcision is only one type of FGM. In fact, circumcision is the least traumatic and dangerous of the various types of FGM. Only a very small percentage of women are circumcised. The vast majority of women suffer more drastic and dangerous forms of FGM.

1. **Circumcision:** The clitoral prepuce or tip of the clitoris is cut away. This is the mildest type of FGM. Some people refer to this as "sunna". However, sunna is often also used to refer to the more severe types of FGM. Sunna should therefore not automatically be assumed to refer to the least dangerous type of FGM. Circumcision is the only form of FGM that is anatomically comparable with male circumcision. The more severe forms of FGM practiced on most women have been described by some authorities (in terms of the closest male equivalent), as closer to the removal of the male sex organ. Only a small percentage, about 5 percent, of women who undergo FGM undergo circumcision.

2. **Excision:** Excision varies. It can be the partial or total cutting away of the clitoris and/or the clitoral prepuce, up to and including the cutting away of all or part of the labia

minora. This is the most widely practiced type of FGM. Some 80 percent of women who undergo FGM undergo this form of FGM.

3. Infibulation: This includes cutting away the clitoris and prepuce, cutting away the labia minora and cutting away a part of the labia majora. The edges of the labia majora are then held together by stitching with silk or cat gut or pinned with acacia thorns. Often only a very small opening is left, made by a straw or a match stick, to allow for the flow of urine and menstrual blood. The girl's or woman's legs are then bound together from the hip to the ankle so she remains immobile for 40 days to allow for the formation of scar tissue. In some communities no stitching is used. Rather, adhesive substances including sugar, eggs, and in rare cases, even animal excreta are placed on the wound to allow it to heal. Overall, 15 percent of women who undergo FGM undergo this type of FGM. However, where it is practiced, it often affects 90 to 100 percent of the women.

ANESTHESIA:

FGM is generally performed without the aid of anesthesia, particularly in villages. If no anesthesia is used, the girl or woman may be held down by a number of women. Sometimes herbs are put on her tongue so that the tongue will retract and she will not bite it off due to excruciating pain. Only if FGM is carried out in a hospital or medical clinic, is adequate anesthesia used.

PRACTITIONERS:

In rural settings FGM is usually carried out by older women in the villages. They have no medical training in surgical practices. Midwives and traditional birth attendants sometimes perform the operation. In a few places such as Egypt and the north part of Nigeria, male village barbers perform the operation. In some countries nurses and doctors perform the operation in hospitals where there is less danger of infections. (Medicalization of FGM, as this is called, has been resisted by many outreach groups because it would help to ingrain FGM in the country. Rather, these groups want the practice outlawed altogether.)

INSTRUMENTS USED:

A variety of instruments are used to perform FGM, depending on the country and group involved. Special knives may be used. For example, special saw-toothed knives are used in Mali. Razors are commonly used as well as scissors, pieces of glass, and even on rare occasions, sharp stones, in some countries. Fingernails are sometimes used in the Gambia to pluck the clitoris out of babies. If performed in a hospital or health clinic, regular surgical equipment is used.

In villages the instruments used to perform FGM are not sterile. Often many girls are operated on during a single ritual ceremony. In these cases the same razor or knife is commonly used on a number of girls.

AGE OF THE GIRL/WOMAN:

FGM can take place at different times in a girl's/woman's life depending on the country, ethnic group etc. It may vary among different groups in the same area of the country. For example, the Ethiopian Falashas perform the operation when the baby is a few days old. In Egypt the girl is between 7 and 10 years of age. Among the Ibo of Nigeria, FGM takes place just before marriage, while among the Edo of Nigeria it is performed before the first child is born. It is not unheard of for a deceased woman who has escaped FGM during her lifetime to have the operation performed on her before burial takes place.

CONSEQUENCES OF FGM:

FGM can have devastating and harmful consequences for a woman throughout her life. The health problems a girl will experience as a result of the operation depend a lot on the severity of the operation, the sanitary conditions in which it was performed, the competence of the person who performed it, and the violence of the girl's resistance. Old women and barbers who perform FGM are medically unqualified and can do extreme damage to a woman or girl, often resulting in death. Girls who struggle violently have often had bones broken as others attempted to hold them still. In cases where the operation is carried out in unsanitary conditions and nonsterile equipment is used, the dangers of infection are greatest. Even when FGM is performed in sanitary conditions of a hospital by qualified personnel, infection may be eliminated, but the long term consequences remain.

Examples of short-term consequences of FGM include:

1. bleeding (often hemorrhaging from rupture of the blood vessels of the clitoris);
2. post-operative shock;
3. damage to other organs (resulting from lack of surgical expertise of the excisor performing the operation and the violence of the resistance of the patient when anesthesia is not used). Some patients have experienced broken femurs, clavicles and other bones depending on the heavy-handed restraint used;
4. infections, including tetanus and septicemia, because of the use of nonsterile or poorly disinfected or dirty equipment;

5. death. It is unknown how many girls die from this operation because it is kept quiet. Some bleed to death. Very few make it to the hospital.

Examples of long-term consequences of FGM include:

1. retention of blood in the abdomen and swelling of the stomach. This has resulted in documented incidents of families believing the girl was pregnant and killing her because she dishonored the family. The most severe form of FGM, infibulation, causes the most severe complications.
2. chronic infections of the bladder and vagina. Since the urine and menstrual blood can now only leave the body drop by drop, the build up inside the abdomen and fluid retention cause infections and inflammation that can lead to infertility.
3. dysmenorrhoea or extremely painful menstruation.
4. the genital area is unbearably sensitive and painful to the touch.
5. child birth obstruction, which can result in the development of fistulas that can lead to tearing in the vaginal and/or bladder wall which can lead to chronic incontinence.
6. risk of HIV infection, particularly when tools have not been sterilized and are used to perform the operation on a number of girls at a single ritual.
7. sexual dysfunction.

Often reinfibulation must be performed each time a child is born. When infibulation is performed, the small opening left in the genital area is too small for the head of a baby to pass through. Failure to reopen this area can lead to death or brain damage of the baby and death of the mother. The excisor must reopen the mother and restitch her again after the birth. In most tribes the woman is restitched as before with the same tiny opening. In other tribes the opening is left only slightly larger to reduce painful intercourse. (In most cases, not only must the woman be reopened for each child birth, but on her wedding night the excisor may have to be called in to open her so she can consummate the marriage. The husband sometimes uses a sword or knife himself for this purpose, instead of the excisor.)

Although no extensive studies have been done on the psychological damage of FGM on a girl/woman, changes have been observed in the child who has been subjected to the operation. Nightmares, depression, shock, passivity, feelings of betrayal are not uncommon among these girls.

OUTREACH/LAWS:

Most of the African countries where FGM is practiced have outreach groups within the country working to eliminate the practice. Some have active support from the government. The emphasis by many of these groups is generally to educate the populace, both male and female, about the damages of FGM and the effect it can have on a woman's health. This is often done through mass media, seminars, education in the schools etc. Many outreach groups are now instituting alternative income producing activities for excisors who depend on FGM for their livelihood. Many outreach groups oppose the medicalization of FGM in hospitals. While lessening the risk of infections, this has the effect of further institutionalizing the practice when total elimination of FGM is the aim.

A number of countries where FGM is prevalent have laws specifically prohibiting FGM. Others have other criminal laws that might be used against FGM practitioners. A few cases have been successfully tried under these laws. The vast majority of countries, however, do not have any law against FGM. (See chart that follows.)

Generally, there are no laws specifically concerning FGM in most of the countries to which persons who practice FGM have immigrated. However, in most Western European countries, Canada and Australia, sufficient legislation already exists to cover FGM. Specific legislation against FGM does exist in Sweden and Great Britain.

Sweden was the first Western European country to specifically outlaw all forms of FGM in 1983. Great Britain's law prohibiting FGM became effective July 16, 1985. The British law makes it an offense for any person to perform FGM and for other persons to aid, abet, counsel or procure the performance of these acts. This would cover parents of girls who have their daughters subjected to the operation. Although not explicitly prohibited in France, there have been several cases involving FGM successfully prosecuted under existing laws. This has included the conviction and imprisonment of parents of girls subjected to FGM.

UNITED STATES LAW AGAINST FGM:

The performance of FGM on a person under the age of 18 has recently been made a crime in the United States. The law provides that whoever knowingly circumcises, excises or infibulates the whole or any part of the labia majora or labia minora or clitoris of another person who has not attained the age of 18 years shall be fined or imprisoned not more than 5 years or both. The law further provides that the belief that the

operation is required as a matter of custom or ritual shall not be taken into account under this law. (Title 18, United States Code, Section 116 "Female Genital Mutilation")

CHART OF FGM SPECIFIC COUNTRIES:

The following chart summarizes the estimated prevalence of FGM in the countries where it is practiced. It also shows the type of FGM, the ethnic groups or areas that practice it, the presence or absence of laws outlawing FGM and the outreach groups working to educate the populace and eradicate the practice. The chart contains general information only and is not intended to be dispositive of asylum claims. Detailed papers have also been prepared on the practice of FGM in 16 countries, including Benin, Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, Djibouti, Egypt, Ethiopia, the Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Liberia, Mali, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sudan and Togo.

OVERVIEW OF PRACTICE OF FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION

Country	Prevalence	Type of FGM	Ethnic Group/Area	Law/Outreach
Benin	30% - 50%	Excision	Most affected- Bariba, Peul, Boko, Wama, Nago.	No law against FGM. The Inter-African Committee on Traditional Practices Affecting the Health of Women and Children (IAC) leads campaign against FGM since 1982 with workshops, seminars. It collaborates with Ministry of Social Affairs and Health. Government permits distribution of educational materials in government-run clinics.
Burkina Faso	70%	Excision	All but a few of 50 ethnic groups practice FGM. Bella group and castes such as Griots and some secret societies do not practice FGM.	Recent law outlaws FGM. Provides prison term and fine. Government waging widespread campaign against FGM. National Committee set up by Presidential decree that does extensive educational work.
Cameroon	20%	Circumcision and excision	Practice in areas of far north and south west.	No law against FGM. National Committee of IAC campaigns against FGM. Activities of IAC are supported by government. Government active against FGM.
Central African Republic	50%	Circumcision and excision	Found in at least 10 of 48 ethnic groups.	Since 1966 law against FGM. Government active and has taken measures against the practice.
Chad	60%	Excision most common in all parts of the country. Infibulation confined to eastern part of country in area bordering Sudan.	In all areas of the country across ethnic and religious lines.	No law against FGM. Government has published policy opposing FGM but plays only minimal role in trying to halt FGM. IAC National Committee active in outreach programs.
Cote d'Ivoire	60%	Excision	Mande (Malinke, Foulas, Bambara, Dioula) and Voltaic groups (Semufo, Tagwana, Djimini, Lobi, Birifor, Koulango) of the north. Southern Mande of the west	No specific law against FGM. Would probably be illegal under general laws against the person. New law being drafted prohibiting FGM. NGOs campaign against FGM. Some government support but no funds yet.

Country	Prevalence	Type of FGM	Ethnic Group/Area	Law/Outreach
			(Dan, Yacouba, Toura, Gouro).	
Djibouti	90-98%	Excision and infibulation	Afars and Issa	Since 1994 Penal Code outlaws FGM with prison term and fine. NGO outreach groups campaign to educate and eradicate practice. Government support-use of its facilities; media.
Egypt	97%	Excision throughout country. Infibulation concentrated in southern part of country.	Practiced by both Muslims and Coptic Christians; across ethnic lines.	Murky area. Presidential decree in 1958 prohibited FGM making it punishable by fine and imprisonment. Later ministerial decrees allowed certain forms. Minister of Health in 1996 banned all doctors from performing FGM. Nonmedical practitioners of FGM have been arrested under current law. Many NGOs doing outreach including National Committee of IAC.
Ethiopia	90%	Circumcision and excision. Infibulation in areas bordering Sudan and Somalia.	Circumcision practiced among Amharas, Tigrayans and Jeberti Muslims living in Tigray. Excision practiced by Gurages, some Tigrayans, Oromos, and Shankilas. Infibulation practiced among pastoralists in Afar, the Somali region and parts of Harari. Mariam Girz practiced in Gojam (the Amhara region). FGM not practiced among Begas of Wellga, the Azezo, the Dorze, the Bonke, the Shama and some population groups in Godole, Konso and Gojam.	No law prohibiting FGM. Constitution prohibits harmful traditional practices. 1960 Penal Code prohibits torture and cutting off any body parts. Wide range of educational outreach activities by NGOs. National Committee of IAC does extensive activities. Government active in outreach.
Eritria	90 %	Circumcision, excision,	By almost all ethnic	No law prohibits FGM. Government makes

Country	Prevalence	Type of FGM	Ethnic Group/Area	Law/Outreach
		infibulation	and religious groups	information on FGM part of its health and general education programs.
Gambia	60-90 % average. Almost 100% of Fulas and Sarahulis	Excision. Infibulation in very small percentage of women and girls. Also special "sealing" performed.	Mandikas, Hausas, and Jolas practice excision. Sarahulis practice modified form of excision. Fulas practice "sealing" analogous to infibulation. Bambaras practice infibulation. Wollofs, Sereres and Manjangos do not practice FGM.	No law prohibits FGM. NGOs working to educate and eradicate FGM using workshops, seminars, theater, media etc. Foundation for Research on Women's Health, Productivity and the Environment (BAFFROW) developed curriculum for schools on "initiation without mutilation". Government recognizes harmful effects, supports NGO outreach. Concerned it be addressed with all due sensitivity.
Ghana	15-30%	Excision	Mainly among Muslims in far northeastern and northwestern areas. Prevalent among migrants of bordering countries in south. Ethnic groups known to practice FGM include Kussasi, Frafra, Kassena, Nankanne, Bussauri, Moshie, Manprusie, Kantansi, Walas, Sissala, Grunshie, Dargati and Lobi. Less prevalent among the educated in urban areas.	1994 law prohibits FGM. Sec. 69A of Criminal Code makes it 2d degree felony with fine and imprisonment. Art. 39 of Constitution abolishes injurious and traditional practices. History of enforcement of this criminal law. Extensive outreach by groups in collaboration with government to eradicate FGM. Government at all levels publicly supports eradication of FGM.
Guinea	70% - 90%	Circumcision, excision, infibulation	Peuhl, Malinke, Soursou, Guerze, Toma	Art. 265 of Penal Code prohibits FGM. Art. 6 of Constitution prohibits cruel and inhumane treatment. Supreme court preparing clause for Constitution prohibiting FGM. Outreach groups work with government to eradicate FGM through films, TV, seminars etc.
Guinea-Bissau	50% average; 70-80% in Fula and Mandinka areas; 20-30% in urban	Circumcision and excision	Fulas, Mandinkas, Peulh	No law prohibits FGM. In 1995 a law proposed to outlaw FGM defeated. Assembly did approve proposal to hold practitioners criminally responsible

Country	Prevalence	Type of FGM	Ethnic Group/Area	Law/Outreach
	Bissau.			if woman dies as result of FGM. Government gives some support for outreach groups doing educational seminars, publicity etc. National Committee formulated plan to fight FGM but has no money to carry it out.
Kenya	50%	Circumcision and excision. Some infibulation in far eastern areas bordering Somalia.	Throughout country but decreasing in urban areas.	No law prohibits FGM. A recent vote by Parliament defeated a motion to outlaw FGM on the basis that each tribe "has a right to choose what to do with its girls". This, despite the fact Ministries had announced government aim to outlaw FGM. Government hospitals instructed to cease practice of FGM. National Committee on Traditional Practices does outreach as do other groups.
Liberia	50%-60%	Excision	13 ethnic groups practice FGM. Mande speaking people of Western Liberia such as Gola and Kissi practice FGM. Not practiced by the Kru, Grebo or Krahn in Southeast, by Americo-Liberians (Congos) or by Muslim Mandingos.	No law prohibits FGM. Liberian National Committee collaborates with government in research, health training about harmful effects of FGM. NGOs also work in anti-FGM campaign.
Mali	90%-94%	Circumcision, excision, infibulation (southern part of country)	Most groups, including, for example, the Bambara, Dogon, Senoufo practice FGM. The Songhai and Tuareg do not practice FGM. FGM is lowest among ethnic groups in north.	No specific law prohibiting FGM, but Penal Code outlaws assault and grievous bodily harm. No nationally coordinated effort to educate on FGM. Many NGOs campaign and provide extensive education programs throughout country. Government supports these activities.
Mauritania	25% average. Among Soninkes and Halpulaar (95%). Among Moor woman (30%).	Circumcision (more common among the Soninkes) and excision (more common among Toucouleurs). Also symbolic excision using gum arabic plant based	All ethnic groups except the Wolof.	No law prohibits FGM. Practice not allowed in government hospitals. NGOs and public health workers educate on harmful effects of FGM.

