



84 CONFERENCIA DE
ESPOSAS DE JEFES DE ESTADO
Y DE GOBIERNO DE LAS AMERICAS

**FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
REMARKS TO THE FIRST LADY'S CONFERENCE
SANTIAGO, CHILE
SEPTEMBER 30, 1998**

GABINETE DE LA SEÑORA DEL PRESIDENTE DE LA REPUBLICA DE CHILE

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Thank you, Veronica (Baraona) for your kind introduction -- and for the remarkable job you've done to pull this Conference together. My friend, Mrs. Frei; First Ladies; special envoys of the hemisphere; distinguished guests; members of the US delegation -- including Aida Alvarez -- Administrator of the Small Business Administration. It's a pleasure to be back here in Chile -- and to join all of you for the eighth Conference of Wives of Heads of States and Governments of the Americas. It is particularly fitting that we meet here in Santiago -- the site of the Second Summit of the Americas -- which I attended with my husband only a few months ago. Many of you helped define the Summits's priorities on women and children -- and it's those commitments -- made by our nations' leaders -- that we seek to reinforce here today.

Before I begin -- I would like to say to our friends in the Caribbean how our thoughts and prayers have been with you, as you deal with the terrible aftermath of Hurricane Georges.. I have just come from a relief mission in Puerto Rico, and saw how communities are already rebuilding their lives and their homes. And I'm pleased that my government has been able to contribute to relief efforts there and throughout the Caribbean.

This is the fourth Conference of First Ladies of the Americas I've had the honor to attend. And I'm pleased to see so many familiar faces -- and many new ones. And as always, I'm reminded that no matter what country we're from; or what beliefs we hold; or what language we speak -- that we all share common concerns -- and common hopes for the future.

That belief in the power of women to make a difference was at the heart of the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing -- which I attended in 1995. There, women from every corner of the globe came together to draw attention to the plight of women and children. And what that Conference made undeniably clear -- and what we all know from experience and history -- is that democracy and prosperity cannot be attained -- or sustained -- in countries that do not value women as full and equal partners in society.

The wave of energy and optimism released at that meeting has begun to transform lives everywhere. Governments are being held to the commitments they made, and grassroots action is igniting reform in every corner of the globe. I have seen these changes occurring first hand, from Senegal to South Africa, from America to Australia, from Eastern Europe to China. And I have seen the impressive progress being made here in the Americas.

This morning, throughout the Americas, there are more girls sitting at their desks in a classroom; more mothers visiting health care clinics, and getting the care they need for themselves and their babies; more women running their own businesses, and gaining greater economic independence; more children who are growing up healthy and strong; more women who are now protected against violence in their homes -- than ever before in our history.

I have also watched democracy taking hold throughout the hemisphere -- as every country but one has embraced the democratic ideals that we all aspire to. And women have played significant roles in those hard-fought victories as well. Yet as you heard from the distinguished speakers over the past two days, we must still overcome great obstacles to ensure every one of our citizens has access to health care, and education, and economic opportunities, and is able to participate fully in the political life of their nations. And one of the greatest barriers in our path to equality is that women still do not hold enough positions of authority, and leadership, and power.

Women's participation in decision making lags behind their gains in education, their contributions to the workforce; and their participation in grassroots organizations. Yet we can see -- all around us -- the positive impact that women leaders can have on the everyday lives of citizens.

There are many such examples throughout our hemisphere. A woman mayor in a small town in Peru, who has promoted projects to protect children's rights, and created occupational workshops to encourage women to increase their family incomes without leaving their homes. A woman senator in the Dominican Republic -- whose courageous voice helped pass a strong law against domestic violence in 1997. A young woman from Colombia, who ran for mayor on a peace platform in one of the most violent areas of her country -- and is now helping to heal those divisions.



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And we all know about the extraordinary leadership roles that Janet Jagan and Violeta Chamorro have played in improving the lives of women and children in their nations, and opening up greater freedoms and opportunities to all their citizens.

Today, more and more governments here and around the world are coming to realize that democracy can't succeed unless women's voices are heard; unless women are given the opportunity to take responsibility for their own lives; unless all citizens are able to participate fully in the life of their countries. More and more leaders now understand that investing in the health, education and the empowerment of women is as critical to a vibrant democracy as are issues like trade, diplomacy, and national security.

As a result, governments across our hemisphere have begun to unlock the once closed doors of decision making and elected leadership that have constrained women's progress and potential for so long. Today, a growing number of countries require a minimum level of women's participation in local and national elections. Others -- particularly since the Beijing conference -- have created agencies to promote women and family public policies. Some programs are now seeking to increase the pool of qualified women to compete for leadership positions -- while others help women exercise effective leadership once they are elected or promoted.

The impact of these new laws -- combined with a greater political will -- are even now being felt at every level of government. And I must admit -- many countries have gone much farther than my own to boost the percentage of women representatives and leaders.

By 1996 -- all but two countries in Latin America had at least one woman cabinet member. (In Colombia -- over a third of the Cabinet positions are held by women.) And while women are still vastly under represented in legislative assemblies -- there are signs of progress. In the Bahamas -- women fill as many as 33 percent of the senate seats. In Argentina -- as a result of a new law -- women's representation in the lower house of congress is 28% -- the eighth highest in the world. The numbers of women mayors is also growing -- and throughout the hemisphere -- more women are serving as judges, and agency heads, and in other leadership roles in government.

Such progress reflects not only new laws -- but important social changes as well: more women are getting an education, and joining the workforce. And deeply-held attitudes against women's participation in public life are changing, slowly but surely.

I am pleased that my country is working with all of you to further this progress. After this session -- I'm joining Mrs. Frei in a signing ceremony of two programs -- funded by USAID -- that will support initiatives across the Americas to nurture strong local leadership -- including women -- and will help countries more effectively pursue the goals of the Summit -- through joint training programs here in Chile. These partnerships -- as well as a major donation by Merck Pharmaceutical company -- that will donate 5,000 medical guides and help educate rural women about their health -- are proof that the commitments made at the Summit of the Americas and reiterated here are being taken seriously.

Even as we celebrate these steps forward -- and the remarkable accomplishments of the women who have gained those positions of power and influence -- we know how far we have yet to go. When women are elected -- they still tend to exercise leadership at the outskirts of the centers of power. They are not adequately represented in party leadership positions. And while women make up one third of the formal labor force in this region -- they are not adequately represented in union leadership -- or in the corporate boardrooms.

As we all know, building a better future for women, men, children and families is not just the opportunity of governments -- it is the responsibility of all of us. Today -- I will travel to Montevideo, Uruguay, and participate in the "Vital Voices" conference -- where women representing grass roots organizations from across the Americas are coming together to build networks; learn lessons; and lift up their voices -- and their power -- on behalf of these same priorities we are speaking about here, at this conference.



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Today -- our work together is more urgent than ever before. We live in an increasingly interdependent world -- where our economies -- our security -- our very futures -- are inextricably tied to each other. It's a time of unparalleled opportunity -- but also of great risk. Those among us who enjoy the opportunities of education, health care, jobs, credit, and legal and political rights are flourishing in this new global economy. Those without such opportunities -- too often women and children -- are lagging further and further behind.

- It's up to all of us to eliminate those inequities -- and bridge those gaps.

This year, we commit ourselves to continue the work we have begun -- such as eradicating measles, and reducing still too high rates of maternal mortality throughout the hemisphere -- and working with our partners in international organizations like PAHO. But we also commit ourselves to new initiatives -- such as efforts to make our region's schools places to promote child and family health; to ensure rural women are not left behind; and to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights by joining the UN campaign to denounce all forms of violence against women -- including domestic violence.

One of Chile's great novelists, Maria Louisa Bombal -- once said: "What is difficult is not to conceive of a work, but rather to build and elaborate upon it." I want to thank all of you here today for what you have already done -- and will continue to do -- to build and elaborate upon our nations' commitments to lift up the lives of women and children throughout our hemisphere.

UNCLEARED TRANSCRIPT

Address by Hillary Rodham Clinton
October 2, 1998

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you very much. Thank you. I feel like I am sure many of you do, that we have had such a rich morning already hearing from our conference participants, and others who have inspired us, and motivated us, and educated us. It is a great honor and privilege for me to be here in Uruguay, and to join all of you – the vital voices of the Americas. The voices of the four conference participants that we have just heard represent the extraordinary intelligence, enthusiasm and diversity of the people who have come together for this third historic Vital Voices Conference. I want to begin by thanking our hostess, Mrs. Sanguinetti – for your warm hospitality and for that fascinating archeological education. That I will immediately go and read about.

This is my first visit to your beautiful country, and both you and the President have made me feel so much at home even in these few short days that I cannot wait to return. And I look forward to a time when I can do that in the very near future.