Country	Prevalence	Type of FGM	Ethnic Group/Area	Law/Outreach
		product mixture to shrink the clitoris.		
Niger	20%	Excision	Peul in southern part of country; Songhai, Kourtey, Wogo	No law prohibits FGM. Government decree established committee to campaign against FGM. Government participates in educational seminars, publicity.
Nigeria	50%	Circumcision, excision and some infibulation in north west area.	Widespread throughout entire country across all ethnic groups and religions. Includes the Yoruba, Ibo, Hausa, Edos. The Nupes and Fulanis do not practice FGM.	No law prohibits FGM. No government policy against it. Many NGOs campaign and educate about dangers of FGM. Medical doctors and nurses campaign against it.
Senegal	20%	Excision	Toucouleur, Sarakole, Peul and Bambara, the Halpulaar, Mande, Diolas, Mandinguis and the Tenda. FGM seldom practiced among the Ouolof and Serere.	No law prohibits FGM. President has spoken out against FGM. Outreach groups conduct seminars, publicity, campaigns, surveys, workshops on FGM.
Sierra Leone	80% - 90%	Excision	All classes and ethnic groups except Christian Krios	No law prohibits FGM. No government support to eradicate practice. NGO grass roots education program on danger of FGM exists. NGOs carry out sensitization programs and work to eradicate practice.
Somalia	98%	Infibulation	Most if not all ethnic groups.	No law against FGM. Outreach groups campaigned to eradicate FGM. Former Barre government appointed group to eradicate FGM. Education programs existed since Somalia Academy of Arts and Sciences began studies on FGM in 1980s. Extensive work by former government's Ministry of Education.
Sudan	89% of northern Sudanese women.	Infibulation predominates. Some are switching to excision instead of infibulation.	All ethnic groups. Predominantly infibulation throughout most of northern, north eastern and north	First African country to outlaw FGM. 1946 Penal Code prohibited infibulation but allowed less severe forms of FGM. Ratified again in 1957. Prohibited infibulation but allowed excision of projecting part of

Country	Prevalence	Type of FGM	Ethnic Group/Area	Law/Outreach
			western regions. FGM is virtually nonexistent in three regions of southern Sudan.	clitoris; punishment of fine and imprisonment. 1993 Penal Code does not mention FGM, leaving its status unclear. Outreach groups working to eradicate it for 50 years. Intensive campaign today.
Tanzania	10%	Excision, infibulation	Christian Chagga groups near Mount Kilimanjaro. Population groups- Dodoma, Singida, Kilimanjaro, Mara region, Morogono, Iringa and Somali immigrants.	No law prohibits FGM. Government efforts to eradicate practice. National Committee carries out extensive education programs, surveys, studies, research.
Togo	12% average. Ethnic groups vary. (Cotocoli, Tchamba, Mossi, Yanga and Peulh show 85-98%). Moba-22%; Gourma-12%.	Excision.	Cotocoli, Tchamba, Peulh, Mossi, Yanga, Moba, Gourma, Ana-Ife. Adja-Ewe and Akposso-Akebou do not practice FGM.	No law prohibits FGM. Human rights and women's organizations educate rural populations on harm of FGM. Since 1984, with help of government, National Committee of IAC holds seminars, workshops to educate about FGM.
Uganda	5%	Circumcision and excision.	Prevalent in only one district - Kapchorwa.	No law yet prohibits FGM. National Assembly bill would prohibit FGM. Government publicly condemns FGM. National Committee of IAC works to eradicate FGM and educate on harmful effects.
Zaire	5%	Excision	In ethnic groups living in the northern part of country above the equator.	No law prohibits FGM. Outreach efforts unknown.

This chart contains general information only and is not intended to be dispositive of asylum claims. Please refer to specific country information where available.

Prepared by the Office of Asylum Affairs, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, Department of State, February 19, 1997

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TOSTAN

POUR L'EDUCATION
NON-FORMELLE
EN AFRIQUE



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FAX

TO : KATIE BUTTON
OFFICE OF THE FIRST LADY
THE WHITE HOUSE
(202) 456-6244

FROM : MOLLY MELCHING / TOSTAN / SENEGAL

DATE : March 3, 1998

Dear Ms. Button,

Hello! On 23 December 1997, I sent you a fax with information you had requested concerning the status of our Non-Governmental Organization TOSTAN working in basic education in Senegal. I have heard nothing from you since, but I hope that you received the fax and all the information you needed.

Recently, an advance team from the White House came to the village of Malicounda in Senegal where the women of the TOSTAN basic education class have been active in the movement to abolish the traditional practice of Female Genital Mutilation. The women of Malicounda performed the play they have used to educate other women on the need to end this harmful operation.

Since then, I have understood that the logistics involved make a presidential visit to the village of Malicounda improbable, but I still hope that the First Lady will somehow be able to meet with the women, even if it were in Dakar, and encourage them in their difficult struggle to end Female Circumcision. Their efforts have already been recognized by the President of Senegal who is now introducing a law against FGM and encouraging others to follow the example of the women of Malicounda who brought about change through education and dialogue.

P 02

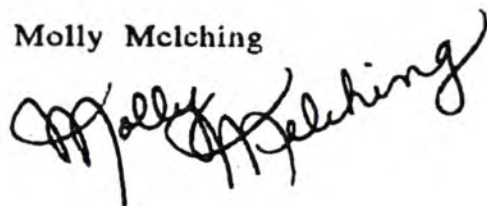
A show of support from Ms. Clinton herself for the effort of these village women who took the courageous initiative to end FGM and are actively mobilizing to protect the health and lives of other women in their Bambara community, would tremendously contribute to the process of social transformation going on in Senegal and other African countries where FGM is still practiced at a rate as high as 90% (in Mali, for example). We are talking about Ms. Clinton contributing to saving the health and lives of thousands of young girls each year who suffer the consequences of this operation. Because it is a subject that has been taboo for many people over the past years, few leaders have had the courage to speak out on the subject and very few significant results leading to the eradication of the practice have been noted in West Africa. Malicounda is, in itself, a very small achievement, yet this one significant decision led recently to 12 other villages, representing 8,000 people, to declare their solidarity with Malicounda and end FGM forever. The media coverage and the support of the President were crucial factors in their decision.

The time is right for Ms. Clinton to speak out on this issue in Senegal and because she is so highly respected by women in West Africa, I strongly believe her support could make a real impact in the region.

I know that you have many considerations when planning the presidential trip, but I do hope you will keep this in mind! If you need any further information from me, please feel free to ask at any time of day or night. Once again, I am so convinced of the importance of Ms. Clinton's support for these village women fighting for the abolition of FGM that I will be thrilled to do anything necessary to make this possible.

Thank you and warm greetings
from Senegal.

Molly Melching



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FAX

TO: AVIVA STEINBERG / 202-4565340
FOR: JAMES LOFTUS
FROM: MOLLY MELCHING / TOSTAN 221-51-34-27

AUGUST 8, 199

Dear James (and Aviva),

Hello from SENEGAL! I hope you got my phone message the other day. I just found this fax number among my papers from Mrs. Clinton's visit to Saam Njaay and hoped that Ms. Steinberg would not mind if I send this through her. It's the only way I knew to get it to you!

As I told you on the phone, something really important has happened here in one of the villages where TOSTAN has done our basic education program for 2 years. The women of the class of Malicounda Bambara decided to stop Female Genital Mutilation although it is a tradition their ethnic group (the Bambaras, originally from Mali) have performed on their young daughters for centuries.

I wanted Mrs. Clinton to know about this because it is a controversial subject much discussed around the world these days. For TOSTAN, it is truly a breakthrough in our education program because these women have "gone public" and are leading a campaign to get other communities to stop also.

I wanted to write Mrs. Clinton so that in her travels throughout the United States and the world, she may use this bold example of women taking hold of their destiny to inspire and influence other women who, because of tradition, are afraid to speak out on the subject.

I hope that you will read the letter and then I would greatly appreciate it if you could see that Mrs. Clinton gets the letter and understands how important it is.

Thank you and I hope that both you and Ms. Steinberg are well and in peace.

Warm greetings.
Molly Melching



TOSTAN - UNICEF

Basic Education Program for Women and Children

Languages: *Wolof, Pulaar, Mandinka and Serrere*

Funding: *UNICEF*

Dates: *1988 - 1997*

Module 1	
Themes for Discussion	A process for problem-solving (Problem identification and analysis, choosing appropriate solutions, planning skills for implementing a solution, evaluation skills)
Methods	Theater, flip-charts, stories, pictures, games.
Literacy Learning	An Introduction to Reading and Writing, pre-reading and writing skills.
Numeracy learning	Number 0 through 9, simple addition and subtraction.

Module 2	
Themes for Discussion	Application of skills learned in Module 1 related to village health and hygiene.
Methods	Theater, flip-charts, stories, pictures, games.
Literacy learning	Study of texts, sentences, words, syllables and letter.
Numeracy learning	Addition and Subtraction. Telling time, using the calender.

Module 3	
Themes for Discussion	Basic health information on the Oral Rehydration Therapy and Vaccinations
Methods	Theater, flip-charts, stories, pictures, games
Literacy learning	Study of texts, sentences, words, syllables and letters.
Numeracy learning	Addition and Subtraction with carry-over.

Module 4	
Themes for Discussion	Management of financial and material resources
Methods	Theater, flip-charts, stories, pictures, games
Literacy learning	Elementary grammar lessons. Reading and writing skills.
Numeracy learning	Multiplication.

Module 5	
Themes for Discussion	Leadership and group dynamics.
Methods	Theater, flip-charts, stories, and pictures
Literacy learning	The writer's workshop.
Numeracy learning	Division

Module 6	
Themes for Discussion	How to do a Feasibility Study.
Methods	Theater, flip-charts, stories, and pictures
Literacy learning	Reading and grammar skills.
Numeracy learning	Mathematics for doing a feasibility study. Mathematics.

TOSTAN Modules for Continued Education

(Each Module Includes 24 Sessions and Lasts 2 Months)

- | | |
|------------------|---|
| Module 7 | Women's Health (2 Month Program) funded by American Jewish World Service reached 4,000 women in 1996. |
| Module 8 | Early childhood development funded by American Jewish World Service to reach 2,000 couples in 1997 |
| Module 9 | Promotion of Democracy and Human Rights - 1996. Funded by the United States Government. |
| Module 10 | Nature resource management funded by USAID (NGO support project). |

March 13, 1997

Dear Mrs. Clinton,

American Jewish World Service (AJWS) is honored that you have chosen to visit *Tostan* in Senegal during your upcoming trip to Africa. AJWS is a non-profit organization that works in partnership with local grassroots organizations to provide non-sectarian support for agriculture, education, health, and economic development throughout the developing world. We have been working in partnership with *Tostan* since 1994, to develop and implement the "Women's and Children's Health, and Early Childhood Development" project.

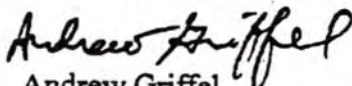
Through this participatory, action-oriented training, over 6,000 women are now learning about their health, their bodies, and their human rights. For the first time ever, women are discussing and addressing sensitive issues such as menopause, family violence and female genital mutilation.

This year, *Tostan* will begin the second part of the AJWS training program, involving children's health and early childhood development. The 48-session module will address the issues that affect a child's health and development, including family planning, nutrition, vaccinations, common illness, and mental health.

Through our volunteer program, the Jewish Volunteer Corps, AJWS has provided *Tostan* with two skilled professionals who assisted the *Tostan* staff with strategic planning, computerized record-keeping, and production of a promotional video.

We very much appreciate your commitment to grassroots human and economic development throughout the developing world and hope you will have a productive and inspiring trip.

Sincerely,


Andrew Griffel
President/CEO

GENEVA 06232

File FGM Page 1 of 2

~~UNCLAS~~

GENEVA 06232

UNCLAS

CLAN01:

ACTION: PSA

INFO:

IEA DCM AMB USIS RMA PSAH PC LA IRM

DISSEMINATION: PSA
CHARGE: PROGAPPROVED: PSA:RLOFTIS
DRAFTED: PSA:ADANAHER (PSA/CB)
CLEARED: NONEVZCZCGVI600
RR RUEHC
DE RUEHGV #6232 2721315
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
R 291315Z SEP 98
FM USMISSION GENEVA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9050
BT
UNCLAS GENEVA 006232

12958: N/A

TAGS: ODIP, PHUM, AORC, KWMN

SUBJECT: LETTER FOR FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM
CLINTON

1. MISSION HAS RECEIVED A COPY OF A LETTER TO FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON FROM MS. BARBARA RAS-WORK, PRESIDENT OF THE INTER-AFRICAN COMMITTEE ON TRADITIONAL PRACTICES. MS. RAS-WORK APPEARED WITH THE FIRST LADY ON THE MISSION-SPONSORED PANEL ON HEALTH IN GENEVA IN MAY.

2. TEXT FOLLOWS:

GENEVA, 24 SEPTEMBER 1998

DEAR MRS. CLINTON,

IN MAY THIS YEAR, I HAD THE HONOUR AND PRIVILEGE OF MEETING WITH YOU AT A ROUNDTABLE TO DISCUSS THE ISSUE OF HEALTH AND HUMAN RIGHTS, HELD AT THE AMERICAN EMBASSY IN GENEVA.

WE ARE GRATEFUL INDEED THAT, IN COMPANY WITH THE PRESIDENT, YOU HAVE ALWAYS FOCUSED ON ISSUES AND HAVE SHOWN DEEP CONCERN FOR AFRICA AND OTHER AREAS OF EXTREME POVERTY IN THE WORLD. YOUR PERSONAL ABILITY TO TARGET HARMFUL TRADITIONAL PRACTICES SUCH AS FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION HEARTENS AND ENCOURAGES ALL OF US WORKING FOR A BETTER FUTURE FOR MEN AND WOMEN AND THEIR FAMILIES.

Letter.

I have
original.

UNCLAS

GENEVA 06232

GENEVA 06232

Page 2 of 2

THE INTER-AFRICAN COMMITTEE MEMBERS SEND THEIR
SUPPORT AND VERY BEST WISHES TO YOU AND YOUR
FAMILY. OUR THOUGHTS AND PRAYERS ARE WITH YOU.