I also want to express my great appreciation to the Conference's co-sponsor, the Inter-American Development Bank. Now we have heard from the President, who is our great friend. Who I believe said again today how committed the bank is to all these projects. I have had the great honor of working with the bank and I've seen how hard he has worked to promote micro-credit, working against domestic violence, doing everything that the bank could do to make clear to everyone who would listen that it is not just a bank, it is an instrument of social justice, social investment and transformation of the Americas and I thank you for that Enrique.

I too want to thank Mayra for her work. She has been a powerful and effective advocate at the Bank for women.

And I want to thank Theresa for your efforts leading our U.S. government team to make "Vital Voices" an effective instrument of American foreign policy.

This is the third Vital Voices Conference. The purpose of these conferences is to give women from various parts of the world the opportunity to come together as you all have to share experiences, to build stronger networks and partnerships, to look for ways that we can introduce new and effective strategy in our common search for ways that will enable women to take their rightful places in all of our societies.

At this particular conference we brought together women leaders from all the democracies of the Western Hemisphere. Leaders in business, non-governmental organizations, trade unions, from small villages and from very large cities, mayors and cabinet officials. We

have also brought together and we have heard eloquently expressed today from our panel many who suffered under brutal dictatorships, many who lost family members to terrorism, people who have been in the forefront of the struggles to end repression, protect human rights, and restore democracy. This is a critical moment in history because so many of you have struggled so long to bring us to it. I want to begin by thanking you. You have set an example, you have served as a model, and you have given heart to literally millions of peoples throughout the Americas because you have never given up on yourselves and your future. And yet I know that with the coming of democracy, with the spread of the global economy, we face new challenges. How do we ensure that democracy and free market economies produce better lives for all people, especially the poor and the marginalized? How do we create conditions in which women are equipped with the tools of opportunity to become full participants in their societies? How do we bolster civil society and its institutions?

The countries represented here may be at different stages of political and economic development, but we are all searching for answers to basic questions such as those. And we share a common belief: we believe that a nation's progress depends on the progress of women; that the strength of democracy depends on the inclusion of women; that the vibrancy of an economy depends on the hard work of women; that the richness of civil society depends on the full participation of women; and that human rights are women's rights; and women's rights are human rights from one end of this hemisphere to the other.

I've heard reports how at this conference – in workshops, over coffee, in hallways – you've been gathering and talking with one another about how to achieve progress. You've been learning from each other. And you have been focussing on three broad areas: First how do we expand political participation for women in public life? Second how do we strengthen the rule of law? And third, how do we promote women's access to economic opportunities?

If this were only a conference where we came together and we met one another, and we heard speeches and we shared ideas, that would be a good thing, but it would not be enough. It would disappoint all of us who are here because it would not fulfill the promise that such an extraordinary gathering holds for us. What we have to think through is how we will, from this point, create those strategies and support one another within our nations and across our hemisphere to see that they are fulfilled. How will we answer the questions we have been asking ourselves? How will we reach progress in the three areas you have been focussing on? Let me take them one by one.

We have seen the fruits of the efforts that have gone into creating political opportunities for women in public life. Throughout the Americas, because we have obtained peace and stability that so many of you have fought for so long, we now have democratic governments that are open to debate, and free speech and association that were not there before. We hope we will never, ever see in our hemisphere again a young women driven

from her own country because she stood up for the human rights of her fellow citizens. We hope that we will never hear the heart-wrenching emotion that we heard in the voice from our mayor from Peru when she talked about terrorism. We must never, ever allow terrorism to have a grip in this hemisphere again.

So this hard-fought-for peace and stability, these democracies, these free-market economies, they're an enormous step forward. But they are also not enough if they do not give people the belief that they have a stake in the future and do not provide opportunities for participation.

But think about some of the women who are here amongst us. Women who have pushed open the doors of political leadership. Some of them are known, so many others are unknown, but they lifted their vital voices when others were silent. They organized their work places, often at great risk to themselves, and they have been willing to run for office and accept appointed office when still there are so many attitudes that argue against a woman doing that in public life. Their voices should inspire us. Think of just a few examples.

A senator from Brazil – the granddaughter of a slave – who worked within the Catholic church on behalf of workers – and who became her country's first black woman senator.

A mother from a small town in Peru who, when elected mayor, developed projects to protect women's rights and created training workshops for women so they could increase their family incomes without leaving their homes.

A grandmother in Argentina who refused to bend under the brutality of the generals and who kept her eyes on the plight of her nation's grandchildren.

There are thousands of examples like that. Each of us could stand and tell them. But they should serve the purpose of reminding and inspiring us, of the price that has been paid to open those doors to democracy, and how disappointed all those who sacrificed would be if now women did not assume their rightful position and walk through those doors to make contributions to their families, to their communities, and their nations.

Today, more than at any other time in history, women have the opportunity and the responsibility not only to raise our own voices but to empower others to raise theirs as well. The women gathered here, we are among the blessed. Even though many have suffered, the spirit was not broken. And you are here as testimony to resilience and determination.

But think of the thousands and thousands and thousands of women throughout the Americas for whom no one speaks. Who believe they are not worth anything. Who have been denied education and even sometimes fundamental health care. What will we do to

raise our vital voices for them? And among the many reasons why women must participate in the political process and must take the risks of putting themselves forward on behalf of issues of concern to us all, is because all of those women and their children need our voices.

There is a very important report that was completed recently by the Women's Leadership Conference of the Americas which details all of the progress and the obstacles that still face women in the Americas. This report confirms what we all know: that while many governments, organizations, and individual citizens acknowledge the importance of women's participation in both formal and informal ways, women are still blocked from realizing their own positions, from going as far as their talents would take them.

Yesterday I was privileged to meet with the Women's Political Network here in Montevideo. I want to thank all of the women who came together to educate me about what they are doing here. They were a remarkable group of women leaders. A cabinet minister, a city council member, others who hold elective office, others who were very prominent in their parties. One of them said: "We grew to realize that what unites us is far more important than what differentiates us." For the women from different parties who honestly hold different philosophical and ideological positions understand that they can cross party lines to work on behalf of issues in common. And I have heard that Paraguay is doing the same. This is one very important idea that can come out of this conference: that there must be ways for women in political life to support each other across party and ideological lines when it comes to fundamental women's rights and children's needs. And this political network can serve as an example for us all. And I would include my own country in that example.

If one reviews the progress that has been made, you can see that the once closed doors have been pried open. More and more countries require a minimum level of women's participation in local and national elections. Others have created agencies to promote women and family policies. Some programs are now seeking to increase the pool of qualified women to compete for leadership positions, and others help women exercise effective leadership once they are elected or promoted.

These changes are having an impact. By 1996 – all but two countries in Latin America had at least one woman cabinet member. In Colombia, over a third of the cabinet positions are now held by women. And while women are still vastly under-represented in legislative assemblies, there are signs of progress. In the Bahamas, women fill as many as 33 percent of the senate seats. And in Argentina, as a result of their new law, women's representation in the lower house of congress is 28 percent, the eighth highest in the world.

If those nations can assure women that level of women's participation, then we all must do better to make sure that parties are fair to women and include them in electoral lists, that governments seek out qualified women and give them opportunities to serve. Because we

will all benefit if more women assume positions of political responsibility. And I hope that one result of this conference will be very specific ways we can all participate in bringing that about.

The second challenge you have been discussing is strengthening the rule of law. Now there is, of course, general agreement in polite company that women deserve equal rights under the law. But there are still laws in the Americas that do not give women equal rights. And our first order of business should be to change those laws.

There are countries in the Americas that prohibit women from doing certain work: from working at night; from lifting heavy objects. Now I have always believed that the job should be suited to the person. And many women could not lift heavy objects, but some women could. And if they could qualify, they should be permitted to compete for those jobs, and jobs like them so they can better support their families, and we should change laws that stop them from doing so.

The larger problem though is that on paper we have equal rights under the law, but they are not enforced. There is uneven or no enforcement. Or there is enforcement only for the rich and not for the poor. So we have to do a better job of making all of our laws fairly enforced and making access to our justice system one that is not in any way prohibited to people on the basis of their background or their income. We have to do much more to absolutely institutionalize the rule of law in the Americas. With independent judiciary, with due-process being respected so that impunity will no longer exist. That the rights of all citizens will be strengthened. We know we will have achieved that goal when a poor, indigenous woman somewhere in the Americas is able to walk into a court and demand that the police stop harassing her, that people in the street stop treating her poorly, and that she be given the same rights as every other person.

And I would hope that by opening up the legal system to more women judges and women prosecutors, women will make sure that women's rights are respected and the rule of law is enshrined in all of our countries.

That is beginning to happen. Again some examples from vital voices that inspire us.

The first woman to sit on Haiti's supreme court helped draft the decree abolishing gender inequality.

The female director of the Inter-American Institute for Human Rights launched a gender equity program when she was a leading Costa Rican jurist.