YOURS SINCERELY,

BERHANE RAS-WORK
PRESIDENT
INTER-AFRICAN COMMITTEE

3. LETTER IS BEING POUCHED TO IO/ESA - SHARON
KOTOK.

MOOSE
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NNNN

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GENEVA 06232

Page 2 of 2

file FGM



United States Department of State

Washington, D.C. 20520

Office of the Senior Coordinator
for International Women's Issues
September 9, 1999

FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION (FGM)/FEMALE GENITAL CUTTING (FGC)**WHAT IS THE UNITED STATES DOING ABOUT IT?**

Several laws were passed in 1996 involving a number of U.S. government agencies in the area of female genital mutilation or female genital cutting (also referred to as female circumcision.) The following discussion is a brief update on the government response to these laws, as well as other government activities in this area.

U.S. Department of State

Interagency Working Group. The Department of State is responsible for coordinating U.S. government responses to international women's issues. FGM/FGC is one such issue. Lois Gochnauer in the Office of the Senior Coordinator for International Women's Issues, heads an Interagency Working Group that coordinates U.S. government efforts on FGM/FGC.

The Group includes representatives from U.S. government agencies including the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID); the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS); the Treasury Department; the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS); the U.S. Information Agency (USIA); and various offices and bureaus within the Department of State.

The Group also meets with representatives of American and African non-governmental organizations who are involved in FGM/FGC issues.

The U.S. views FGM/FGC as a harmful health practice and a human rights violation. It has been working to support local community organizations in countries where it is practiced to provide information and education about the harmful effects of the practice and for its eradication.

Democracy and Human Rights Fund (DHRF). In FY 1999 the State Department provided a total of \$3.1 million for the DHRF in our Embassies in Africa. Of that amount, a sizeable portion was used to fund local projects for women. Many of these projects focused on FGM/FGC.

The Embassies use these funds to make small grants for locally initiated projects. Proposals from NGOs are reviewed by the Embassies that then submit the proposals they wish to fund to Washington for review and final approval by a panel from the Department of State, USIA and USAID.

In FY 1999 DHRF provided funds for projects that focused on FGM/FGC in:

- Chad - Implementation of a plan to counter FGM/FGC.
- Djibouti - Anti-FGM/FGC projects.
- Ethiopia - Media campaign to discourage the practice of FGM/FGC and forced child marriages.
- Ghana - Education on specific issues including FGM/FGC; workshops on the health hazards of FGM/FGC; setting up a community watchdog program to increase vigilance on FGM/FGC. (A number of projects were also funded in FY 1998 including re-training practitioners of FGM/FGC; workshops to educate police, teachers and women leaders about the law that makes FGM/FGC illegal, as well as about the health hazards of the practice; research throughout Ghana to document prevalence of the practice.)
- Senegal - Theater to combat the practice of FGM/FGC.
- Somalia - Education project on harmful effects of FGM/FGC.
- Togo - Assistance to the Inter-African Committee on Traditional Practices Affecting the Health of Women and Children (IAC) in its campaign against FGM/FGC.

Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)

Under PL 104-134 (enacted April 26, 1996), HHS was mandated to develop materials for physicians and nurses on how to treat women who have been subjected to the practice of FGM/FGC. As a result, HHS recently issued a technical manual, *Caring for Women With Circumcision*, for health care providers including doctors, nurses and midwives to provide health care for women who have been subjected to this practice.

The manual serves as a clinical guide to health care providers on how to manage the physical complications of FGM/FGC; provides information on social and cultural meanings of the practice; deals with counseling and education; discusses the legal status of the practice in the U.S. as well as in other countries, etc. The manual, which was written by Dr. Nahid Toubia of RAINBO, was funded through the HHS Office for Women's Health and thus produced in a true public/private partnership with RAINBO. It has been distributed to all medical schools in the U.S. and will also go to Title 10 family planning clinics. There has been such a demand, that HHS is doing a second printing of the manual.

Another of HHS's partners, the Immigration and Refugee Services of America, produced a manual for refugee resettlement caseworkers on how to talk with immigrants about the subject of FGM/FGC. The manual is intended to create a basis for discussion about this practice and hopefully bring about behavioral change.

As part of the legislation, HHS consulted with local ethnic groups in seven communities across the United States where many immigrants from countries that practice FGM/FGC have settled. They held meetings/listening sessions in Washington DC, New York City, Atlanta, San Diego, Houston, Boston and Chicago. The purpose was to get input from these community groups and experts to develop outreach programs, which would best provide education about the harmful health effects of the practice.

As a result of these meetings, HHS is now providing funds in a number of its existing refugee women's health and family strengthening programs to provide education about the health effects of this practice. These have impacted immigrant communities across the U.S. including, particularly, those in Los Angeles, San Diego, Houston, New York and Boston.

U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)

USAID addresses FGM/FGC as a sociocultural health and human rights issue. It's cornerstone in approaching the eradication of this practice is to empower women in the countries where it occurs; to undertake actions that will halt the practice; to address the issue themselves. In other words, this is participatory development - helping women to work within their own communities and political structures for change. USAID believes that eradication

efforts should be multisectoral in approach and that entire communities must be involved in these efforts in order to create an environment for change.

USAID has supported education, training and advocacy programs dealing with FGM/FGC in Kenya and The Gambia.

USAID has funded research on this issue in a number of countries including Mali, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Guinea and Eritrea. In Egypt a program has been implemented in several cities which will investigate the status of uncircumcised women. It is called the "Positive Deviance Inquiry" program.

Data collection under the Demographic and Health Surveys Program has been conducted in the Central African Republic, Cote d'Ivoire, Egypt, Eritrea, Mali, northern Sudan and Yemen.

USAID has provided funds for programs for the elimination of FGM/FGC since 1994. In 1995 Congress earmarked one million dollars for FGM/FGC. USAID spent a total of approximately \$807,000 for FGM/FGC programs in FY 1998 and expects to spend a total of \$800,000 for these programs in FY 1999.

U.S. Treasury Department

Section 579 of the Foreign Operations, Export Financing and Related Appropriations Act, that was passed in 1996, required the Secretary of the Treasury to instruct the U.S. Executive Director of each international financial institution to use the voice and vote of the U.S. to oppose any loan or other utilization of the funds of their respective institution, other than to address basic human needs, for the government of any country which the Secretary of Treasury determines: (1) has, as a cultural custom, a known history of the practice of FGM and (2) has not taken steps to implement educational programs designed to prevent the practice of FGM.

The Treasury Department determined that no country to date has failed to meet the legislation's criteria and no instructions to oppose loans to any countries based on the legislation have been issued.

The Treasury Department has been working with the Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs) to address the practice of FGM. U.S. Executive Directors at the World Bank and the African Development Bank (AfDB) have been and will

continue to advocate policies and programs aimed at changing the cultural practices that promote FGM/FGC. As a result of these efforts, the World Bank and the AfDB have developed programs to support grass root efforts by NGOs providing literacy campaigns, training and micro credit activities to combat FGM.

Specific World Bank FGM-related programs include a Poverty Assessment for Djibouti, financial support for legal and literacy programs in Togo, Mali and Mauritania and Health loans for Cote d'Ivoire and Eritrea. At the AfDB, FGM activities have been included in the Mali Poverty Alleviation project, the Senegal Poverty Alleviation project and the Mauritania Education project. The Treasury Department and the U.S. Executive Directors will continue their advocacy work to raise the FGM issue at the MDBs.

Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS)

Section 644 of the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996 requires the Immigration and Naturalization Service, in cooperation with the Department of State, to provide information to visa applicants in countries where FGM is commonly practiced, concerning the severe harm to health caused by FGM and the potential legal consequences in the United States for performing FGM or allowing a child under ones care to be subjected to FGM.

Notices have been prepared in six languages (English, French, Arabic, Swahili, Amharic, Somali and Portuguese) and are being distributed to U.S. Embassies in countries where FGM is commonly practiced for distribution to visa applicants and for posting in visa waiting rooms at our Embassies.

The countries include Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Cote d'Ivoire, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Eritrea, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Kenya, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Tanzania, Togo and Uganda.

United States Information Agency (USIA)

USIA has a Website for information on FGM/FGC. It is usia.gov/usis.html

White House

First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton participated in a roundtable discussion on Human Rights: Women and the Girl Child on May 15, 1998 at the U.S. Mission to the UN in Geneva. One of the subjects discussed was female genital mutilation or cutting. Ms. Berhane Ras-Work, President of the Inter-African Committee on Traditional Practices Affecting the Health of Women and Children (IAC) participated in the discussion on this topic.

On her visit to Senegal on April 2, 1998, the First Lady held a round table discussion about FGM/FGC with 20 women from the village of Malicounda Bambara, which abolished this practice in 1997. Also participating in the discussion were men and women from other villages that had abolished the practice; Senegal government officials; an NGO representative working with these villages and a Malian activist on FGM/FGC issues.

At a human rights round table chaired by President Clinton on April 2, 1998 in Dakar, Senegal, the topic of FGM/FGC was also raised.

CONTACT:

Lois Gochnauer, Senior Advisor on Violence Against Women,
Office of the Senior Coordinator for International
Women's Issues

United States Department of State • 2201 C St., NW •
Room 6936 • Washington, D.C. 20520
Telephone (202) 647-6227 • Fax (202) 647-5337



The President's Interagency Council on Women

First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton
Honorary Chair

Secretary of State Madeleine K. Albright
Chair

Secretary of Health and Human Services
Donna Shalala, Immediate Past Chair

NGO PUBLIC BRIEFING AGENDA

Thursday, September 9, 1999
Loy Henderson Auditorium

2:00 PM

OVERVIEW AND WELCOME

Theresa Loar, Director of the President's Interagency Council on Women and Senior Coordinator for International Women's Issues, State Department

KUWAITI WOMEN AND THE RIGHT TO VOTE

Ambassador James A. Larocco, United States Ambassador to Kuwait

2:30 PM

BREAK-OUT SESSIONS

- Women 2000: Beijing Plus Five (Loy Henderson Auditorium)
Update on regional outreach across the United States and further consultation with NGOs.
Panel Speakers:
 - Ann Lewis, Counselor to the President and Chair of the Women 2000 Working Group
 - Lidia Soto-Harmon, Deputy Director, President's Interagency Council on Women
- Women in Science and Technology (Room 1105)
How to expand the vital role of women in science and technology.
Panel Speakers:
 - Dr. Martha Krebs, Director of the Office of Science, Department of Energy
 - Joanne Isham, Associate Deputy Director for Science and Technology, Central Intelligence Agency.

(over)

BREAK-OUT SESSIONS (CONTINUED)

- **Female Genital Mutilation (Room 1107)**
Update on what the US Government is doing in the area of FGM and discussion of asylum claims based on FGM.
Panel Speakers:
 - Lois Gochnauer, Office of the Senior Coordinator for International Women's Issues, State Department
 - Kelly Ryan, Office of General Counsel, INS
- **Trafficking in Women and Children (Room 1207)**
Update on current legislation and interagency efforts to combat trafficking in women and children.
Panel Speakers:
 - Anita Botti, Deputy Director of International Women's Initiatives, State Department and Chair, Interagency Task Force on Trafficking
 - Stephen Warnath, Special Counsel and Senior Advisor on Trafficking, President's Interagency Council on Women

file FGM

Dear Hillary,

I just wanted to be the first to let you know that the law against Female Genital Cutting was passed last night at around 11:30 PM in the National Assembly. The law reads:

Article 299 bis

"Six months to five years of imprisonment is the punishment for anyone having violated or attempting to violate the physical integrity of the genital organs of a person of the female sex by total or partial cutting of one or many of its elements, by infibulation, by making it less sensitive, or by any other means.

The maximum penalty will be applied when these sexual mutilations will have been carried out or favored by a person from the medical or paramedical corps.

When these acts lead to death, the penalty of forced labor for life will be pronounced.

Any person who through contributions, promises, influence, threats, intimidations, or abuse of authority or power has provoked these sexual mutilations or given instructions for them to be committed will be punished with the same sentence."

I am proud to say that the women and men of Malicounda, Medina Cherif and Ker Simbara, many of whom you met at the Hotel in Dakar, played an important role in the passing of the law. They addressed "deputies" from the National Assembly on Tuesday, January 12 and spoke of the need to pass the law, but to accompany it with measures for education and social mobilization. The women's parliamentary network listened very carefully and actually tried to request a delay for the APPLICATION of the law, based on the testimony of people who had already decided to stop the practice. The villagers and the Malicounda experience were CONSTANTLY referred to during the debate in the Assembly (which lasted six hours) and their opinions cited. Most deputies were against FGC but are very worried indeed that a repressive law might have the opposite effect of what was intended. Already there have been reports of mass cuttings in the Southeastern region of Senegal - in Kedougou, for example, where 120 girls were cut by one person, probably in anticipation of the law. This issue is extremely complex!!

By the way, several people told me that this was the first time a group of villagers had come to testify before members of the Parlement!!! It was quite exciting for all of us. The villagers told the deputies that your visit and support had helped them in their campaign to end FGC - Demba Diawara (the older man whom I always say has a Doctorate in Wisdom and Social Transformation) told them that the President of the United States himself had congratulated him on his work and that this helped in his motivation to continue talking with other villagers. He has succeeded in convincing 10 other Bambara villages to end FGC of their own accord in the past 3 months and we are now planning a meeting of these villages to publicly declare their decision.

We have just received news of your generous gift to TOSTAN and are very excited. I will, of course, write a separate thank you letter but just want you to know that we received it and are very, very happy. Since

it arrived at the same time as the vote, we may want to use it as the first contribution for education and social mobilization in ending FGC. For example, for transportation money to help villagers like Demba and his niece get out to other villages. This may encourage others to give for that purpose and help TOSTAN at a time when we are still having serious financial problems. According to the UNICEF representative, UNICEF has no funds as of March, 1999. And, for example, our two old, old cars are constantly breaking down - I spent New Year's night in our car on the highway in the middle of the bush on my way back from visits to villages in the Southern region!! Of course, I probably need to come back to the States for serious fundraising, but I can not pull myself away at this crucial time when so many things are happening.

We did receive money through the Population Council (with help from USAID - Marge Horn and Hannah Baldwin) in order for TOSTAN to write up the entire experience. It is almost finished and I will, of course, send you a copy.

Once again, thank you so much for your support during these past two years. We are very hopeful that this law will work for the women and not against them - the next months will be crucial in assuring that there is not a backlash...

I think of you and your husband often and know that things will work out for the best. Meanwhile, the villagers and all the staff of TOSTAN send their prayers and love.

Warm greetings - MOLLY

Molly Melching
TOSTAN
BP: 326-Thies
Senegal
Tel. 51.10.51
Fax. 51.34.27

file FGM

TOSTAN

POUR L'EDUCATION
NON-FORMELLE
EN AFRIQUE



TOSTAN

BP 326

THIES, SENEGAL

TEL: 221-51-10-51

FAX: 221-51-31-27

FAX

TO: MRS. HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON

OFFICE OF THE FIRST LADY
THE WHITE HOUSE
(202) 456-6244

FROM: MOLLY MELCHING
TEL: 703-660-6543

DATE: May 5, 1998

Dear Mrs. Clinton,

How can I ever thank you enough for presiding the Roundtable on Female Genital Mutilation in Dakar on April 2, 1998? It meant so much to the villagers who have led this initiative over the past months and certainly reinforced their commitment and dedication to the movement they have begun on the grassroots level. We plan to use your public endorsement in support of these villagers as we continue our work and it will be most helpful when representatives from fifteen villages in the Kolda region of Senegal meet at the beginning of June, 1998 to discuss their position concerning FGM in their villages. This is the first time that members of the Pulaar ethnic group, known for their reserve and discretion, have chosen to speak out publicly on this subject and, hopefully, make a public commitment. We feel this meeting will be extremely important for influencing the rest of the southern region of Senegal where presently the majority of the population now practices FGM.

I have also noticed an increased awareness in FGM since I have been in the United States this past week and am certain that your interest in the subject has made an impact.

As happened last year, your visit to Senegal this April was inspiring to me, particularly in light of all the lessons learned this year at TOSTAN and in relation to your book It Takes A Village. Indeed, the Malicounda experience is not the only illustration of powerful and lasting social transformation which can be achieved when members of the entire community come together to make important decisions. However, in view of our various experiences this year, I think I would add to your title: It Takes a Human Rights Village! Allow me to explain.

We began doing human rights education after extensive participatory research with hundreds of women in villages in several regions of Senegal in 1994-95. The results of that research indicated that the women's problems related to the family, health, education, the environment, law, participation in public life, and the economy were often due to a lack of general knowledge of rights and responsibilities, both on their part as well as of the entire community. We then decided

not only to strive to inform the village women of their rights and responsibilities through a process we now call "active education" (I prefer this to non-formal education), but also to help them appropriate these rights by using their own stories and experiences, then providing a nurturing space (the classroom) to work together on strategies to find solutions and help achieve desired change based on the social, cultural and economic environment in which they live.

Experience with this active human rights education has led to rapid and positive social transformation that I have never before witnessed in my work in Senegal these past 23 years. To give you just two examples:

- In the village of Mbardiack, a woman participant of the basic education class was physically abused by her husband. It was not the first time, and the women met immediately to discuss what they should do. They selected a delegation and went to the offender's home accompanied by the Village Chief and Imam (Muslim religious leader) where the women presented a sketch they had practiced during their class, clearly demonstrating that people, especially women and children, have a basic human and universal right to be protected from physical violence. Without **directly** accusing the man, the women, supported by respected male village leaders, got across their point through the theater. The man apologized to everyone and gave the women's organization ten dollars. He told them he would never hit anyone again. He explained that he had seen his father hit his mother and thought that that is simply what a man was supposed to do. He said he had never heard about these "rights" before and wanted to learn more. Encouraged by his response, the women did the play in front of the entire community and led an in-depth discussion on the themes presented when it ended.

- After studying Module 8 on Early Childhood Development which uses universal children's rights as a reference for all subjects developed during the module, the women of Toubatoul recognized that by sending their 10-12 year old girls to work as maids in neighboring towns, they were violating many children's rights such as children's right to live with their parents, the right to education, the right to love and affection, the right to not be given work not suitable for young children or to not be exploited by others and also the right to play. (Please note:

This is a common practice throughout Senegal because parents want the monthly income they pocket from their daughter's work, even though it is only about \$10 a month. These young girls are expected to do an incredible amount of work for their employers and are often occupied from 7 am until 10 PM. They rarely receive love from these families and are sometimes abused since there is no family to protect them.)

The class decided to use strategies they had discussed throughout the module to change the situation. The President of the Women's Group called for meetings in the different neighborhoods of the village and the women presented a play and poems on children's rights and the negative consequences of sending children off as maids at such a young age. These were used to provoke comments and encourage debate with other villagers. They discussed the human rights abuses involved in this practice, making reference to specific articles violated, feeling these legal references would make more of an impact. In March, 1998 they organized a special day of consciousness-raising on this specific subject, inviting village leaders and local government authorities to attend and speak out on the practice. A communal decision was made that day to abolish the practice of sending young girls off as maids and a committee was elected to follow through on future abuses.

These experiences, along with the Malicounda commitment and the Diabougou Declaration, are only several examples among numerous others that clearly demonstrate the impact an entire village can make when the members of the community fully participate together in the decisions which affect their lives and that of their children; when they have the skills, confidence and courage to envision and develop strategies for positive social transformation in respect of human rights norms, taking into account their own socio-cultural environment. It takes a village.....it takes a village guided by universal human rights standards to ensure more equality, justice and prosperity for all.

Because of these experiences, TOSTAN, in collaboration with UNICEF, the Ministry of Women, Children and the Family and the Senegalese Organization for Human Rights, is presently in the experimental stage of a five day training program on Human Rights Education for 10 pilot villages in the Thiès region where women have already studied the TOSTAN basic education program. The idea again is

that it doesn't just take a class to achieve major social transformation, it does indeed take a village; therefore, the whole village must be informed of human rights, discuss and debate the meaning and application of the rights in their daily lives, identify on a consensual basis violations of these rights in their village, discuss the responsibilities inherent in these rights, and establish an action plan to work on eliminating human rights violations in the community.

We began these trainings only one month ago, yet are astonished by the large turnouts, by the enthusiasm, as well as the decisions and actions already taken in the villages where the training has occurred: for example, plans for abolishing violence against women, discrimination against other ethnic groups, and exploitation of children in the work force, and for promoting the education of children, particularly girls. In one large village (Ngeukhokh), the training led to massive enrollment of children in the public school and meetings with local authorities on how to improve the quality of and access to education for their children.

I will keep you informed of the results of these human rights villages over the next months, but already I am excited by the prospects for bringing about change **BY THE PEOPLE THEMSELVES** at the grassroots level. If it continues as it has started, I believe it will be an important model for other villages in other countries. We have also created interesting materials for training on the human rights instruments for women, men and children that could be used elsewhere.

Mrs. Clinton, once again, thank you for your continued support. As I said at the Malicounda Roundtable, you are a model for many of us working out in the field. Whenever I am confronted with what seem like insurmountable problems, I think of you and how you have dealt with so much more....and then I just keep plodding along!! (Sometimes it's not so easy!)

I also want you to know how much I appreciated the very professional, yet amicable way in which the different activities were organized by your staff while in Dakar, especially Katie Button with whom I was in constant contact.

Thank you again and warm greetings.

Molly

THE WHITE HOUSE

Elimination of Female Genital Mutilation[Help](#) [Site Map](#) [Text Only](#)

**Roundtable on the Elimination of Female
Genital Mutilation**
**Remarks by First Lady Hillary Rodham
Clinton**
Dakar, Senegal
April 2, 1998

April 1998

**Elimination of
Female Genital
Mutilation**▶ President &
First LadyVice President &
Mrs. GoreRecord of
ProgressThe Briefing
RoomGateway to
GovernmentContacting the
White HouseWhite House
for KidsWhite House
HistoryWhite House
Tours

Let me start by thanking all of you who are here this morning. And I want to thank, first of all, the minister and I particularly want to thank the minister for her work on this issue and many others. And I want the minister to convey to the president what an example he is for not just Senegal and Africa but the entire world with the stand he has taken.

I also want to thank our representative from Mali. We know that the issue of FGM in Mali is a very serious one, and I want to thank you for bringing to our attention the statistics and the work that you are doing in Mali. And I know that you will have the support and solidarity of women, not only in Senegal and Africa, but around the world, for your work. I want to thank our moderator for her excellent job and honor the work that she has done. And I want to thank Molly Melching for the work that TOSTAN and that she personally has done on this issue and so many others.

But mostly, I want to thank the great women and men who are here today. The work that you have done in Malicounda is an example that will stand as a model for all time and all people. I hope you understand how important your work is not only to your families and your girls but to girls all over Senegal, Mali, Africa – everywhere where custom and tradition in any way poses a danger to girls' health.

And in your skit I saw how difficult this has been. It was not easy for women and men to come together to stand against and speak out against a very ancient custom. And as we saw in the skit, even sometimes

mothers who did not want their girls to be circumcised felt like they had to because of this ancient custom. And as we heard, the circumcisers often themselves felt they had to continue the custom because it made them a living. So you had many obstacles to face when you began your struggle to bring to everyone's attention all of the difficulties, the pain, the hemorrhaging, the suffering, even the deaths associated with female circumcision.

This is not only a very wonderful example of what you have done on this issue. This is an example of how democracy works; how women's voices, combined with some very brave men's voices, can be heard. It is also an example, as we heard, of how you can make it clear to people that there is no religious basis for this custom, that the Koran does not say anything about this, and that Islam does not support this. And I appreciate very much the message to that effect.

The courage and commitment of the women, the men, and the religious leaders of Malicounda has served now as an example to bring together thousands and thousands of other Senegalese. So you have started a great movement. And I hope that this movement, along with the very strong statement of the president and the work of the minister, will end FGM in Senegal. And that Senegal will then be an example, because of your leadership, to Mali, to Egypt, to every other country and every other family and every other village because they can say, "If the people of Malicounda can do it, we can do it." And our girls are healthier, they are happier, and the men and the women are working together, and we should be able to do this as well.

I have written about what you have accomplished. I have written about it in a newspaper column that will go all over the world because I want the world to know about the men and the women and the religious leaders of Malicounda and what you have done for your girls. You have changed history. You have done something so very important, and I am honored – honored – to be with you. I feel a great sense of pride and honor as I look at you because I know that you have accomplished – more than anything else – you have created a new future for the girls and the boys.

Because, after all, the girls become the mothers, and the mothers must give birth to healthy children and be able to raise those children for the village to continue, and you have made that much more possible than it used to be. So I thank you. I thank

you for your work. I thank you for your leadership. And I thank you for making this long journey early in the morning with your babies to come here to be with all of us. And I want the rest of us to applaud the people of Malicounda.

I am just very proud to be with these extremely brave and courageous leaders of change.

President and First Lady	Vice President and Mrs. Gore
Record of Progress	The Briefing Room
Gateway to Government	Contacting the White House
White House for Kids	White House History
White House Tours	Help Text Only
Privacy Statement	

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March 23, 1998; Monday

14:44 Eastern Time

SECTION: International news

LENGTH: 305 words

HEADLINE: Hillary Decries Female Circumcision

BYLINE: TIM SULLIVAN

DATELINE: ACCRA, Ghana

BODY:

Moved by discussions she heard during her last trip to Africa, Hillary Rodham Clinton lashed out Monday at the traditional practice of female genital mutilation, calling the custom "sometimes deadly but always inhumane."

Mrs. Clinton, in Ghana on the first day of a 12-day presidential journey across Africa, praised this West African country for outlawing the tradition.

"I want to congratulate this nation for your leadership, not only by passing a law outlawing this practice, but by making sure this law changes hearts and minds so that individuals understand what the law means and why it should be enforced in every village," she told representatives of dozens of women's groups at an Accra day-care center.

Female genital mutilation, also known as female circumcision, involves cutting part of a girl's vagina or clitoris. It is commonly practiced in many countries throughout Africa and the Middle East.

It has, in recent years, become a divisive issue in many countries defended as an important rite handed down through generations to protect a girl's honor, cleanliness and virginity but criticized as an abusive custom that can lead to years of pain and medical treatment.

Aides said that while Mrs. Clinton had long been concerned with the health problems that can go along with the practice, she became increasingly interested in the issue after prominent Eritrean women talked about the custom and its effects during her visit to Africa last March.

Mrs. Clinton made her comments after being welcomed to the 31st December Women's Movement Day Care Center named for the day President Jerry Rawlings completed his 1981 coup.

Accompanied by Ghana's first lady, Nana Konadu Agyeman Rawlings, Mrs. Clinton was greeted with traditional dances and poems recited by children who attend the center.

July 26, 1998

SECTION: NEWS, DOCUMENTS & COMMENTARY

LENGTH: 844 words

HEADLINE: United States and Africa;
Glimpse into Hillary's diary on her African trip

BYLINE: Wanjia Githinji, The Nation (Nairobi)

BODY:

Nairobi - Glimpses into Hillary Clinton's diary of her recent trip to Africa indicates that the US First Lady enjoyed every minute of her first journey to a continent where hope has been described as a very rare commodity amidst wars, hunger, corruption and a host of other calamities.

In March last year, Hillary and daughter Chelsea visited several African countries, many of which she re-visited with her husband March this year.

According to the diary, excerpts of which were published in a recent edition of the Ebony magazine and other sources, the two-week trip was a mission to express the US interest in Africa's potential.

Her last year's six country trip which included Zimbabwe, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda and Eritrea started in Senegal where she says: "I chose Senegal as a first stop to underscore the strong bonds of history and culture that link our two nations. This year's trip ended in Senegal

In another entry in her diary, she says: "In a slave house in Senegal - the Maison des Esclaves - built the same year our nation was born, we peered out from "The Door of No Return" where Africans were separated from their families and slave traders from their humanity. Today, that open doorway is a powerful symbol of a past we must never return to or forget and a new future we must continue to walk towards together."

Hillary admits that there were too many misconceptions and stereotypes about Africa that make the countries in the developed world look down on the continent

"We see pictures of brutal dictators. Yet half of the 48 nations in sub-Saharan Africa now choose their own governments. We see images of famine and poverty. Yet, as countries have embraced economic reform, Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth rates in Africa have more than tripled since 1990. We see countless pictures of war and conflict. Yet people all over Africa are choosing reconciliation and renewal. Those are the people - and the new picture of Africa - we were privileged to see in every country we visited," she says"

The American First Lady was very impressed by the Ghanaian women, for instance, and their fight for a say in the democratisation process in the country.

"At a Day Care centre I visited with Mrs Rawlings, the women we spoke with were dressed in aqua, orange, yellow and other bright colours. Like other female pioneers who have built and sustained Ghana's democracy, these women were united by a common mission - the desire to become full participants in their country's political and economic development.

According to the diary, Hillary was also impressed by women's micro enterprises where they sell jewelry, art, clothing and other goods or what we would call here Jua Kali enterprises. "But nothing delighted us more than the child care centre. In bright rooms, children were learning and being cared for while their mothers worked to support their families."

In Eritrea, Hillary met a woman, amongst many other women, Olga Hap Temariam, and one of the many Eritreans with a self-sacrificing character. She is a self-made woman who was married off at 16, already pregnant while her brother went to university. But two years ago, she sought divorce, demanded a 30,000 birr alimony and started off her own business. She used 2,000 birr for a business license, 18,000 birr for the shop and now earns up to 7,500 birr a month which enables her to educate her daughter in a private school and hopes to expand her business so that she can take her to college abroad to give her the education she, herself, missed. She hopes her daughter will become a doctor one day.

In Senegal, Hillary says she met courageous women who are fighting against the last straws of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM). Although FGM affects less than 20 per cent of women in the country, in the village of Malicounda, it is considered a rite of passage for all girls.

The women of Malicounda had attended a literacy class created by an American, Molly Metching, who had gone to Senegal with the Peace Corps 20 years previously and never left. It was here that they learnt about their health and rights and decided that FGM had to come to an end.

"During our discussion, the women showed me the skit they had used to educate their religious leaders, neighbours and husbands because men must be part of this and every struggle for women's rights. A 66-year-old man described how he now goes from village to village spreading the word about the dangers of FGM," Hillary explained. Because of the efforts of those women, Malicounda Bambara has now banned FGM and in the process, they are inspiring others to do the same. Just before her arrival, 13 other villages with a combined population of more than 8,000 people joined together to end female circumcision in their communities. President Abdou Diouf has recently called for a new law to abolish it throughout the country.

It seems Hillary discovered one fact, "Women in Africa know their rights and many are waking up and taking what belongs to them by their birth rights!