There are many more examples we can point to. But we need more women lawyers, more women judges, more women prosecutors. And as a lawyer, I hope that more women will go into the law in the Americas and use the tools of the law to promote social justice

throughout our hemisphere.

I also want to say a specific word about something we have seen terrific progress in but have a long way to go and that is in domestic violence. Many of you have been leaders, both inside and outside of governments to make it clear that violence between spouses, between parents and children, in families is not a custom, it is a crime and must be treated as a crime.

More and more governments throughout the Americas are reforming their penal codes and passing anti-discrimination legislation. And we see the results. Twelve Latin American countries have adopted new laws classifying domestic violence finally as a crime, and enforcement has been stepped up, prison sentences extended. There are now special police stations for women in many countries, shelters and counseling centers and training courses for law enforcement officials and judges.

Yesterday I was privileged to meet with professionals here in Montevideo who are working both with victims and perpetrators of domestic violence. And this particular crime is so important for us to focus on because we know that if women have their spirits broken inside the family, by the violence that so many face day in and day out, how can they ever have the confidence to be citizens of a democracy, to participate fully in the life of their democracy?

The Summit of the Americas which met first in Miami and then in Santiago set a goal of full equality between men and women by the year 2002. Now I know that is an ambitious goal. But I like that goal. And I like to remind people that that goal was agreed upon by all the leaders of our hemisphere. And I believe we must accept nothing less than doing all that we can to try to reach that goal.

Our third priority, at this conference, is opening up economic opportunities for women. There are some fundamental issues that we have to address before we can even get to economic opportunities. One is education and one is health care.

Women cannot earn good income for themselves and their families, and advance to the fullest of their god-given potential if they are not educated, or if they are held back by poor, or substandard, or unavailable health care.

So we must continue to do everything we can to ensure access to education, for girls and women, and to make available quality health care throughout the hemisphere. Because talking about economic opportunities in the absence of emphasizing education and health care is an empty promise. Because we certainly know that the economy of the 21st century will be unforgiving for those who are not educated and not healthy and not able to make their own way.

Now we all know that women contribute enormously to the economic growth of their countries. Both inside and outside the home. But that work, both in the home and in the informal economy is not counted in a country's GDP. I believe it is time for economists and bankers to start figuring out ways to count women's economic contributions in their nations' GDP and overall world economies.

I remember talking to an economist during one of my visits to Africa. He said "well women have no real economic role to play in the African economies that are emerging". And I said, "well you know I have only spent a few days in Africa but every where I looked I saw women working: I saw women in the fields, I saw women carrying water; I saw women in the markets; I saw women building their own houses. Now tell me what exactly is it that they are doing if not contributing to the economic well-being of their country?"

We also have to face up to continuing wage discrimination against women. Women in Latin America receive salaries well below those of men. And women who work in the informal sector, as many do, have no benefits and no security. Working women have never held the rights and opportunities and benefits that men have traditionally have held. So we have to attack those inequities as well.

We need to celebrate the contributions that women have made. And I especially appreciate the comments about how women have been the ones who have managed poverty and have day in and day out, and year after year kept families going with very little in the way of meager resources. So let us celebrate what is really very good budgeting and extremely good economic planning if we stop to think about it, and let's look for ways to bring more opportunities and greater income into the lives of these women who have already proven that they know how to stretch a peso as far as possible.

We also need to look at ways of getting more capital and credit into women's hands. And I want to thank everyone who has supported micro-credit because it is truly transforming lives and societies. Micro-enterprise loans are expanding the support from international and bilateral donors and non-governmental organizations. USAID and IDB programs are already reaching well over one million women in this hemisphere.

I would once again issue a plea to commercial banks, and other potential funders, to look at the success of micro-credit as a tool for creating market activity at the grassroots level, giving more people within a society a stake in the free market. And I would ask, as I did in Belfast, that commercial banks look for ways to partner with the IDB or non-governmental organizations to put some funds into micro-credit so that we could expand their reach. I'm always amazed when I read in the newspaper about some very bad loan that a commercial bank has made and they write it off when we know that loans to poor women are repaid at a rate of between 95 and 99 percent throughout the world.

I have talked with such women from one end of our hemisphere to another, including in

my own country where we are using micro-credit to try and help develop economic opportunity for women, particularly women who were formerly on welfare.

Think of these vital voices:

A rural woman in El Salvador who overcame low expectations – of herself and others – to turn her roadside tortilla stand into a profitable business with the help of a \$46 loan. And who, because of that increased economic activity that she was able to generate, all of a sudden had the respect of everyone in her village. And she and her small village group of people who were borrowing and supporting each other understood that they had a real stake in their future. She was selected president of her village bank group. And she said something that all of us would agree with, and that is “courage is half of life.” Well for her, having the courage to do what she did was half of life, but having the credit to put that courage into action was the other half. And that is the kind of partnership we need more of.

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

Workers' rights are an important part of the global economy.

We have such great opportunities ahead of us if we are able to take the extraordinary benefits of the global economy and ensure that they are spread fairly to everyone. We cannot permit greater inequity in income to be part of the new global economy. And workers' rights are part of that. Regular and equal pay, medical examinations, training programs, benefits, all of that should be on the front burner for women and men who understand how important it is that workers be given the opportunity to share in the fruits of their labor.

Now where does this leave us as we are looking at this conference and all that you have discussed and heard? Well I hope that we are building on the progress so many of you have begun. And I hope we are producing real partnerships that will strengthen democracies and improve lives of women throughout the Americas.

Today I am pleased to make several announcements. First, the United States Government through USAID will commit \$50 million to support the common goals of this conference and the Summit of the Americas, to strengthen human rights, justice, and democracy particularly on behalf of women.

USAID is also increasing its loans to micro-enterprises across the Americas to \$120 million over the next three years, over two-thirds of those loans committed to going to women.

The United States Small Business Administration, whose Director, Aida Alvarez is with us

today, and I am very pleased that Ms. Alvarez could be here for this announcement. It has done a great deal in our country to promote micro-enterprise and has created an "on-line women's business center" offering training and support and research for women to start and expand their businesses. Today the Small Business Administration is unveiling the Spanish version of this website so that millions of women, throughout the hemisphere and literally around the world, can also access this information.

After this meeting you can go into the conference room, right outside here and into one of the hallways, and you can log right on to this new SBA service. And be sure and tell us how well it works, because it is our very first time to try it out.

Because of this conference the Discovery Channel, the Foreign Ministry of Argentina and the Global Foundation in Buenos Aires have come together to make sure that these voices are heard well beyond this conference. They will do this through a series of Vital Voices Public Service Announcements on issues raised here at the conference. Tomorrow each of you will have the chance to help shape those messages that will be broadcast throughout the hemisphere. So think please about the most effective way to reach women and men with the messages of the Vital Voices Conference.

Another important partnership that is taking place is that IBM Uruguay will produce computer and Internet training sessions for women in media and a political training workshop experience sponsored by USAID, the Partners of the Americas, the League of Women Voters, and USIA Women's Campaign International. This is one way that you can really test and improve your own skills and learn from one each other about how you can take messages from this conference back home.

The United States Government stands ready to continue to work with all of you. To make sure that this critical effort started here at this conference, and building on so much work that has gone before, will continue well into the future and will have the results that we all hope for.

As I travel around the world, I am very grateful for the opportunity that I have to meet with women and to listen to them. Their dreams, their aspirations, their hopes, their concerns. And I am always amazed, impressed and humbled by the extraordinary human spirit and hopefulness that I find whether I am in a very poor village in Bangladesh or Uganda, or in a very small business in Nicaragua, or Santiago, I'm always with women who inspire me. And these are the women from throughout this hemisphere who we must do all that we can to ensure that their voices are heard, heard in city halls and board rooms, and trade union offices, and political parties, in academia, in families.

If we carry forth from this conference the extraordinary example and words that we heard from our four panelists, and we take our energy and work together to make sure that these voices are heard, I think we have a great opportunity ahead of us.

I ran across a quote from an early Uruguayan woman leader, Dr. Paulina Luisi who said "We shall not reach the radiant mount toward which our eyes are fixed today. But on the ground we are breaking, our daughters will march to victory."

As the mother of a daughter, I hope with all my heart, that we will break that ground, and the youngest among us will see results, that we will make it possible in the next century for women and men to feel as they should. fully empowered, full of hope and confident, because there are no longer any of those divisions that separate us from one another, but instead a commitment creating a future that brings out the best in all of us.

Thank you very much.



Speech given by the Honorable Mrs. Hillary Clinton, First Lady of the United States

I am honored to be part of this Seventh Conference and to share with you the third year of these important meetings. I would like to thank the government and Republic of Panama, and especially our host, for organizing this Conference and welcoming us with the hospitality we have come to associate with their country.