April 2, 1998

SECTION: NEWS, DOCUMENTS & COMMENTARY

LENGTH: 396 words

HEADLINE: United States and Africa;
Hillary Clinton Refuses Comment On Paula Jones Case

BYLINE: Peter Masebu, PANA Staff Correspondent, Panafrican News Agency

BODY:

DAKAR, Senegal (PANA) - United States First Lady Hillary Clinton refused Thursday to be drawn into discussion over the merits of the dismissal of the sexual harassment suit against her husband, President Bill Clinton.

The Paula Jones case, which has dogged Clinton's presidency, was tossed out of court Wednesday for lack of substantial proof.

Speaking to journalists after a lively debate and theatre play on the effects of female genital mutilations, which are practiced in 26 African countries, including Senegal, Mrs. Clinton said the case being thrown out of court was a non-event.

"That (the case) is not very important. What we have witnessed here is more important because the play by the women in Malicounda Bambara, who rejected female circumcision, will serve as a model to others all over the world where the harmful practice exists," she said.

The women in Malicounda Bambara, a village of 2,000 people, rejected female circumcision which affects at least 100 million Africa women.

Several women from Malicounda Bambara were invited to the discussion on the practice at the posh Meridien President hotel in Dakar.

Mrs. Clinton said their decision was a shining example of democracy in practice, as it demonstrated what people could achieve when they acted together.

However, as the discussion was coming to an end, controversy erupted in the conference hall as to how widespread female circumcision was practiced in Senegal.

Awa Thiam, a researcher from the Dakar-based IFAN (Fundamental Institute of Black Africa) disagreed with the statistics given by the Senegalese minister of women and children affairs to the effect that only 20 percent of Senegalese women were circumcised.

Thiam said the figure was at least 50 percent and accused the nation's first president, Leopold Sedar Senghor, of having denied the existence of the practice in Senegal when the issue was first raised.

A security aide had to be called in to calm Thiam who insisted she be allowed to talk.

This afternoon, President Clinton and his wife are visiting the historic island of Goree, the final departure point of at least hundreds of thousands of Africans as they were being taken into servitude in the Americas and Caribbean.

Clinton winds up his six-nation African tour Thursday in Senegal having visited Ghana, Uganda, Rwanda, South Africa, Botswana.

March 23, 1998

SECTION: NEWS, DOCUMENTS & COMMENTARY

LENGTH: 655 words

HEADLINE: United States and Africa;
U.S. To Provide One Million Dollars For Women's Network

BYLINE: Panafrican News Agency

BODY:

ACCRA, Ghana (PANA) - United States first lady Hillary Rodham Clinton announced Monday that the U.S. government would provide one million dollars for the creation of a network that would enable women across the world share ideas to improve their societies.

Mrs. Clinton, who arrived in Accra earlier with husband President Bill Clinton to begin a six-nation tour of Africa, said the "Power Net" would serve as an electronic bridge linking women from all segments of society to learn from each other, share strategies and successes.

"We want to speak with one voice, women from all over the world. There is a lot American women can learn from you," she said. "We have women building houses with their own hands and teaching other women about their right."

This drew loud cheers and applause from a cross-section of Ghanaian women and a handful of men at a durbar organised in her honour.

The durbar, a festive occasion held for honoured guests, was attended by Nana Rawlings, wife of Ghana President Jerry Rawlings; ministers and parliamentarians. The event was held at the 31st December Women's Movement Day Care Centre at the ministries, the first of the over 900 centres established by the movement. The movement's president is Mrs. Rawlings.

Mrs Clinton, an advocate of women and children's rights, underscored the importance of educating the girl-child and urged the government to ensure that all girls of school going age were educated.

"If you educate a woman, you educate the family, the community and the nation," she said. "If women are given the power to pursue their own programmes, they would make their societies better."

She noted that despite the hard work and efforts of women to develop their countries, they continued to face injustices and abuses.

She urged "African women to speak up against gender violence as a crime and not to dismiss it as a cultural practice or a trivial issue."

Mrs. Clinton commended Ghana for promulgating a law to abolish the practice of female genital mutilation and for educating communities to stop the practice.

Speaking about the objectives of the tour of her husband, she said the United States had the desire to improve health care, education, democracy human rights and economies of African states to enable women to make the right decisions that would improve their lots.

Mrs. Rawlings credited Mrs. Clinton's efforts at promoting family values, empowerment of women and the rights of children.

"Mrs Clinton's interest in children and families dates back to her university days at Yale, where she worked to protect the interest of children and families," Mrs Rawlings said.

Mrs Clinton founded the Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families and introduced a pioneering programme called the Home Instruction Programme for Pre-school Youngsters.

"Mrs Clinton also has interest in a wide range of activities. No wonder President Clinton said, 'We have a first lady of many talents whom most of all can bring people together around complex and difficult issues to hammer out consensus and get things done,' Mrs Rawlings said.

She also said women needed to occupy high positions in political, social, public and economic institutions to be able to influence decision-making and policies which affected women and children.

"We need good leadership and support to be able to promote peace, development, and the positive things that women stand for," Mrs. Rawlings said.

Mrs. Rawlings' own movement, established to improve the quality of life of women in both rural and urban areas, has some two million members.

With the establishment of day-care centres and income generating activities, she said, the movement had been able to make more women economically independent and break the cycle of poverty in many families.

At the day care centres, pupils are given balanced-diets and immunised against the six childhood killer diseases.

A profile

**SCHEDULE FOR HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 1, 1998**

FINAL

DAKAR, SENEGAL

DAKAR

LEAD ADVANCE: **KATY BUTTON**
 LE MERIDIEN HOTEL **ROOM 439**
 33220 **PHONE**
 33501 **FAX**
 WHCA PAGER **#4861**

PRESS ADVANCE: **ERMETTE PURCE** **ROOM 112**

SITE ADVANCE: **THE HONORABLE** **ROOM 136**
 MAGGIE WILLIAMS

SITE ADVANCE: **ANN WALKER** **ROOM 521**

RON ADVANCE: **MELODIE GREENE** **ROOM 461**

SCHEDULER: **EVAN RYAN**
 202/456-6751 **PHONE**
 202/456-5340 **FAX**
 202/483-0383 **HOME**
 WHCA PAGER **#4223**

PREV RON **Le Meridien Hotel**
 Dakar, Senegal

10:10 am **DEPART Le Meridien Hotel**
 VIA Presidential Motorcade
 EN ROUTE Presidential Palace
 [drive time: 25 minutes]

10:35 am **ARRIVE Presidential Palace**

GREETERS:

President Abdou Diouf and Mrs. Elisabeth Diouf

10:40 am- **ARRIVAL CEREMONY**
10:50 am **Attire: Business**
 • Presidential Palace
 POOL PRESS/WH PHOTO

FORMAT:

**-The President and The First Lady are greeted
curbside by President and Mrs. Diouf and proceed
thru an honor cordon.**

SCHEDULE FOR HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 1, 1998
PAGE 2

-The Four Principals pose for a photo.

-The President, The First Lady, and President and Mrs. Diouf are escorted inside.

-The President and President Diouf proceed to Room TBD for the bilateral meeting, Mrs. Diouf escorts The First Lady upstairs for a separate meeting.

10:55 am-

COURTESY CALL with Mrs. Elisabeth Diouf

11:40 am

Interpretation: Whisper

Attire: Business

President's Private Study

Presidential Palace

CLOSED PRESS/WH PHOTO

PARTICIPANTS:

The First Lady

Mrs. Elisabeth Diouf

Melanne Verveer

Aminata Ndiaye, Minister of Women, Children, and The Family

11:45 am

PROCEED to Room TBD to join The President and President Diouf

11:50 am-

MEET & GREET

12:00 pm

Room TBD

Presidential Palace

CLOSED PRESS/WH PHOTO

PARTICIPANTS:

The President

The First Lady

President Abdou Diouf

Mrs. Elisabeth Diouf

9 Senegalese Ministers

U.S. Members of Congress

7 Members of The Diouf Family

12:00 pm-

RECEPTION HOSTED BY PRESIDENT ABDOU DIOUF

12:50 pm

Interpretation: Consecutive

Room TBD

Presidential Palace

POOL PRESS

SCHEDULE FOR HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 1, 1998
PAGE 3

FORMAT:

- President Abdou Diouf makes brief remarks from a toast lectern.
- The President makes brief remarks from a toast lectern.
- The President and President Diouf work a ropeline.

PARTICIPANTS: 300 guests expected.

12:55 pm-
1:20 pm

HOLD/LUNCH/CHANGE CLOTHES
Room TBD
Presidential Palace

1:25 pm

DEPART Presidential Palace
VIA Presidential Motorcade
EN ROUTE Dakar Landing Zone
[drive time: 25 minutes]

1:50 pm

ARRIVE Dakar Landing Zone

2:00 pm

DEPART Dakar Landing Zone
VIA Marine One
EN ROUTE Thies Military Base
[flight time: 30 minutes]

2:30 pm

ARRIVE Thies Military Base

GREETERS:

President Abdou Diouf
Mrs. Elisabeth Diouf
Senegalese Commander TBD
US Commander TBD

2:40 pm

DEPART Thies Military Base
EN ROUTE Mode Kane School

2:50 pm

ARRIVE Mode Kane School

Withdrawal/Redaction Marker

Clinton Library

DOCUMENT NO. AND TYPE	SUBJECT/TITLE	DATE	RESTRICTION
001. schedule	Schedule for Hillary Rodham Clinton [partial] (1 page)	04/01/1998	b(6)

COLLECTION:

Clinton Presidential Records
First Lady's Office
Melanne Verveer
OA/Box Number: 20032

FOLDER TITLE:

FGM [Female Genital Mutilation] Vital Voices

2013-0534-S

rc1522

RESTRICTION CODES

Presidential Records Act - [44 U.S.C. 2204(a)]

- P1 National Security Classified Information [(a)(1) of the PRA]
- P2 Relating to the appointment to Federal office [(a)(2) of the PRA]
- P3 Release would violate a Federal statute [(a)(3) of the PRA]
- P4 Release would disclose trade secrets or confidential commercial or financial information [(a)(4) of the PRA]
- P5 Release would disclose confidential advice between the President and his advisors, or between such advisors [(a)(5) of the PRA]
- P6 Release would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy [(a)(6) of the PRA]

C. Closed in accordance with restrictions contained in donor's deed of gift.

PRM. Personal record misfile defined in accordance with 44 U.S.C. 2201(3).

RR. Document will be reviewed upon request.

Freedom of Information Act - [5 U.S.C. 552(b)]

- b(1) National security classified information [(b)(1) of the FOIA]
- b(2) Release would disclose internal personnel rules and practices of an agency [(b)(2) of the FOIA]
- b(3) Release would violate a Federal statute [(b)(3) of the FOIA]
- b(4) Release would disclose trade secrets or confidential or financial information [(b)(4) of the FOIA]
- b(6) Release would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy [(b)(6) of the FOIA]
- b(7) Release would disclose information compiled for law enforcement purposes [(b)(7) of the FOIA]
- b(8) Release would disclose information concerning the regulation of financial institutions [(b)(8) of the FOIA]
- b(9) Release would disclose geological or geophysical information concerning wells [(b)(9) of the FOIA]

SCHEDULE FOR HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 1, 1998
PAGE 4

GREETERS:

Mr. Saloum Diallo, Principal/Director of School
Mr. Pape Sow, Director of Elementary Schools
20 School Children (one student presents The First Lady with a gift)

2:55 pm-
3:20 pm

TOUR MODE KANE SCHOOL

Interpretation: Whisper

Attire: Casual (b)(6) [001]

Hold: Principal's Office

Staff Hold: same as above

Thies, Senegal

OPEN PRESS

FORMAT:

-The First Lady, Mrs. Elisabeth Diouf, and Mrs. Judy Smith, escorted by Mr. Saloum Diallo and Mr. Pape Sow, proceed to the student run store.

-The girls who work in the store show The First Lady their record keeping and products.

-The First Lady, Mrs. Diouf, Mrs. Smith, Mr. Diallo, and Mr. Sow proceed to the school garden and see how the children learn about geometry thru the garden.

-The First Lady proceeds to a classroom.

-Mr. Pape Sow, Director of Elementary Schools, makes brief remarks about the Senegalese School System and the pilot program.

3:25 pm-
3:45 pm

REMARKS

Interpretation: Consecutive
Classroom/Courtyard

Hold: Principal's Office

Staff Hold: same as above

The Mode Kane School

Thies, Senegal

OPEN PRESS

FORMAT:

-The First Lady, Mrs. Diouf, and Mrs. Smith proceed to semi-circle in the courtyard.

SCHEDULE FOR HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 1, 1998
PAGE 5

- Representatives of the Parents Association and Women's Literacy Program make brief remarks.
- A poem is read in Waloof and translated.
- The First Lady makes brief remarks.
- The First Lady departs.

PARTICIPANTS:

The First Lady
Mrs. Elisabeth Diouf
Mrs. Judy Smith
Mode Kane School Teachers
20 school children

3:55 pm	DEPART Mode Kane School EN ROUTE Thies Military Base
4:05 pm	ARRIVE Thies Military Base
4:10 pm-	HOLD
4:30 pm	Thies Military Base
4:35 pm	DEPART Thies Military Base VIA Presidential Motorcade EN ROUTE Dal Diam Village [drive time: 25 minutes]
5:10 pm	ARRIVE Dal Diam Village

GREETERS:

Wendy Fall, National Council for Negro Women
Mandiaga Gueye, Village Chief, "Chief"
Lamine (la-man) Gueye (gay), The Chief's Son
Awa Gueye, Director, USAID NGO Project

5:15 pm-	VISIT DAL DIAM VILLAGE
6:45 pm	Interpretation: Consecutive TIGHT PRESS POOL

FORMAT:

- The President and The First Lady view vegetable garden.

SCHEDULE FOR HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 1, 1998

PAGE 6

- The President and The First Lady board motorcade en route main village.
- The President and The First Lady proceed to household.
- The President and The First Lady tour Sow family extended household.
- The President and The First Lady proceed to a village shop.
- The President and The First Lady view village shop.
- The President and The First Lady proceed to village square.
- Tyson, the Senegalese wrestler, performs.
- Chief Gueye makes brief remarks.
- Village skit is performed.
- Male Village Elders present a gift to The President.
- Female Village Elders present a gift to The First Lady.
- The Griot is performed.
- Lamine Gueye introduces The First Lady.
- The First Lady makes brief remarks and introduces The President.
- The President makes brief remarks.
- The President and The First Lady depart.

6:50 pm

DEPART Village Square
VIA Presidential Motorcade
EN ROUTE Landing Zone
[drive time: 10 minutes]

SCHEDULE FOR HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 1, 1998

PAGE 7

7:00 pm	ARRIVE Landing Zone
7:15 pm	DEPART Landing Zone VIA Marine One EN ROUTE Dakar Landing Zone [flight time: 35 minutes]
7:50 pm	ARRIVE Dakar Landing Zone
8:00 pm	DEPART Dakar Landing Zone VIA Presidential Motorcade EN ROUTE Le Meridien Hotel [drive time: 10 minutes]
8:10 pm	ARRIVE Le Meridien Hotel
RON	Le Meridien Hotel Dakar, Senegal

WEATHER FORECAST FOR DAKAR, SENEGAL: Sunny. High 86. Low 77.