The United States and Panama enjoy a rich and long-lasting friendship which will be stronger in the new millennium, along with our partnership of a century with the Canal which is experiencing a time of historic transition; we shall always be united by the mutual respect and commitment we share in ensuring the benefits of democracy for all our people.

I think it is appropriate to have met in Panama for our annual Conference. Panama really is the crossroads, the bridge of the Americas, it is a nation which literally joins our hemisphere, the diversity of this country, ecologically, culturally, ethnically, it is a microcosm of all the Americas. We have arrived here from the other side of the hemisphere hoping to build a better world for all women, children and families, in numerous ways.

Difficult and Complex Task

Our task is much more difficult and complex than the task of those who built the Canal a century ago. Instead of mountains, we seek to move hearts, change old attitudes, eradicate hunger and disease, educate all our children and most importantly, give women the power throughout our hemisphere to participate in the lives of our nations.

Propitious Time

We are reaching for our goals at a time in history which is full of hope, at a time which is propitious for social change of a more positive kind.

Along the road of freely-elected democracies, today for the first time, there are millions of people who are

We are reaching for our at a time in history which is full of hope, at a time which is propitious for social change of a more positive kind.

enjoying the right to shape their own leaders, as well as forming their own opinions based on information obtained from a free press, from open talks in support or opposition of a cause.

Today we know that for every democracy, whether recently created or whether thousands of years old, the process of building and caring for a democracy can only take root when its principles are forever set in the hearts of all people. Democracy can only move forward when no one is afraid of the consequences of stopping or talking in the name of justice, and democracy can only achieve its greatest potential when women are not prohibited by law, ignorance, by tradition or custom or intimidation, from making their voices heard at the moment of voting for and achieving their most cherished dreams.

Power for Women

Because of this, I believe that the part of the Conference which is called Rights and Participation is so important in granting more women the power to seek out and claim their rights as citizens and human beings. It is the only way in which our democracies, old or new, will survive and struggle and move into the twenty-first century.

I have been told that the word "empowerment" does not translate well, however I am sure that each woman in this room knows its meaning very well. It means the right to participate in the political lives of our countries. "Empowerment" means the capacity to lead a life free of sexual and domestic violence. In addition, it means access to justice in accordance with the law, to education and health, to credit and property. In short, giving women power means giving them the same treatment as complete citizens in every country.

Domestic Violence

No nation can hope to be successful in our global economy if half their population is not given the opportunity to make use of the potential given to them by God, as we can see in many countries, where many rights have been denied women and many positions of opportunity remain closed.

Many women live in fear of violence at the hands of a



member of the family. For them, their homes do not provide a refuge, the law does not offer protection and public opinion does not offer any sympathy.

Domestic and sexual violence against women remains as one of the most serious forms of unreported violation in our region. All of us must work to offer renewed protection against this violation of human rights which is domestic violence.

Criminal Violence

As the Secretary of State in my country, our first female Minister of Foreign Affairs has said, violence cannot be classified as cultural, it is criminal. Many women, especially those who are poor and less educated, are not aware of their legal rights in the workplace, their right to their own property and their right to choose their own lives. Regardless of whether these laws exist on the books, many women and children are trapped in a cycle of endless poverty and do not have access to family planning and have received a limited education, but please, let us not forget what we already know about many solutions to these problems. We already know what is being worked on to improve our lives.

Next week I will be privileged to travel to Venezuela, Brazil and Argentina with my husband. I will be visiting micro-credit, family planning and educational programs, which, I and many of you, have worked to support here in this Hemisphere as well as around the world.

Successes have been registered in granting women the power to bring up their children, to remove their families from poverty.

Priorities

There is also encouraging news to report on the three priorities which were established following our Miami meeting of the Summit of the Americas in 1994, the elimination of measles in the Americas by the year 2000, and the reduction of maternal morbidity and educational reform, all of which we have heard about this morning.

Last year not one case of measles was reported in the 27 countries of the Americas, meanwhile we could have suffered a setback with an outbreak of this disease in Brazil, as well as in my own country.

We must maintain the same speed in reaching the goal to finally achieve it and to be able to say it has been achieved.

Contribution

All the countries in the Hemisphere have united with the PAHO to improve pre-natal and obstetrics care and many women in this room have greatly contributed to this effort.

We have brought institutions and individuals together through the Association for the Program on Rehabilitation of Education in America to push primary education. In Honduras, El Salvador and many other countries, many children are graduating from primary school and we have helped to place educational reform and revitalization at the top of the list of the agendas of our countries.

Rights of Women

However, the subject we are focused on this morning, the promotion and expansion of the legal and political rights of women, represents possibly the most difficult challenge we slowly, but surely face. We are witnesses of legal reform which is raising the status of women in the home and in society.

Law against Domestic Violence

In Costa Rica, women have pushed for the approval of a law against domestic violence. Many countries now have a human rights Ombudsman dedicated to the protection of the rights of women.

In El Salvador, legislators have updated the laws against rape, forcing perpetrators to face justice. Also, laws have been approved which force politicians to prove they have paid child support before being able to run for public office.

Here in Panama, legislators have reformed the Family Code to improve the regulation of matters such as child support and child custody.

In Latin America, we see many new laws which allow women to be elected to public posts, and in my own country we have introduced programs on violence against women which involve training police and the prosecution of delinquents throughout the 50 states.

These are a few of the ideas we have to share with you so women in our hemisphere may experience the same improvements in their lives.



Beneficial Political Changes

None of these advances would have taken place if women had not spoken and demanded changes, and obliged governments to respond to their needs. We must push women forward so their voices may be heard, so they may join in with organizations in striving for political changes which will benefit all women.

Albright and I visited the Inter-American Institute of Human Rights in Costa Rica. The Organization was set up to defend and promote respect for human rights where many regimes control the lives of many people of the Americas. Throughout the last decade, it has guided these countries on the long and difficult path towards democracy, to free societies through very critical transitional elections.

At present, the new mission of the Institute is to help new constitutional governments to understand and live for the principles of democracy, to create a new culture of human rights in the Americas. The Secretary of State and I met with official activists who told us that even though governments had changed, the tasks of safeguarding and deepening respect for human rights remained as challenging as ever.

A few years ago, the Institute began a gender and human rights program, designed to educate women in their rights and to promote the principle that women's rights are in fact human rights, and human rights are women's rights. Further on, there will be an announcement of a donation of 4.8 million dollars to aid the human rights of women.

Continuing the Struggle

Our work as individuals and as First Ladies is not over yet, we must continue to fight for democracy and to encourage women to take responsibility as citizens, to take it seriously so they can vote in local and national elections, as well as elect more women to public office.

Only women like ourselves can make democracy work for us and our families. It is a message which is taking shape in all countries around the world.

Last year, at a conference in Vienna I had the privilege of meeting with a group of women from the new democratic countries of the former Soviet Union.

They had recently recognized the power of action of independent citizens to direct changes as diverse as the traffic of women for prostitution, and they had met to share ideas and to renew and strengthen their faith in democratic values and freedom.

This type of agreement of many women could be very beneficial for our hemisphere as well, by drawing many working women to the forefront of the various changes which we advocate. In the measure in which our countries continue to expand their strategic and political alliances, women in this hemisphere can shape the path by building an alliance of democratic values which will strengthen our democracy for the next millennium.

We must work actively to empower all women to take their places in society, in government and all institutions of society, to take advantage of their talents, to begin new businesses, to pay off their loans and to vote to elect presidents, to have their voices heard, and we must not rest until we have abolished laws and the cobwebs of tradition, until we have brought down the forces of intimidation which threaten the potential of women and children, and which nations maintain to prevent them from being democratic and free.

Last year I took part in a radio call-in program of the Voice of the Americas. One listener called from the other side of the world to ask *what I had meant to say in Beijing about the rights of women being human rights and human rights being the rights of women*. I asked the person who called in to close his eyes and think of all the rights and privileges he enjoys as a man, and then I told him to imagine a world where all women enjoyed those same rights and privileges. I know if we continue working, work which all of you have begun and which we have carried out jointly, that we can move our hemisphere toward making these principles a reality in this world so that in the future, a question like that will never be asked again.

As delivered

FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
REMARKS TO THE SIXTH CONFERENCE OF
WIVES OF HEADS OF STATE AND OF GOVERNMENTS OF THE AMERICAS
LA PAZ, BOLIVIA
DECEMBER 3, 1996

President and Mrs. Sanchez de Lozada, First Ladies and special envoys representing the nations of the Western Hemisphere, and distinguished guests:

It is a great pleasure for me to be in La Paz and to join you for this annual conference. I particularly want to thank Mrs. Sanchez de Lozada for her leadership on behalf of women -- especially her work to promote safe motherhood, education, and to reduce domestic violence -- and for extending to all of us a warm welcome this week.

I know that, as in the past, this gathering will provide new insights and fresh inspiration as we work to expand opportunities for women, children, and families in North, Central, South America and the Caribbean region. I am also pleased to note that Vice President Gore will be in Santa Cruz in a few days representing the United States government at what promises to be a significant hemispheric meeting on sustainable development.

This is my first trip to Bolivia, but I have long felt a special connection to this country. Little Rock, the capital of my home state of Arkansas, is a sister city of Santa Cruz in what is called the Eastern Bolivia-Arkansas partnership. This partnership has initiated cultural, professional and health exchanges that have benefitted the people in both of our countries. So I am especially delighted finally to be in Bolivia after all these years.

Many Bolivians have made their mark on my country. I am proud to say that President Clinton named a woman who was born and raised here in La Paz, Maria Otero, to be the Chair of the

Board of the Inter-American Foundation. That foundation funds grassroots development in the region, and Maria is with me today.

I'm also pleased to be here at a time of such hope and promise for women, children and families across the Americas and around the world. A few days ago, I returned from a trip with my husband to Australia, the Philippines and Thailand, and at each stop I had the chance to talk to diverse groups of women -- from government leaders to grassroots activists to teenage school girls. And I was reminded once again, no matter where we find ourselves in the world today, our aspirations and concerns are fundamentally the same.

Thanks in part to the agenda set at the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, as well as the conferences of this group in Miami, and Asuncion and elsewhere, the status of women is improving in many countries.

In the Philippines last week, I had the opportunity along with Mrs. Frei to speak to 15,000 women and girls in Manila. Some had traveled for days by boat and car to celebrate the Beijing Agenda and just as we are doing today, they came together to renew their commitment to women's rights -- and to ensure that every woman and girl has access to the tools of opportunity: health care, education, jobs and credit, legal protections and the right to participate fully in the political life of their countries.

In the 15 months since Beijing, we have seen advances on every continent. In country after country, governments, non-governmental organizations, businesses and corporations, and individual citizens are beginning to recognize that elevating the status of women and girls in society is essential to progress and prosperity. That is the same whether we are talking about the East, the West, the North or the South; there is a growing appreciation of women's contributions inside and outside of the home - and a greater understanding that everyone in society benefits when women are allowed to claim the political, economic, social, and civic power they are due.

The Western Hemisphere is no exception. In Panama, the family code has been reformed, giving women more say in alimony, child support and child custody cases. The country's new Law 27

on Intra-Family Violence criminalizes certain forms of domestic violence. In Colombia, men and women now have equal weight in determining divorce. In El Salvador and Peru, new institutions have been established to address issues relating to women's development. In Guatemala, a national university has created scholarships for indigenous women to study political science.

Jamaica's Gold Street Program, which addresses teen violence and adolescent pregnancy, has become a model that the United States is using to confront the same issues in the city of Baltimore. In Brazil, women are now entitled to free breast and uterine exams. And in Chile, the government has committed itself to tackling AIDS and adolescent pregnancies and to expanding educational opportunities for girls. And here in Bolivia, as part of the President's plans, the *Plan de Todos*, special efforts are being made to reach out to the indigenous population.

From the northernmost reaches of Canada to the southern tip of South America, women are pushing governments to lift the veil of secrecy that for too long has concealed the tragic crime of domestic violence. I mentioned the legal advances in Panama. Another ground-breaking domestic violence law was passed in Ecuador, creating Family Courts that are empowered to separate an abusive spouse from the home. In Costa Rica, police officers receive special training on how to handle domestic violence cases. In my own country we recently launched a national hotline for victims of domestic violence which has already received 50,000 calls.

Looking across our region, we also see progress on the goals that this group outlined at our previous meetings. Those goals to eliminate measles from the hemisphere, reduce maternal mortality, and promote education reform are making progress. Since 1995, our region has witnessed a 63 percent decline in measles. We have seen the Partnership for the Revitalization of Education in the Americas launch new efforts to expand educational opportunities in six countries. And while the tragic problem of maternal mortality continues to haunt us, we know that progress will come if we focus more energy and resources on this issue.

It is clear that pioneering efforts are underway across the Americas to improve conditions for women and girls. Earlier

today in La Paz, I visited with Ximena, Banco Sol, the only commercial bank in the world and the largest that specializes in microenterprise right here. I spoke to women whose lives had been transformed because they had received a modest loan to start selling vegetables in the market, to start making skirts. Not only had they become economically self-sufficient, they had begun to lift their families out of poverty and improve the economies of their communities. We met one woman in the market who is caring for her six orphan grandchildren because of the loans that she had received. I have seen the same encouraging results at FINCA, a micro-lending enterprise that I visited in Managua, Nicaragua. I've visited a comparable enterprise in Santiago and I have seen it in my own country.

In La Paz today I also visited new and expectant mothers at a primary health care center run by an NGO, PROSALUD. The 28 PROSALUD clinics offer prenatal care and family planning services that have resulted in safer pregnancies and deliveries and, in some cases, have saved lives.

This is but one piece of the nationwide effort here in Bolivia to promote safe motherhood and family planning so that women and girls are educated about their own health and their own reproductive options.

Although the rate is far too high, Bolivia's success over the past five years at reducing maternal mortality offers a model for the world of how one nation has responded to a serious health crisis and galvanized the government, non-governmental organizations, and the medical communities. I wish to commend the President and the Vice President for their leadership in this very important effort.

It is worth noting that Bolivia undertook this campaign not only as a way to reduce maternal mortality, but also to reduce the increasing rate of abortion. Without access to family planning, women often turn in desperation to illegal, unsafe abortion procedures that account for half of all maternal deaths in this country. Deaths from abortion complications are responsible for from 30 to 70 percent of maternal mortality in our hemisphere, depending on the country.

Here, in Brazil, and in other places around the globe, I have seen examples of how investments in family planning improve maternal health and the well-being of families as well as reduce the number of abortions. The United States has supported family planning efforts, including Bolivia's. However, as you may know, some members of the United States Congress have voted to limit American support for family planning initiatives. My husband's Administration remains committed to encouraging a continuation of these investments, which represent a sensible, cost-effective and long-range strategy for improving women's health and for lowering the rate of abortion. And for my part, I will certainly remember and share the powerful stories I have heard around the world to explain why these programs are critical.

Education is also critical. It is inextricably tied to how women and children achieve progress. Children of illiterate mothers are twice as likely to die as those with mothers who are educated. So our efforts across the Western Hemisphere to educate girls and mothers will have a profound and concrete effect on women's health. The better educated a girl or woman is, the healthier she is. The healthier she is, the healthier her family is. And all of society stands to gain.

While some may dismiss the achievements of this conference and the conferences before or of the Beijing Agenda as merely "women's issues" that have no place on the front-burner of global politics, I believe that you here in Bolivia, and certainly your President and Vice President understand how they are part of sustainable development and progress. They represent a balancing of power that is just as crucial to the endurance of democracy as issues like trade, diplomacy and national security. Democracy, after all, requires the full participation of all citizens, including women.

And today, we can take heart knowing that democracy has replaced dictatorship around the world and virtually throughout our own hemisphere. Building and sustaining democracy has always required a balance of power, a balance of public power, private economic power, and the power of civic society, those formal and informal networks that bring people together. It is the balance of power that Bolivia has incorporated into its Popular Participation Law, and by doing so, insured the further success of democracy. Whether we succeed at achieving the balance of

power is particularly important for women who despite the strides we have made, still find their voices silenced and their potential stymied in too many parts of the world. In country after country -- from the most advanced democracies to those newly emerging, from the most dynamic free market economies to those struggling in the face of rapid global change -- women are still striving to define and attain their rightful place in government, the economy, the civil society and throughout their lives.

Women are seeking balance in their lives and in their societies, and I am heartened that civic education is on the agenda of this conference. Teaching people about democratic values and the importance of their participation in the political process is critical to sustaining democracy. When we look at what is happening in our hemisphere, when I look at what is happening in my own country, I see that the voices and votes of women can make a difference. If all of us believe in the God-given potential of each human being, then all of us should do what we can in our own ways and our own roles to further those voices and that potential.

For all of the challenges that confront us on the eve of this new century I am optimistic about our future. I am optimistic about our hemisphere and about our capacity to meet those challenges. And certainly, if there is one vision that should guide us, it is that of the young people who rely on us to leave them a world that encourages their dreams, nurtures their talents and respects their choices. That is really why we are gathered today -- most of us in this auditorium have made most of the choices we will make that will determine the course of our lives. It is up to us to determine how we provide the same opportunities for all of our sons and daughters.

Building a better future for children, women, men, and families in the Western Hemisphere is not just the opportunity of government, it is the responsibility of all of us. And I thank you very much for being part of meeting that responsibility and challenge.

**FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
REMARKS TO THE FIFTH CONFERENCE OF
WIVES OF HEADS OF STATE AND OF GOVERNMENTS OF THE AMERICAS
ASUNCION, PARAGUAY
OCTOBER 16, 1995**

I am privileged to have the opportunity to represent my country, the United States, for the first time at this Fifth Conference of First Ladies from the Western Hemisphere. It is also a great honor for me to be here in Paraguay with all of you.