SCHEDULE FOR HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON

THURSDAY, APRIL 2, 1998

FINAL-REVISED

DAKAR, SENEGAL/WASHINGTON, DC

DAKAR

LEAD ADVANCE: KATY BUTTON
LE MERIDIEN HOTEL ROOM 439
33220 PHONE
33501 FAX
WHCA PAGER #4861

PRESS ADVANCE: ERMETTE PURCE ROOM 112

SITE ADVANCE: THE HONORABLE ROOM 136
MAGGIE WILLIAMS

SITE ADVANCE: ANN WALKER ROOM 521

RON ADVANCE: MELODIE GREENE ROOM 461

SCHEDULER: EVAN RYAN
202/456-6751 PHONE
202/456-5340 FAX
202/483-0383 HOME
WHCA PAGER #4223

PREV RON Le Meridien Hotel
Dakar, Senegal

STAFF NOTES: Members of the staff who wish to attend the President's speech on Goree Island who are not manifested on the Presidential Yacht or the Pool Boat for the ride to Goree Island, should depart with the delegation from the hotel at 12:00 pm.

Please make sure you are on the boat manifest for the return trip from Goree Island, in order to ensure that you will make it back to the hotel in time for departure from the airport.

There will be vans departing from the hotel lobby at 6:30 pm for the airport for staff who do not go to Goree Island.

9:05 am PROCEED to Room B6, Le Meridien Hotel

SCHEDULE FOR HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
THURSDAY, APRIL 2, 1998
PAGE 2

9:15 am-
10:15 am

WOMEN'S HEALTH ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION

Room B6
Hold: Room B4
Phone: 221-820-2122
Le Meridien Hotel
Translation: Simultaneous
OPEN PRESS

FORMAT:

- The First Lady and Maymouna [MIA-moonal] Mills, Moderator, enter the room and take their seats at the head table with Molly Melching, Director Tostan Literacy Program, and Madame Ndiaye, Minister of Women, Children and Family.
- Maymouna Mills makes welcoming remarks and introduces Maimouna Traore, Malicounda villager.
- Maimouna Traore introduces a skit to be performed by members of the Malicounda Bambara Village.
- Skit is performed.
- Maymouna Mills introduces Oureye Sall, villager.
- Oureye Sall explains her personal history.
- Maymouna Mills introduces Mr. Demba Diawara.
- Mr. Demba Diawara makes brief remarks.
- The village Iman makes brief remarks.
- The First Lady makes brief remarks and introduces Minister Ndiaye.
- Minister Ndiaye makes brief remarks.
- Maymouna Mills introduces Mrs. Sedebe [C-D-B] from Mali.
- Mrs. Sedebe makes brief remarks.
- Maymouna Mills introduces Molly Melching.
- Molly Melching makes brief remarks.

SCHEDULE FOR HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
THURSDAY, APRIL 2, 1998
PAGE 3

-Open discussion.

-Maymouna Mills, moderator, closes the program.

-The First Lady proceeds to Hold, Room B4.

PARTICIPANTS:

The First Lady
Maymouna Mills, Moderator
Molly Melching, Director of Tostan
Madame Ndiaye, Minister of Women, Children, and
Family
27 Malicounda Bambara Villagers
NGO Representatives

10:30 am-
11:45 am

**PANEL DISCUSSION WITH DEMOCRACY AND HUMAN RIGHTS
RIGHTS ACTIVISTS**

Interpretation: Simultaneous (as needed)
Room B12
Le Meridien Hotel
PRINT PRESS ONLY

NOTE: There will be approximately 30 people in the audience.

FORMAT:

- The President makes opening remarks.
- The First Lady makes opening remarks.
- The President opens the discussion.
- The President closes the discussion.
- The President and The First Lady depart.

11:50 am-
12:30 pm

LUNCH
Presidential Suite
Le Meridien Hotel
CLOSED PRESS

STAFF NOTE: The hotel will provide a buffet lunch for staff.

Withdrawal/Redaction Marker

Clinton Library

DOCUMENT NO. AND TYPE	SUBJECT/TITLE	DATE	RESTRICTION
002. schedule	Schedule for Hillary Rodham Clinton [partial] (1 page)	04/02/1998	b(6)

COLLECTION:

Clinton Presidential Records
First Lady's Office
Melanne Verveer
OA/Box Number: 20032

FOLDER TITLE:

FGM [Female Genital Mutilation] Vital Voices

2013-0534-S

rc1522

RESTRICTION CODES

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- P2 Relating to the appointment to Federal office [(a)(2) of the PRA]
- P3 Release would violate a Federal statute [(a)(3) of the PRA]
- P4 Release would disclose trade secrets or confidential commercial or financial information [(a)(4) of the PRA]
- P5 Release would disclose confidential advice between the President and his advisors, or between such advisors [(a)(5) of the PRA]
- P6 Release would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy [(a)(6) of the PRA]

C. Closed in accordance with restrictions contained in donor's deed of gift.

PRM. Personal record misfile defined in accordance with 44 U.S.C. 2201(3).

RR. Document will be reviewed upon request.

Freedom of Information Act - [5 U.S.C. 552(b)]

- b(1) National security classified information [(b)(1) of the FOIA]
- b(2) Release would disclose internal personnel rules and practices of an agency [(b)(2) of the FOIA]
- b(3) Release would violate a Federal statute [(b)(3) of the FOIA]
- b(4) Release would disclose trade secrets or confidential or financial information [(b)(4) of the FOIA]
- b(6) Release would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy [(b)(6) of the FOIA]
- b(7) Release would disclose information compiled for law enforcement purposes [(b)(7) of the FOIA]
- b(8) Release would disclose information concerning the regulation of financial institutions [(b)(8) of the FOIA]
- b(9) Release would disclose geological or geophysical information concerning wells [(b)(9) of the FOIA]

SCHEDULE FOR HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
THURSDAY, APRIL 2, 1998
PAGE 4

12:35 pm **DEPART** Le Meridien Hotel
 VIA Presidential Motorcade
 EN ROUTE Central Mosque
 [drive time: 20 minutes]

12:55 pm **ARRIVE** Central Mosque

NOTE: Women should wear long sleeves, and cover their heads.

1:00 pm- **VISIT TO THE CENTRAL MOSQUE**
1:30 pm Central Mosque
 POOL PRESS

GREETERS:

Mr. Badiane, Secretary General of the Islamic
Institute of Dakar
Sheik Sylla, Iman of the Grand Mosque

FORMAT:

(b)(6)

[002]

-Secretary Badiane escorts The President and The First Lady through the courtyard to the prayer area.

-Secretary Badiane escorts The President and The First Lady back to the courtyard for a photo opportunity.

-The President and The First Lady depart.

1:35 pm **DEPART** Central Mosque
 VIA Presidential Motorcade
 EN ROUTE Dock
 [drive time: 15 minutes]

1:50 pm **ARRIVE** Dock

GREETERS:

President Abdou Diouf
Mrs. Elisabeth Diouf

SCHEDULE FOR HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
THURSDAY, APRIL 2, 1998
PAGE 5

2:00 pm **DEPART Dock**
 VIA Boat
 EN ROUTE Goree Island
 [sail time: 20 minutes]

2:20 pm **ARRIVE Goree Island**

GREETERS:

Urbaine A. Diagne, Mayor of Goree Island
Yande Toure, Governor of Dakar
Abdoulaye Elimane Kane, Minister of Cultural
Affairs

STAFF NOTE: Upon arrival on the Island, the Ambassador and members of the staff will be escorted to the museum to take their seats for The President's remarks.

2:30 pm **DEPART Dock**
 ON FOOT
 EN ROUTE Slave House

NOTE: The President and The First Lady will pause for a photo with TBD, the oldest resident of Goree Island, en route the Slave House.

2:40 pm- **TOUR OF SLAVE HOUSE**
3:05 pm Goree Island
 Interpretation: Whisper (as needed)
 TIGHT POOL PRESS/WH PHOTO

GREETER: Joseph N'Diaye, Curator

PARTICIPANTS:

The President
The First Lady
President Diouf
Mrs. Elisabeth Diouf
Interpreter

SCHEDULE FOR HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
THURSDAY, APRIL 2, 1998
PAGE 6

3:10 pm- **VISIT WOMEN'S MUSEUM**
3:25 pm Goree Island
PENCIL REPORTER/WH PHOTO

PARTICIPANTS:
The President
The First Lady
President Abdou Diouf
Mrs. Elisabeth Diouf
Ambassador Dane Smith
Mrs. Judy Smith

3:35 pm- **TOUR GOREE ISLAND**
3:50 pm Goree Island
TIGHT POOL PRESS/WH PHOTO

3:50 pm **PROCEED** to Strickland House

NOTE: The President and The First Lady will be greeted by students from Amidon Elementary School in Washington, DC.

3:55 pm **ARRIVE** Strickland House

4:00 pm- **HOLD**
4:10 pm Strickland House
Goree Island

NOTE: President and Mrs. Diouf will go to a separate hold during The President and First Lady's Hold time.

4:15 pm **PROCEED** to History Museum

4:20 pm- **REMARKS**
5:20 pm Front Courtyard
History Museum
Goree Island
Interpretation: Consecutive
POOL PRESS

NOTE: This event is outside.

FORMAT:
-Off-stage announcement of The President, The First Lady, President and Mrs. Diouf.

SCHEDULE FOR HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
THURSDAY, APRIL 2, 1998
PAGE 7

- Miriam Ba Girls Choir performs the Senegalese National Anthem.
- Martin Luther King, Jr. School for Girls' Choir performs the U.S. National Anthem.
- President Abdou Diouf makes remarks and introduces The President.
- The President makes remarks.
- Upon conclusion of remarks, The President, The First Lady, President Diouf and Mrs. Diouf work a ropeline and depart.

5:25 pm **PROCEED** to Dock

5:30 pm **ARRIVE** Dock

5:40 pm **DEPART** Dock
 VIA Boat
 EN ROUTE Dakar
 [sail time: 20 minutes]

6:00 pm **ARRIVE** Dakar

6:10 pm **DEPART** Dock
 VIA Presidential Motorcade
 EN ROUTE Airport
 [drive time: 30 minutes]

6:40 pm **ARRIVE** Airport

6:45 pm- **REMARKS TO U.S. EMBASSY STAFF - SENEGAL**
7:15 pm Tarmac
 Airport, Senegal
 CLOSED PRESS/WH PHOTO

FORMAT:

- Ambassador Dane Smith makes welcoming remarks and introduces Secretary Rodney Slater.
- Secretary Rodney Slater makes remarks and introduces The First Lady.

SCHEDULE FOR HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
THURSDAY, APRIL 2, 1998
PAGE 8

- The First Lady makes remarks and introduces Representative William Jefferson.
- Representative William Jefferson makes remarks and introduces The President.
- The President makes remarks, works a ropeline and departs.

7:25 pm-
7:55 pm

DEPARTURE CEREMONY
Tarmac
Dakar Airport
OPEN PRESS

FORMAT:

- The President and The First Lady, accompanied by President and Mrs. Diouf, proceed to greet 30 government officials and bid farewell.
- The President and President Diouf proceed to the U.S. and Senegalese flags. The First Lady and Mrs. Diouf proceed to a position behind them.
- The U.S. and Senegalese Anthems are played.
- The President, accompanied by President Diouf, proceeds thru a cordon of troops to the base of the stairs of Air Force One.
- The First Lady joins The President as they bid farewell to President and Mrs. Diouf and six Ministers.

8:05 pm

WHEELS UP Dakar, Senegal
VIA Air Force One
EN ROUTE Andrews Air Force Base
[flight time: 8 hours, 15 minutes, -5 hours]

11:20 pm

WHEELS DOWN Andrews Air Force Base

11:30 pm

DEPART Andrews Air Force Base
VIA Marine One
EN ROUTE The White House

11:40 pm

ARRIVE The White House

SCHEDULE FOR HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
THURSDAY, APRIL 2, 1998
PAGE 9

RON

The White House

WEATHER FORECAST FOR DAKAR, SENEGAL: Partly cloudy. High 84.
Low 75.

WEATHER FORECAST FOR WASHINGTON, DC: Partly sunny. High 65. Low
45.

**TRIP OF
THE PRESIDENT AND THE FIRST LADY
TO
DAKAR, SENEGAL**

Event: Women's Health Roundtable

Date: April 1, 1998

Time: 9:15am - 10:00am

Location: Meridien Hotel, Room B-6

Greeters: None

Attendees: Maymouna (MIA-moona) Mills
Molly Melching - Director of Tostan
Mme. Ndiaye - Minister of Women, Children and Family
Malicounda Bambara Villagers
NGO Representatives

Press: Open

Interpretation: Consecutive

Scenario: The **FIRST LADY** enters room with Mrs. Smith and the moderator, Maymouna Mills. The **FIRST LADY** and Ms. Mills proceed to the head table and take their seats with Molly Melching and Minister Ndiaye.

The moderator makes introductions and opens the program. The moderator introduces Maimouna Traore who will introduce a skit to be performed by members of the Malicounda Bambara village.

After the skit, the moderator introduces Oureye Sall who will explain her personal history. The moderator will then introduce Mr. Demba Diawara who will speak followed by the village Iman who will speak.

The **FIRST LADY** will then open the discussion on the government's role by making brief comments and introducing Minister Ndiaye. Upon conclusion of the Minister's remarks, the moderator introduces Mrs. Sedebe (C-D-B) from Mali. She makes remarks.

The moderator then introduces Molly Melching who makes remarks. Upon conclusion of her remarks, the **FIRST LADY** will close the program and depart.

X X X ²⁴X X

X Interpreter
X Interpreter

x x x x x x
 x x x x x x
 x x x x x x
 villagers
 (performing skit)

Villagers

X	X	2	2	X
X	X	X	X	X

Press

**MRS. CLINTON'S MEETING WITH THE WOMEN OF
MALICOUNDA-BAMBARA**

Participants:

Hillary Rodham Clinton

Mme. Mayamouna Mills, Moderator.

Mme. Aminata Mbengue Ndiaye, Minister of Women, Children and the Family

Mme. Sidibé Kadidia Aoudou, President, Malian Association for the followup and Orientation of Traditional Customs (AMSOPT) in Mali, who has fought against harmful traditional practices, early marriage, and has been at the forefront of Human Rights for Women and FGM matters in the country of Mali where FGM is practiced by 90% of the women.

Molly Melching, Tostan ("Breakthrough" in Wolof). Founded in 1991 by Melching, Tostan works in Senegalese villages to empower women to make decisions concerning their health, their families, their work and their villages.

Cheikh Traoré and Demba Diawara (from the village of Malicounda-Bambara), since becoming aware of the health dangers and harmful consequences of FGM, walk from village to village to urge the banning of FGM. Note: Demba Diawara is a 66 year old male.

Mayamuna Traouré, President of the Management Committee of the village class and 30 women from Malicounda-Bambara (Mme. Traouré will explain briefly what happened and why before the play is performed).

Imam of Malicounda-Bambara

Senegal: Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

Certain minority groups in Senegal practice female genital mutilation (FGM). However, the practice is growing less common due to urbanization and education.

Most Senegalese women have not undergone female genital mutilation (FGM). Estimates of the number of Senegalese females who have had the procedure range from 5 to 20 percent. The Wolof plurality (43 percent), the Serer (15 percent), and most Christians regardless of ethnicity do not practice FGM. Moreover, most of Senegal's Islamic religious leaders and scholars do not consider FGM a Muslim practice, but rather a traditional practice of certain ethnic minorities.