We have gathered together to discuss the futures of women and children in all of our countries. Whether we live in North, Central, or South America or the Caribbean region, we are united in our belief that women everywhere share common aspirations and concerns.

Yet, as we meet here in this beautiful hall this evening, we also know that a vast reservoir of human potential is now being wasted across the Americas.

No nation in our hemisphere can say that all of its children are fed, clothed, housed, schooled, and raised by loving parents. No nation in our hemisphere can say that all of its women are treated with dignity, respect, and given the chance to fulfill their God-given potentials. And no nation can say that each and every family within its borders is healthy, strong, and stable.

Our world, as we know, is far from perfect. But even though enormous challenges remain, we have come here hopeful about our future. Hopeful because, somewhere in our hemisphere right now, a baby in a local health clinic is being immunized against a serious disease. . . a little girl is going to school and is learning to read and write . . . a woman is taking out a small loan from a neighborhood bank that will enable her to start her own business in her home. We know that every problem we face in our hemisphere is being solved somewhere in our region at this very moment.

We are also hopeful because of the progress made at last year's Summit of the Americas in Miami, at the United Nations Conference on Social Development in Copenhagen earlier this year, and more recently at the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing. I think it is very fitting that we meet after those three historic gatherings, which drew world attention to the plight of women and children and, in so doing, to the plight of families as well.

Since Miami, we have seen cooperation grow among our nations, and our political leaders. The Summit not only recognized every nation's duty to invest in its people, but also the special role that girls and women play in the economic and social development of the Western Hemisphere.

That theme was reiterated again in Copenhagen, which focused on the alleviation of poverty as an essential factor in political, social and economic progress.

Many of us also attended last month's women's conference in Beijing, where it was again made clear that democracy and prosperity cannot be attained or sustained in countries that do not value women as full and equal partners in society.

The conferences in Miami, Copenhagen and Beijing showed the world that issues involving children and women are not secondary issues. They are keys to building democratic institutions, strengthening market economies, and achieving social justice.

They are also among the hardest issues we face.

That is why the agreement reached in Miami last year was an historic first for countries of this hemisphere. For the first time, there was universal recognition that no nation can compete in the global economy if half its population cannot read or write, cannot find a job, or cannot rise out of poverty.

And that is why it is also heartening that, despite assurances from skeptics that nothing would be accomplished in Beijing, more than 180 nations endorsed a platform for action that lays out specific ways to expand the rights and opportunities of women around the world.

This is particularly critical today, given the growing gap between the rich and the poor, the educated and the uneducated, the skilled and the unskilled.

Those among us who enjoy the opportunities of education, health care, jobs, credit, legal and political rights are flourishing in the new global economy. Those without such opportunities are lagging farther and farther behind. And more often than not, those lagging behind are women and poor children.

This trend, if it continues, threatens to undermine the very institutions we are seeking to uphold: strong families, strong economies, and strong democracies. All will be in jeopardy if women continue to be denied the opportunities they need to thrive and compete in the new century.

So, what must change?

First, values and attitudes.

In our everyday lives, we must begin to respect the dignity of each person, no matter where that person lives or what he or she looks like. To do that, we must be willing to overcome many assumptions, presumptions, prejudices and prejudgments.

Because, to truly respect a child means to respect every child in every family, boy or girl. To respect a child means to give that child the love, attention, and discipline he or she needs to grow up with confidence and competence. To respect a child means to nurture that child with the health care and schooling that he or she needs to get the right start in life.

Every time we dismiss the potential of a child because of skin color, parental income, or family background, we betray our own futures.

We must also appreciate the contributions of every woman, instead of pigeon-holing and categorizing women in ways that limit their potential. To truly respect a woman means to respect and protect her human rights; it means to respect the choices she makes for herself and her family; and it means to value the experience she brings to all facets of life.

Second, institutions must change, and so must the ways we go about our everyday business.

If programs and policies have outlived their usefulness, we should admit that they no longer solve the problems they were meant to solve. We must fix programs that don't work with reforms that are efficient and inexpensive. And we must insist that institutions -- whether government, schools, or health care systems -- overcome bureaucratic intransigence and put people first.

We must also take advantage of the many innovative programs that do exist throughout our hemisphere. Prior to arriving in Paraguay today, I was in Brasilia, where President and Mrs. Cardoso told me about Brazil's efforts to improve the quality of primary education.

I then traveled on to Salvador da Bahia, where an extraordinary effort is underway to channel the potential and energy of thousands of street children. One program I saw was a circus in which the performers were children, some as young as eight, who had been recruited off the streets where they lived.

They were not being trained for circus jobs; their performances were merely a vehicle for learning the value of discipline, teamwork, and hard work. Along the way, these children develop confidence, self-esteem, and pride in their accomplishments. Part of a program called Project Axe, they also receive schooling and vocational training, as well as counseling to reunite them with their families.

I asked one 15-year-old boy, who had been with the project since it began five years ago, whether it had made a difference in his life. If not for the project, he said, "I would be dead or in prison now."

Programs like this one, which receive support from the public and private sectors and some international organizations, can be replicated widely. But that requires us to share information,

exchange ideas, discuss honestly our successes and failures, and learn as much as we can from each other.

Government has a vital role in all of this. But government is only effective if it listens to the voices of the people it serves, instead of making decisions based on political convenience or whim. And government must be held accountable for meeting human needs.

At the same time, government cannot address every problem alone. We must not look on government as a panacea, but as an able partner of business, non-governmental organizations, and other private institutions committed to investing in the promise of every person, including those who are poor, disadvantaged, and politically powerless. And one of the best things government can do is to make it easier for outside groups, non-governmental groups, to do the work they are willing to do.

Finally, as societies, we must be willing to move beyond inertia to action. And all of us -- individuals and institutions -- must heed that call to action. We must start by taking responsibility within our own families and then spreading that responsibility to the communities in which we live.

Every segment of society has a stake in this issue. And every segment of society can affect positive change.

Schools, for example, can be more flexible in responding to the needs of their students, young and old.

A few days ago, in Santiago, Mrs. Frei took me to a school that embodies the Chilean commitment to building an educational system for the future. I saw boys and girls busy working on computers hooked up to the Internet.

I learned from the Minister of Education that schools may begin to keep their doors open on Saturdays and Sundays to accommodate the children of working parents who have no alternatives for child care, and for children who wish to acquire new skills for themselves.

I saw that Chile has not been content to stick with old methods that do not work. The government and people of that country are devising new ways of training teachers, involving parents and communities. All of this is happening now in many countries throughout the Americas and more can happen if we are willing to learn from each other's experiences.

Heeding the call to action also means that financial institutions must serve all people, even if they are poor, live in remote areas, or are women. How much more evidence do we need that women are a good credit risk? I have seen the proof myself at the Grameen Bank in Bangladesh, where the poorest of the poor in the world have transformed entire villages by taking out small loans for cows, rickshaws, and other items they use to earn an income.

I have even seen it in my own country, where poor women at a project called Mi Casa, in Denver, Colorado, have banded together to take out small loans to help themselves. And they told me very, very directly how difficult it is for women even in the United States to have access to credit. One woman said: "Too many great ideas die in the parking lots of banks."

But all over this hemisphere, women are overcoming these obstacles. In Nicaragua, which I visited at the beginning of my trip, I saw how hard President Chamorro has worked to strengthen democratic institutions and promote a market economy. And I met thirty women from a very poor barrio in Managua who run a bank in their neighborhood, borrowing small sums of money to start their own businesses, to start a bakery, to make mosquito netting, to be a seamstress.

Not only had these women organized themselves to improve their own circumstances, they were also improving the circumstances of their families and communities.

Furthermore, they have, like every bank I have ever visited, a high loan repayment rate. In that particular neighborhood bank, the repayment rate was 100 percent. And from what I know about banking, that would be the envy of many commercial lenders.

Individual men and women need to change attitudes and then act, just as every branch of society.

Businesses can initiate policies, such as flexible work schedules, child care, and the use of modern technology, that enable employees to perform well on the job and continue to fulfill their family obligations. Businesses also can value women by paying women equal salaries for equal work with their men employees.

The media can assume greater responsibility for the values it transmits by avoiding negative advertising and television programming that sensationalizes violence and glorifies the exploitation and degradation of women and children.

At this conference, we will examine these issues, and we will focus specifically on what can be done to address the pressing health and education of women and children.

We will discuss initiatives to ensure the elimination of diseases that primarily affect women and children, reduce maternal mortality and provide comprehensive health care to women throughout their lifetimes, including family planning. We will talk about what every nation must do to ensure that girls are guaranteed the right to an education and that all citizens acquire the knowledge and skills they will all need in the new global economy.

And we will explore ways to end the problem of domestic violence, which has destroyed the lives of too many women and their families in every country represented here.

I would like to make one final point about our agenda. Because we are talking about the

issues that matter most in the lives of women and children does not mean we are not talking about the lives of men and boys.

When I was in Nicaragua, I noticed billboards along the side of the road. They showed the face of a crying child with the caption: "My father has left the home." The problem of the absent father is as tragic as the problem of the undervalued mother and wife. It is a problem that, in the United States, we are urgently trying to address.

If, as a hemisphere, we truly care about strong families, strong communities, and strong societies, we have to recognize that men and women can and must complement each other inside and outside of the home. We should not be at opposite poles; we should be partners in a common enterprise for the good of all of us, and particularly our children.

Because of the roles that the women here and many of you in this hall have, we know we can help initiate the changes that must take place if we ever want to realize the great potential of this hemisphere.

Like the women I have met all over this hemisphere in Canada, in my country, in Mexico, in Nicaragua, in Chile, in Brazil and here in Paraguay, we come together to pool our experiences and ideas to improve conditions for our individual families as well as our national family and the family of nations.

I was not present at the earlier conferences, but I want to thank and applaud all of the women who took part in those conferences and who have moved this agenda forward. I was privileged to host our meeting in Miami and I look forward to the work ahead of us. It is the most exciting and challenging work any of us can imagine or be engaged in. And it is work in which we can make a difference.

Thank you very much.

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Chapter VIII



Declaration of Panama

The First Ladies of Antigua and Barbuda, Brazil, Canada, Colombia, Costa Rica, Chile, Ecuador, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Nicaragua, Panama, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, and the United States, and the Representatives designated by the Governments of Argentina, Bolivia, Cuba, El Salvador, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru, the Dominican Republic, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Uruguay and Venezuela, meeting in Panama on October 8-9, 1997, with the theme "Building the Future of America with Human Rights and a Culture of Peace," to evaluate progress made and to renew our commitment to find a solution to the social problems of our Continent, agree to sign the following Declaration:

1- We recognize that the social problems which our countries are facing are, in some respects, common to us all, and that their solution requires the participation and commitment of all sectors of society.

2- We firmly believe that the promotion and respect of human rights, the achievement of equality and the strengthening of values such as solidarity, tolerance, a culture of peace, pluralism and the right to self-determination of people, are fundamental conditions for the development and integration of a community of nations.

3- We have proven the existence of vulnerable population groups who have been greatly impacted by poverty, unemployment, and social disintegration. Among these, children, young people, urban and rural women, the elderly and disabled require policies and programs which will facilitate their incorporation into the development process and its benefits.

4- We reiterate our desire to put our capabilities as managers, mobilizers, facilitators or ralliers of social programs and policies at the service of our countries, with an emphasis on the vulnerable sectors, in complete unity with the national interests of each country, gaining inspiration from dialogue, negotiation and mutual respect.

5- We will continue to use as a frame of reference and orientation the recommendations and decisions supported

by our Governments at the World Summit on Children in 1990; the United Nations Conference on the Environment and Development of 1992; the Geneva Declaration on Rural Women of 1992; the World Conference on Human Rights of 1993; the International Conference on Population and Development of 1994; the Summit of the Americas of 1994; the World Summit on Social Development of 1995; the IV World Conference on Women of 1995; the World Food Summit of 1996, and the Summit for Sustainable Development in Santa Cruz, Bolivia, in 1996.

6- Conscious of the rapid changes which characterize today's world, we reiterate our commitment to increase the access and to improve the systems of education, training, information and technology, with the aim of providing our populations with the necessary tools to successfully assume the responsibility to contribute to their development.

7- We reiterate our commitment to continue to supporting the fulfillment of our agreements on:

- Prevention of Early Pregnancy
- Prevention and Control of Cancer
- Elimination of all Forms of Violence
- Reduction of Maternal Morbidity-Mortality
- Observance of the Rights and Duties of Children
- Improvement of the Quality of the Educational Systems for Children
- Equal Access for Girls and Boys to Education
- Equal Access of Women in Decision-making Processes

8- We value the work carried out by countries in the region who support the elimination of measles.



9- We continue to be concerned with the poverty and inequality which persist among rural women in the Americas. For this reason, we view with great satisfaction the advances achieved in the establishment and launching of the regional proposal to strengthen the integration of rural women in educational, productive and commercial activities. We request that the Pro-Tempore Secretariat present the project in the manner deemed convenient at the next meeting of the Inter-American Agricultural Board and of other interested regional organizations.

10- We consider that the process of educating children and adolescents must include the development of knowledge, abilities, and a sense of responsibility to look after their health, to guarantee and promote their rights and to promote co-existence, non-discrimination, equality among men and women, and conflict resolution through dialogue, communication, negotiation and mutual respect.

11- We commit our efforts to contribute to the eradication of child labor, whose repercussions bar the harmonious and integral education and development of boys and girls in our countries. Because of this, we request the United Nations to establish an International Year for the Eradication of Child Labor.

12- We recognize the urgency of all the countries in adopting the necessary measures to comply with the Treaty on the Rights of Children in particular, and to confront as soon as possible, the elimination of all forms of violence against boys and girls which irreparably mutilate and lacerate their bodies and spirits.

13- We invite countries which have not done so, to ratify the Inter-American Treaty for the Prevention, Sanction, and Eradication of Violence against Women, known as the Treaty de Belem do Pará, adopted in 1994.

14- We support initiatives promoting Human Rights, to lay the foundation for a real Culture of Peace and Development, such as the ones already in place, to overcome poverty on our continent.

15- We recognize that to reach our goals of achieving a true culture of peace and development, it is indispensable to support the access and participation of women in the process of decision-making within the framework of a diverse and active civil society.

16- We recognize the valuable participation and contribution of international organizations and financial institutions which have supported our initiatives, making possible the execution of projects and programs destined for the neediest and most vulnerable sectors of our societies.

17- We gratefully appreciate and accept the kind offer of the First Lady of Chile to host the VIIIth Conference of the Wives of Heads of State and Governments of the Americas in 1998.

18- We thank the First Lady of Panama, Dora Boyd de Pérez Balladares, the people and government of Panama, for the kind attention we have received during our stay.

Two copies were signed in the city of Panama in their original form in Spanish and English on October 9th, 1997.



Annex

Participants and special guests

COUNTRY	FIRST LADIES
1. Antigua	Patricia Bird
2. Chile	Marta Larrechea de Frei
3. Colombia	Jacquin Strouss de Samper
4. Costa Rica	Josette Altmann de Figueres
5. Guatemala	Patricia Escobar Dalton de Arzú
6. Guyana	Ivonne Hinds
7. Nicaragua	María Dolores de Alemán
8. Suriname	Patricia De León
9. Trinidad and Tobago	Ismay Patricia Robinson
10. Brazil	Ruth Correa Leite de Cardoso
11. Ecuador	Lucía Peña Ochoa de Alarcón
12. Haiti	Géri Benoit Préval
13. Canada	Aline Chrétien
14. United States	Hillary Rodham Clinton
15. Jamaica	Lady Ivy Silvia Watson de Cooke
16. Panama	Dora Boyd de Pérez Balladares

COUNTRY	GOVERNMENT DELEGATES
1. Argentina	Ambassador Zelmira Mireya Regazzoli
2. Cuba	Sonia Beretervide Dopico
3. Peru	Ambassador Beatriz Ramacciotti
4. Uruguay	Deputy Diana Cristina Saravia Olmos
5. St. Kitts	Verónica Liburd
6. Venezuela	Elsie de Altimari
7. Paraguay	Beatriz Barriocanal de Breuer
8. Mexico	María Carmen Oñate
9. Bolivia	Virginia Gaylle de Quiroga
10. El Salvador	Abigail Castro de Pérez
11. Dominican Republic	Lissy Campos de Fernández

	SPECIAL GUESTS
1. Her Majesty Queen Fabiola	Queen of Belgium
2. Rebeca Grynspan	Vice-President of Costa Rica
3. Sir George Alleyne	General Manager of PAHO
4. Muni Figueres	IDB External Relations Advisor
5. Mayra Buvinic	Head of the IDB Unit for Women in Development
6. Juan Méndez	Executive Manager of the Inter-American Institute of Human Rights
7. Ana Botella de Aznar	Wife of the President of the Government of Spain
8. Ofelia Calcetas-Santos	Special Reporter of the United Nations on the subject of Child Abuse
9. Carmen Moreno	Subregional Manager -IPEC
10. Elaine Wolfensohn	Head of the World Bank Delegation
11. Tomás Jiménez Araya	Head of the UNFPA Delegation
12. Ricardo Alba	ALICC- representing the Countess of Elda
13. Anaisabel Prera	Special Counsellor to the Director of UNESCO
14. Larry Boone	General Deputy Manager of IICA, Costa Rica
15. Margarita Roque	Executive Secretary of the CIM
16. Marta Maurás	Regional Manager of UNICEF for Latin America and the Caribbean
17. Roberto Leal Ocampo	Director of the Inter-American Confederation of the International League for Mentally Disabled People