FGM is estimated as up to 88 percent among the minority Halpularen (Puelh and Toucouleur) in rural areas of eastern and southern Senegal. However, the practice is far less common among urban Halpularen; one study puts the urban Halpularen FGM rate at 20 percent. Halpularen (rural and urban) comprise approximately 14 percent of Senegal's total population. The Halpularen practice infibulation, the most extreme and dangerous form of FGM. Mostly rural elements of the Diola and Mandingo minorities also practice FGM as an initiation rite. But there too it is becoming less and less common due to urbanization and education.

Though Senegal is a signatory to the 1982 World Health Organization Agreement on FGM, the government has not criminalized the practice. Rather, Senegalese authorities have left most efforts to eradicate FGM to educators and activists. The Ministry of Women, Children, and the Family sponsors public education programs against FGM.

Private efforts are having some effect. For instance, on July 31, 1997, a Bambara village of 3000 inhabitants, Malicounda-Bambara, decided to ban the practice. The Senegalese NGO "Tostan" spearheaded the effort. The local religious leader endorsed the villagers' decision. With the help of "Tostan," other villages have followed the lead of Malicounda-Bambara. On February 15, 1998, thirteen villages with a combined population of more than 8000 people decided to end the practice in their villages.

On November 20, 1997, President Diouf publicly endorsed this decision and called for a debate in every village on ending the practice. On February 3, 1998, President Diouf called for a new law to ban the practice entirely.

Senegalese need not seek asylum abroad to avoid FGM. Since over 90 percent of Senegalese females who undergo FGM are between two and five years old, it is unlikely that a Senegalese girl facing FGM would seek asylum abroad. Moreover, a parent of a FGM candidate wishing to protect his or her child from FGM has numerous options short of travel to another country. Families seeking to escape social pressures to perform FGM on their daughters can evade the problem by moving to another village or one of Senegal's urban centers.

THE IMPACT OF THE MALICOUNDA COMMITMENT TO ABOLISH FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION

In September 1996, the women of Malicounda Bambara made the historic decision to abolish the practice of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) in their village of 2,000 people. Using the participatory methods and social transformation strategies learned from their Basic Education Program (developed by the American Private Voluntary Organization TOSTAN, with support from UNICEF and the Government of Senegal) the women then proceeded to convince their husbands, the other women of their community, and the traditional and religious leaders that such a decision was imperative to protecting the health of their girl children and respecting the human rights of both women and girls. Although some Bambaras, on an individual basis, had made the decision to stop the practice, no village had ever dared to stand up publicly and announce their decision.

In May, June and July of 1997, the period when the Bambara usually perform this traditional ceremony, no FGM took place in Malicounda for the first time. The women were proud of their achievement and told TOSTAN that they were not afraid to discuss their decision with others. TOSTAN and UNICEF therefore organized a trip for a group of 20 Senegalese journalists who came to Malicounda Bambara on July 31, 1997 and interviewed the women of the class and the village leaders. The women performed a play which illustrated the reasons why they chose to abolish FGM.

The reaction to the "Malicounda Commitment" and the courage of these women to speak out on a formerly taboo subject was immediate and widespread. The press coverage led to a national debate on Female Circumcision for the first time in Senegal.

But the extensive publicity also led to difficult times for the women of Malicounda. Members of their Bambara ethnic group, both men and women, were angry and sent hostile messages to Malicounda. The women were hurt and depressed, yet continued to defend their position. They even traveled to the villages of Ngeriñ Bambara and Kër Simbara to discuss their decision with other Bambara women who had participated in the TOSTAN program. On November 6, 1997 the women of Ngeriñ Bambara, having just finished their education program and encouraged by the firm resolution of the Malicounda women, decided to follow suit and renounce Female Circumcision forever. The President of the Women's Group, Ourèye Sall, the daughter of a traditional "Circumciser", led the class and for the first time publicly stated

that her own daughter had hemorrhaged when undergoing FGM and that it was time to stop.

Then on November 20, 1997 President Abdou Diouf made a declaration against FGM and cited the example of the Malicounda women. He called on all villages throughout Senegal to follow the process used by these women to end a harmful practice which violates human rights. This was a courageous decision, but a necessary one since there is no law against FGM in Senegal.

In November, the villagers of Kër Simbara decided that they could not stop this practice without consulting the rest of their extended family living in ten villages near Joal. For three months, two Bambara men, Cheikh Traoré and Demba Diawara (66 years old) traveled from village to village to discuss FGM with all members of these communities. Because the Malicounda decision had opened the path for discussion and dialogue, the men were not chased from the villages as they had originally imagined. They heard "shocking" stories from the women for the first time and were ever more convinced of their mission.

The villagers from these 10 communities decided to meet together and make a communal decision concerning FGM. From February 14-15 they met in the village of DIABOUGOU with three representatives from each of the 10 villages including the village chief and two women, and with the women from Malicounda Bambara, Ngeriñ Bambara and Kër Simbara the honored guests. This meeting led to the Diabougou Declaration, an engagement on the part of 8 000 villagers to stop Female Circumcision.

Meanwhile, on February 3, President Diouf called for a new law against FGM and several meetings have been held to prepare the text.

Now other villages who participated in the TOSTAN basic education program have also decided to stop FGM. For the first time, two Pulaar villages in the region of Kolda made the firm commitment to abolish the practice.

Thus, the Malicounda experience was the first step on a long journey, but a first step that was critical to begin a process of social transformation throughout Senegal and in other African countries.

TOSTAN and UNICEF are convinced that the educational process, with reinforcement from the media and public authorities, was critical for this example of the empowerment of women who are now able to make significant changes for improving their health and that of their families.

On the day of the ceremony, the mother informs Woruba that she will be going to Dakar so that she will suspect nothing and not be afraid. The women take her to a traditional hut and perform the operation using the razor blade without anesthesia. But something goes wrong. Woruba begins bleeding profusely. The circumciser leaves immediately, assuring that all will be well eventually. The other women who have come to sing and celebrate also desert.

In desperation, the mother and aunt take young Woruba to see the health worker who immediately understands that the child has been circumcised and has been brought in too late. The mother assures the health agent that Woruba has fallen from a

child has been circumcised and has been brought in too late. The mother assures the health agent that Woruba has fallen from a mango tree, but of course the health agent does not believe her.

"It's all over!" the health worker then announces.

"Thank heavens!" the mother and aunt shout and laugh.

"Thank heavens our Woruba is all right and it's all over!"

"No. You don't understand. Woruba has died from hemorrhaging. Although you sought to do good for your daughter, you have needlessly killed her with your traditional practice!"

In the village, this play is followed by a debate on FGM.

SUMMARY OF THE PLAY
AGAINST THE PRACTICE OF FGM
BY THE WOMEN OF THE TOSTAN-UNICEF CLASS
OF MALICOUNDA BAMBARA

Woruba, a young girl of the Bambara ethnic group, is extremely upset because she is one of the only girls in her community not to have been circumcised. She is jeered at and mocked by the girls selling in the market as being "unclean and impure" and is told she will never find a husband! In tears, she begs her mother to speak with her Aunt Woruba, for whom she is named, so that she too may become part of the initiated group of girls and have a respected place in her community.

The aunt arrives and announces her decision to have her namesake "circumcised". The mother and aunt call in the traditional "circumciser" and negotiate prices. She requests a razor blade, 5 000 fcfa (about \$10) and a kilo of soap for performing the operation.

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Malicounda Bambara

Region of Thies

Department of Mbour

Population approximately 3,000

Situated 10 kilometers from Ngekhokh

The women of Malicounda Bambara have made up their minds. They will no longer practice Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) on the young girls of the village! There will no longer be annual ceremonies to mark the moment when "girls" become "real women" following the ancient traditions of their ethnic group. No longer will needles and razor blades be used to cut off the clitoris. No longer will there be the flow of blood. No longer will there be suffering on the wedding night of their daughters and complications at childbirth. No longer will young girls die needlessly from infection, hemorrhaging, or AIDS caused by the female circumcision rite!

But how did a group of African women from an ethnic group which has known and practiced circumcision for thousands of years have the courage to stand up and say "no more" to such a powerful and ingrained tradition? How did they convince the other members of their community, particularly the men and the older women who fight to preserve Bambara traditions? The women told me their story.

"We had been enrolled in classes in the TOSTAN/UNICEF/Government of Senegal Basic Education Program in national languages and we women of Malicounda Bambara had begun to change," explains Mayamuna Traouré, President of the Management Committee of the village class. "We started thinking and talking about things in class that we had never before discussed, things that had always been 'taboo', you might say. In Module 1, we worked on problem-solving and from then on tried to look at some of the problems we women have in our village and we thought of different solutions for these problems. In Module 2 we learned about germs and the spread of disease and that made us think a lot about some of our traditions that might be dangerous for our children." As Mayamuna talks, she cuts up a large bar of homemade soap produced by the women of the class. "Actually, the TOSTAN program gave us a certain amount of confidence that we never had before. Confidence that we could change things if we wanted to."

"That's true," says another participant, "the education sessions woke us up. We received information that we never had before and the new knowledge has given us a voice in our community. For the first time when we speak, everyone listens because what we say is based on objective facts."

Kercon Diarra asks to speak : "We studied Human Rights in the TOSTAN Module 7 on Women's Health (funded by the American Jewish World Service) and particularly the right to health. We learned that this right implies the freedom of each woman to decide for herself what she does with her body. She also has the right to preserve her body as it is, without mutilation or changes. This was a revelation for us since it was in contradiction with one of our oldest traditions : the circumcision of all female children. In fact, in our traditions, it is unthinkable not to circumcise girls - why she would be the laughing stock of the community and could never find a husband! It was so important that we were told that an uncircumcised woman was "dirty" and not fit to prepare and serve food to those who study the Koran! Yet, we have always been uneasy about the disadvantages linked to circumcision. Many of us suffered greatly during sexual relations with our husbands and during childbirth. Many got infections or hemorrhaged after the 'operation' ".

"You know, we're now aware that we have the right to a normal and dignified sexual life! Our daughters also. So we asked ourselves lots of questions," says another participant, "For example: Is female circumcision an act of violence against our own daughters?"

Mayamouna explains that the women first made the decision to stop female circumcision as a class. "Then we discussed that decision with the traditional and religious leaders of the village, as indicated in the modules of our education program. We learned that the Muslim religion doesn't require female circumcision, only male circumcision. We talked with our husbands and they understood our concerns. Encouraged by their support, we created a theater on Human Rights that included messages on the dangers of female circumcision and we went to all the neighborhoods in the village - Binabougou, Julacounda and Kahaydacounda. We invited our village midwife to these sessions and she was also convincing since she had seen many cases of horrible suffering among women and children caused by this practice. After only several months, the women of Malicounda Bambara had agreed to stop the ceremonies for this year and indeed to forever stop a practice that is no longer justifiable in our community because of the health dangers it poses for our daughters."

An elder woman who had been listening attentively to the younger women talking suddenly spoke out: "We old women were the ones who insisted that all the girls of the community be circumcised! Even when the parents were against it, we'd go take the child and do it when they weren't around. But I'm in this class and I learned about universal human rights. Did you know that every man and woman have the right to marry and live their lives

according to their own beliefs? When I found that out, I realized I could no longer impose my will on my children and grandchildren."

The village chief who was present during the whole discussion gave his opinion for the first time: "I'm not a member of the class, but I support the women's decision. Life is constantly evolving. We have even heard that in Mali, where we come from, that people are discussing and questioning female circumcision. But changes in traditions take a long time. It's hard to put an end to an ancestral practice which has lasted for thousands of years."

Kerthio responds immediately: "That may be so but we women have given this a lot of thought over the past year and we've made our decision! We're going to stop female circumcision in Malicounda! Now those who continue to do it will be the ones who are laughed at. Those who feel they must continue will have to hide, as people do when they are ashamed."

Maimouna shows us the pieces of soap ready for sale in the market that she has just finished cutting:

"This decision we made brought us other advantages too. We became aware that we could make a difference in the world. Maybe that's why we chose many of the education sessions in the modules we have studied and we go from neighborhood to neighborhood each Monday to facilitate discussions with the other members of our community: men, women and young people.

We also did a feasibility study which we learned in Module 6 and started a small income-generating project to produce and sell soap which, even though a tiny effort, will help to improve conditions of hygiene, health and living conditions of participants. We are managing the project ourselves and are now planning other, more ambitious activities for next year.

Given the results of their efforts this year, it's easy to believe that the women of Malicounda Bambara will achieve their goal.

Malicounda Bambara**Region of Thies****Department of Mbour****Population approximately 3,000****Situated 10 kilometers from Ngekhokh**

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"You know, we're now aware that we have the right to a normal and dignified sexual life! Our daughters also. So we asked ourselves lots of questions," says another participant, "For example: Is female circumcision an act of violence against our own daughters?"

Mayamouna explains that the women first made the decision to stop female circumcision as a class. "Then we discussed that decision with the traditional and religious leaders of the village, as indicated in the modules of our education program. We learned that the Muslim religion doesn't require female circumcision, only male circumcision. We talked with our husbands and they understood our concerns. Encouraged by their support, we created a theater on Human Rights that included messages on the dangers of female circumcision and we went to all the neighborhoods in the village - Binabougou, Julacounda and Kahaydacounda. We invited our village midwife to these sessions and she was also convincing since she had seen many cases of horrible suffering among women and children caused by this practice. After only several months, the women of Malicounda Bambara had agreed to stop the ceremonies for this year and indeed to forever stop a practice that is no longer justifiable in our community because of the health dangers it poses for our daughters."

An elder woman who had been listening attentively to the younger women talking suddenly spoke out: "We old women were the ones who insisted that all the girls of the community be circumcised! Even when the parents were against it, we'd go take the child and do it when they weren't around. But I'm in this class and I learned about universal human rights. Did you know that every man and woman have the right to marry and live their lives

according to their own beliefs? When I found that out, I realized I could no longer impose my will on my children and grandchildren."

The village chief who was present during the whole discussion gave his opinion for the first time: "I'm not a member of the class, but I support the women's decision. Life is constantly evolving. We have even heard that in Mali, where we come from, that people are discussing and questioning female circumcision. But changes in traditions take a long time. It's hard to put an end to an ancestral practice which has lasted for thousands of years."

Kerthio responds immediately: "That may be so but we women have given this a lot of thought over the past year and we've made our decision! We're going to stop female circumcision in Malicounda! Now those who continue to do it will be the ones who are laughed at. Those who feel they must continue will have to hide, as people do when they are ashamed."

Maimouna shows us the pieces of soap ready for sale in the market that she has just finished cutting:

"This decision we made brought us other advantages too. We became aware that we could make a difference in the world. Maybe that's why we chose many of the education sessions in the modules we have studied and we go from neighborhood to neighborhood each Monday to facilitate discussions with the other members of our community: men, women and young people.

We also did a feasibility study which we learned in Module 6 and started a small income-generating project to produce and sell soap which, even though a tiny effort, will help to improve conditions of hygiene, health and living conditions of participants. We are managing the project ourselves and are now planning other, more ambitious activities for next year.

Given the results of their efforts this year, it's easy to believe that the women of Malicounda Bambara will achieve their goal.

THE DIABOUGOU DECLARATION

We, the 50 representatives of more than 8 000 people residing in the 13 villages of :

Kër Simbara
Diabougou
Soudiane
Sorabougou
Bagana
Baboucar
Kobongoy
Fajal
Medina Fajal
Samba Dia
Samba Diallo
Ngeriñ Bambara
Malicounda Bambara

meeting in the village of Diabougou (Region of Thiès) from February 14-15, 1998 to discuss the practice of Female Circumcision in the Bambara community:

• *Considering* the numerous testimonies of the women and girls in our community, in other localities of Senegal and in numerous African countries which affirm that Female Circumcision can be a source of suffering, illness, psychological trauma and even loss of human life;

• *Considering* the reports of health workers who have established that Female Circumcision is often the source of medical problems for girls and women who undergo this practice and can cause :

- heavy bleeding, which can lead to death
- infection
- infertility
- complications during and after childbirth
- Sexually Transmitted Diseases or AIDS
- mental health problems, etc.

• *Considering* the religious values of our community which affirm the importance of the physical and psychological health of women and guarantee the right to health;

- *Considering* the different international conventions and charters relating to Human Rights which stipulate that Female Circumcision is a violation of the human rights of girl children and women;
- *Considering* that the Government of Senegal, through the voice of the President of the Republic himself, has taken a firm stand against the practice of Female Circumcision in order to protect the health of girls and women and to comply with the commitment of the Government of Senegal to enforce the international declarations, conventions and charters they have ratified;
- *Affirming* that traditions should be positive and beneficial for the individual and for society and not be a source of suffering, trauma, illness or death;
- *Affirming* that women play an essential role in our society and should, consequently, benefit from the best possible state of health at all stages of their lives;

DECLARE :

Our firm commitment to end the practice of Female Circumcision in our community.

Our firm commitment to spread our knowledge and the spirit of our decision to our respective villages and to other communities still practicing Female Circumcision.

We also wish to continue the process of consciousness-raising and social transformation begun during this experience by benefiting from a Basic Education Program which will allow us to acquire reading, writing and math skills as well as to obtain information on health, hygiene, problem-solving, management, leadership, human rights and democracy.

We would like to take this opportunity to express our deep appreciation and gratitude to the women of Malicounda Bambara, Ngeriñ Bambara and Kër Simbara who, under difficult circumstances, led the way and indicated the path to follow for the government and other communities who are committed to assuring that girl children and women will no longer be subjected

to the dangers of Female Circumcision. Our meeting here in Diabougou today is the result of the determination of these courageous women.

We also would like to thank President Abdou Diouf who, through his personal appeal for the abolition of Female Circumcision, an extremely sensitive subject in our country, showed courage and resolve by appealing to the national community to perpetuate the process which led to the Malicounda Commitment.

We express our gratitude to TOSTAN, UNICEF, the Minister of Women, Children and the Family, the Minister of Health and Social Action, the National Organization for Human Rights (ONDH), UNIFEM, FNUAP, and OMS for their numerous activities related to this field. We ask that they continue to support and accompany us in our efforts to eradicate Female Circumcision.

Because education is at the heart of this historic encounter in Diabougou and recognizing that basic education is a necessary element for the promotion of the individual and of society in general, we appeal to the Government to assist us in beginning a program for basic education in national languages in the ten villages not previously having benefited from such a program.

We make a solemn appeal to the national and international community to quickly mobilize their efforts to assure that girl children and women will no longer suffer the negative health effects associated with Female Circumcision.

We wish finally to thank our traditional and religious leaders, our government representatives and all the women, men and young people who have actively participated and supported us in our initiative.

The 50 Representatives of 8 000
people residing in 13 villages
in the Regions of Thiès and Fatick

DIABOUGOU, SENEGAL
February 15, 1998

3

POINTS FOR CLOSING PANELPOTUS

- o Thank panelists for a rich and substantive exchange.
- o This all-too-brief discussion has provided a glimpse of your courageous efforts on the front lines of the struggle for human rights and democratic participation in your countries.
- o The United States supports you and will continue to work in partnership with you.
- o Since 1989 we have worked in 46 Africa countries and invested more than \$400 million to support elections, reform judiciaries and strengthen civil society participation.
- o US efforts to advance democracy and human rights are as important as our efforts to help accelerate Africa's full integration into the global economy and community.

FLOTUS

- o There is clearly much work left to be done.
- o On this trip and my earlier visit, I met with women, men and children in villages and urban areas who are joining their voices together to strengthen democracy.
- o Improving our economic well-being and building democracy go hand-in-hand.
- o Keep up the good work; we stand behind you in this critical struggle.

POINTS TO BE MADE FOR FGM ROUNDTABLE

Background of FGM

- I understand that the practice of female genital mutilation (FGM) has its roots in historical, cultural and religious teachings. It is a universally difficult challenge to change such practices.
- It is important that FGM be understood, not only as a "women's" issue, or an issue only for those ethnic groups that practice FGM. If the practice is to be eliminated, it must be portrayed as a problem for everyone in society.

Role of community leaders

- You are important as community leaders in pressing for programs which will educate all people regarding the physical and psychological dangers of FGM.

Drawing out participants

- I would like very much to hear your ideas on the most effective ways to combat FGM in Senegal.
- Do you think there should be a law against FGM?
- Do you think the Government has been effective in making known its opposition to the practice of FGM?
- How can the USG assist Senegalese to combat FGM?
- What kinds of services are currently available to victims of FGM?
- What are your ideas on the kinds of services that can be provided to women who have already been the victims of FGM?

for background

THE OSCE'S ROLE IN COMBATTING TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS

Of all the human rights abuses to which the international community has turned its attention, the trafficking of human beings, predominantly women and children, is clearly one of the most egregious violations of our time. Trafficking is a form of modern-day slavery. At its core, this international trade is about abduction, coercion, violence and exploitation in the most reprehensible ways. Examples include forced prostitution, domestic servitude, bonded sweatshop labor or other debt bondage. Traffickers capitalize on rising unemployment and lack of viable economic opportunities in countries of origin and the low status of women around the world to coerce or force victims into the trafficking scheme.

Moreover, trafficking is one of the fastest growing and most lucrative criminal enterprises in the world. Much like narcotics traffickers, traffickers in human beings operate boldly across sovereign borders. Corruption among government officials also facilitates the industry and undermines law enforcement and the rule of law.

Real progress in combating trafficking will require changes in national legislation and policies, increased enforcement of laws against traffickers, measures to end official corruption and collusion, long and short term prevention strategies, "fair treatment" of, and assistance to trafficked persons, and greater co-ordination and cooperation at the national, regional, and international level. Participating States need to intensify their efforts to address the problem of and to treat trafficking in human beings as an issue requiring national and international priority. Individually and collectively, the participating States of the OSCE bear primary responsibility for implementation of measures to combat trafficking from and within the region. The OSCE's unique capabilities position it well to assist States in addressing this problem:

- First of all, OSCE's broad membership and commitment to cooperation are well suited to tackle the regional nature of the trafficking which is clearly a problem throughout the OSCE region. All three sets of countries involved in the trafficking problem: supply, transit and recipient

states are represented in the OSCE, making the OSCE a proper forum to adopt a comprehensive strategy to combat this problem.

- Second, the OSCE has established a commitment to fight trafficking as set out in the 1991 Moscow Document which states that participating States "seek to eliminate all forms of violence against women and exploitation of prostitution of women including by ensuring public official accountability and adequate legal prohibitions against such acts and other appropriate measures." The OSCE Charter we will adopt at the Summit will deepen our commitment to fighting trafficking.
- Third, OSCE fora provide mechanism for review of compliance with commitments and focus attention on how we can work together toward achievement of our goals to eliminate this scourge.
- Fourth, the OSCE is operational. Its institutions such as the Office of Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) can provide concrete program assistance to countries committed to fighting trafficking. OSCE's recommendation to the Stability Pact that the OSCE Mission in Croatia take the lead in coordinating a Task Force to Combat Trafficking provides ample evidence of the OSCE's increasing operational determination to engage on this issue

At the 1998 OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Review Meeting and Supplementary Meeting on Gender Issues in 1999, both State delegations and non-governmental organizations identified trafficking as a key human rights issue requiring intensified action by the OSCE and the participating States. As a follow-up to these meetings and in anticipation of the OSCE Review Conference in November, the OSCE's Office of Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) has proposed an action plan of OSCE projects and initiatives to combat trafficking in 2000.

The implementation of the action plan could serve as a basis to focus the efforts of participating states around the three key areas of Prevention, Protection of Victims, and Prosecution of Traffickers. Moreover, implementation of the action plan would allow ODIHR to direct attention to specific program areas: rule of law; civil society; migration; and human rights. An OSCE action plan will allow

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for the coordination of domestic and international efforts
to stop trafficking in women and children.

Dear Alice,

Melanne -
FYI
HRC has copy
Alice

It was great to hear from you again today!! Yes I have been thinking of you too. I did call you at the White House when I came to the States to bring Zoe to study in Westford MA in August, but they told me you were on vacation!! I didn't stay too long then - just time to get Zoe settled in at her new high school and family. She really is happy there and has so many new opportunities! I miss her terribly but know it is good for her to have this experience. I will see her in November when I return to the States. Harvard has asked me to come on November 15 for a presentation for their Women's leadership board meeting so I will be in Boston anyway. I will then go to Los Angeles, Seattle and New York with Malick to do fundraising and presentations.

I am of course thinking about all of you now and am so hopeful for the elections. Please tell Hillary that I have gotten all the villages to hold special prayers for her - they love doing this because they think she is so terrific. They are still talking about how wonderful she was to them when she came before and represents a real model of democracy and caring for the people at the grassroots level.

Hillary's credit program is also a great success in these villages! Not only did ALL the women reimburse their loans 100% after the 8 months period, but 100 new women from the same five villages have now received loans from that money!!! The first 100 women made a PROFIT of more than \$10,000 on their small projects. Some of the women grouped together to cultivate fields which then provided food for their families and also money from sales of produce. One village started a local market with their credit which was so successful that Tostan gave them further credit to buy a horse and cart for their transportation needs. So everyone is quite excited about this experience and it is highly motivating to all of our classes who hope to benefit in the future from a similar experience. Thus, the \$5,000 that Hillary gave will multiply over the years and be of benefit to hundreds of women! I'd say it was a good investment on her part and I am so happy to have been able to use her contribution in this way.

We are also preparing a big declaration for the 4th of November in the Northern region of Senegal. I sat on the airplane to the States with one of the biggest opponents in the Parliament to ending FGC in Senegal and after five hours of discussion, convinced him to support our movement. I was so excited because this is a tremendous breakthrough for our program - if he supports us, then many many people will now follow. He is very influential in the Northern region so his support was crucial.

Malick has been extremely helpful to me since he came in May and we are getting lots done. We will be doing fundraising when we come to the States - some money has come in recently but only for FGC activities. All the education programs in the Wolof areas where FGC is not practiced have no

funding now and so many of our trainers are without projects. So this is a difficult time for us because we have to support their salaries out of general funds. Somehow I believe that funding will eventually come - it has just taken so long!!! We started training for Burkina Faso today and went last week to the Gambia because the Ministry of Education has asked us to work there too. So our program is highly appreciated throughout Africa - I just hope we will get the support we need to reach thousands more soon given the fact that we are still having these incredible results!! (Again I can't understand why the funding is not coming when we have been so successful and guess it is because we do not have a PR office in the States to do fundraising as the big NGOs have - I have never wanted to spend money on this - but rather orient everything to the field. Maybe I have been wrong however because I'm worried about getting through the next six months!!!)

Anyway, please say hello to everyone there for me. Please tell Hillary that if there is ANYTHING that I can do for her for the elections, to let me know (other than the prayer vigils). I really want her in the Senate and would do anything to help!!

More later - Love MOLLY

Africa Overview: Female Genital Mutilation

Female genital mutilation (FGM) is the cutting or removal of all or part of the female genitals, as part of a ritualistic practice deeply rooted in culture and tradition. It is based on long-held beliefs, superstitions, women's social role, and the belief that FGM will suppress and control the sexual behavior of women and girls. FGM crosses ethnic, cultural and religious lines. It is often such a deeply held conviction that some girls desire it to conform and be a part of their society. Many women, however, increasingly view it as a way to control and subjugate women. Experts put the number of females who have been genitally mutilated at 115-130 million worldwide. Two million girls are at risk each year of being mutilated.

FGM can have devastating and harmful consequences for a woman throughout her life. Short-term effects include bleeding, post-operative shock, damage to other organs, infections and even death. Long-term effects include retention of blood in the abdomen and swelling of the stomach, chronic infections of the bladder and vagina, painful menstruation, childbirth obstruction, and increased risk of STDs and HIV infections and sexual dysfunction.

FGM is most prevalent in sub-Saharan Africa where it is practiced in at least 28 countries. Some immigrants practice FGM in other parts of the world, including in Europe, the United States, Canada, Australia, and Israel. The United States has recently enacted legislation specifically outlawing FGM practiced on a person under the age of 18. In separate legislation, Congress has provided that, beginning later this year, the United States must oppose loans by the international financial institutions to the government of any country where FGM is widely practiced which has not taken steps to implement educational programs to prevent it.

A number of international organizations and conferences have expressed strong positions on the dangers of FGM and their support to eradicate the practice. Since 1992, the World Health Organization has maintained that FGM must not be institutionalized (i.e., made legal for doctors and hospitals to perform). The UN's International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo in 1994 and the UN's Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995 recognized FGM as a harmful traditional practice against women and girls and called for action by governments and other organizations to eliminate FGM and provide education about its harmful effects. The Inter-African Committee on Traditional Practices Affecting the Health of Women and Children (IAC) works to encourage governments to adopt clear national policies to abolish FGM and to intensify educational programs about its harmful effects.

The State Department, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), and the U.S. Information Agency (USIS) are working with community organizations and governments overseas to address the issue of FGM. State chairs an interagency group that coordinates USG policy on FGM. State has funded studies and provided assistance to NGOs through its Democracy and Human Rights Fund. USAID obligated \$1 million in FY95 to develop and integrate educational programs on the dangers of FGM into population, health, education, and women in development activities. USIS makes information on women's issues, including FGM, available on its home page on the World Wide Web. The United States views the practice of FGM as both harmful to women's health and a violation of women's human rights. Recognizing the extreme cultural sensitivities involved in addressing FGM and in an effort to ensure our message is better received, the United States supports efforts by local community-based organizations and health officials working within their own communities to eradicate FGM.

In June 1996 the U.S. Board of Immigration Appeals granted asylum to a Fuziya Kasinga, a Togolese woman fearing FGM. The board found that FGM can be a basis for a grant of asylum, but the decision was narrow. The possibility of being a victim of FGM does not constitute grounds for asylum in all cases. The Kasinga case was decided on its individual merits and future cases involving FGM will also require an examination of the individual's circumstances until the Board of Appeals chooses to articulate broader guidelines.

In Eritrea the prevalence of FGM is estimated to be on the order of 90%, and it is practiced by almost all ethnic groups. While there is no law prohibiting FGM, the government makes information on FGM part of its health and general education programs. In Uganda the prevalence is estimated at only 5% because it is practiced only in one district (Kapchorwa). The government condemns the practice and the IAC works to eradicate it. A bill pending before the National Assembly would prohibit FGM. In Tanzania prevalence is on the order of 10%; it is practiced by scattered population groups. There is no law prohibiting FGM, but the government is making an effort to eradicate it. In Ghana, prevalence ranges from 15-30%; FGM is practiced mainly among Muslims in the far north. A 1994 law prohibits FGM, the government publicly seeks eradication and NGOs are actively involved in eradication efforts through extensive grassroots educational programs. In Senegal, prevalence is on the order of 20%. There is no law prohibiting FGM, but the President has spoken against the practice and outreach groups are active. FGM is not prevalent in Malawi, Zimbabwe, South Africa or Mozambique.