Santiago Declaration

The Wives of the Heads of State and Government of the Americas and Delegates meeting in Santiago, Chile from the 28th through the 30th of September of 1998 under the theme "The Americas Pave Today the Way for the Year 2000" for the purpose of sharing the achievements and lending new impetus to our commitment to contribute to the development of the countries in the Hemisphere, hereby sign the following Declaration:

1. We recognize the growing need to contribute more actively to finding solutions to social problems that require a hemispheric effort by pooling skills, sharing experiences, strengthening initiatives, and designing strategies that permit us to take effective action in this area.
2. We value our potential as a shared network of common goals and projects that transcend our borders for the purpose of bringing together, developing and using capabilities and resources to the benefit of our societies, especially its vulnerable sectors.
3. Our actions are oriented towards supporting and promoting social policies and strategies consistent with international agreements and resolutions that foster the strengthening of democracy, the eradication of poverty, the protection and promotion of human rights, progress toward economic stability and social justice for all the peoples of the Americas.
4. We commit ourselves once more to the agreements concluded as part of the Panama Declaration with respect to high-risk population groups who are hardest hit by the effects of poverty and social exclusion. We reaffirm our commitments to ensure that policies and programs are fully incorporated into the development processes of our countries.
5. We recognize that globalization is generating in each of our countries new scenarios that present a series of new demands and opportunities with respect to national capabilities.
6. We endorse and value the strides made as set forth in the "Follow-up Report on the Agreements and Projects Adopted at the Seventh Conference of Wives of Heads Of State and Government of the Americas" regarding: Teen Pregnancy Prevention; Cancer Prevention and Control; Eradication of Measles; Elimination of all Forms of Violence; Reduction of Maternal Morbidity and Mortality; Compliance with Rights and Obligations with respect to Children; Improvement of the Quality of Childhood Education Systems; Equal Access by Boys and Girls to Education; and Equal Access by Women to Decision-Making Processes.
7. We agree to adopt, as central priority issues of this Eighth Conference, given their importance and relevance to the situations in the countries gathered here: Education; Promotion of Women's Rights to Participation; Prevention and Elimination of Domestic Violence and Child Abuse, and coordination with the agreements and resolutions of the Second Summit of the Americas held in Santiago, Chile, in April 1998 and other conferences on these topics.
8. We underscore, in the field of education, the importance of the comprehensive development of the child, with emphasis on the early education of boys and girls under 6 years of age living in poverty and other high-risk situations. We also underscore the importance of continuing to combine our efforts to support the inclusion and retention of women in the labor force and promote educational strategies that target women and children's health.
9. We recognize that problems that need to be addressed in the Americas on an urgent basis include: increased teenage pregnancy and a higher incidence of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome. We agree to dedicate our efforts to encourage and support sexual education for boys and girls, regarding the prevention of AIDS and other STD.



10. We reaffirm our support for strengthening the rights of women to participate in all areas of social, political, economic and cultural endeavors involving our peoples. We greatly value and support the initiatives taken to include rural women in this process.
11. We declare our firm intent to continue to strive for equal treatment and opportunities for women, which serve as barometers of actual progress made in consolidating the democratic mechanisms that our countries are promoting. We will lend support to programs aimed at strengthening the capabilities of women, particularly those that encourage and develop their leadership skills.
12. We recognize and value the progress made in the countries of the Hemisphere with respect to legislation applicable to domestic violence. We agree to devote our efforts to strengthening those entities that guarantee proper implementation of and actual compliance with the rights and duties resulting from this legislation.
13. We reiterate the need to guarantee continuity of efforts aimed at eradicating measles in our Hemisphere by the year 2000. Moreover, we support other initiatives aimed at implementing innovative strategies for the promotion of physical and mental health.
14. We agree that within the context of the International Year of Senior Citizens, scheduled by the United Nations to cover the period September 1, 1998 through September 30, 1999, to work systematically in our countries for their full social, economic and cultural inclusion. We will also provide assistance with exchanges and technical support in this area among our countries.
15. We note that our meeting coincides with the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and we undertake to comply fully with the goals set forth in that important Declaration, reaffirming the universal, indivisible and interdependency of these rights.
16. We declare our firm intention to promote equal opportunities for persons with disabilities, in order to strengthen their participatory rights.
17. We emphasize the valuable assistance being provided by cooperation agencies, international organizations and multilateral programs to support social policies, governmental and non-governmental institutions to bolster initiatives and resources aimed at the implementation of our activities that benefit the vulnerable groups.
18. We reaffirm our support for access to and participation of women in decision-making processes as one of the most important ways of achieving our goals and "paving today the way for the year 2000".
19. We express our solidarity with the countries affected by the recent disaster caused by nature particularly by Hurricane George.
20. We express our appreciation to the First Lady of the Republic of Chile, Mrs. Marta Larraechea de Frei, and in particular, the Chilean government and people, for the hospitality extended during our stay.
21. We are grateful for and accept the courteous offer of the wife of the Prime Minister of Canada, Mrs. Aline Chrétien, to host the Ninth Conference of Wives of the Heads of State and Government of the Americas in 1999.



Mrs. Dora Boyd de Pérez Balladares
First Lady of Panama

Mrs. Mary Flake de Flores
First Lady of Honduras

Mrs. Marta Larraechea de Frei
First Lady of Chile

Mrs. María Dolores Alemán Cardenal
First Lady of Nicaragua

Mrs. Aline Chrétien
First Lady of Canada

Mrs. Mirta Gusinky de Cubas
First Lady of Paraguay

Mrs. Yolanda Prada de Banzer
First Lady of Bolivia

Ms. Keiko Sofía Fujimori Higuchi
First Lady of Peru

Mrs. Ruth Correa de Leite Cardozo
First Lady of Brazil

Mrs. Carmen L. Campos de Fernández
First Lady of the Dominican Republic

Mrs. Norha Puyana de Pastrana
First Lady of Colombia

Mrs. Calliopa Pearlette Louisy
First Lady of Saint Lucia

Mrs. Lorena Clare de Rodríguez
First Lady of Costa Rica

Mrs. Ismay Patricia D'Leon
First Lady of Suriname

Ms. Paola Mahuad Calderón
First Lady of Ecuador

Mrs. Oma Panday
First Lady of Trinidad and Tobago

Mrs. Elizabeth de Calderón Sol
First Lady of El Salvador

Mrs. Teresa González Fernández de Solá
Government Delegate of Argentina

Mrs. Hillary Rodham Clinton
First Lady of the United States of America

Mrs. Vilma Lucila Espín de Castro
Government Delegate of Cuba

Mrs. Patricia Escobar de Arzú
First Lady of Guatemala

Mrs. Elsie Schmilinsky de Altimari
Government Delegate of Venezuela

Mrs. Yvonne Zereder Hinds
First Lady of Guyana

Mrs. María Amparo Canto González
Secretary of Foreign Affairs of Mexico

Mrs. Géri Benoit Preval
First Lady of Haiti

Mrs. Escribana Gabriela Sierra del Cioppo
Technical Advisor of Uruguay



6ª CONFERENCIA DE ESPOSAS
DE JEFE DE ESTADO
Y DE GOBIERNO
DE LAS AMERICAS
Secretaría Pro-Tempore

SIXTH CONFERENCE OF WIVES OF HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT OF THE AMERICAS

DECLARATION OF LA PAZ

WE, THE WIVES OF HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT OF THE AMERICAS AND REPRESENTATIVES OF GOVERNMENTS, MEETING IN THE CITY OF LA PAZ BETWEEN 3 AND 6 DECEMBER, 1966, WITH THE PURPOSE OF ANALYZING "THE RIGHTS OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF SUSTAINABLE HUMAN DEVELOPMENT" AND IN AGREEING UPON ACTIONS, INSPIRED IN DIALOGUE, SOLIDARITY AND MUTUAL RESPECT. SUBSCRIBE TO THE FOLLOWING DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES:

1. WE RECOGNIZE THAT THE SUBJECTS OF SOCIAL POLICIES SHOULD PARTICIPATE IN AN ORGANIZED AND ACTIVE MANNER IN THE PLANNING, IMPLEMENTATION AND FOLLOW-UP OF ECONOMIC, POLITICAL AND SOCIAL ACTIVITIES SO THAT EVERYONE MAY DEVELOP TO THEIR MAXIMUM POTENTIAL IN ORDER TO ASSURE THE RIGHTS OF PEOPLE TO RECEIVE PROPER CARE INCLUDING NUTRITION, HOUSING, HEALTH, EMPLOYMENT AND RECREATION.
2. WE RECOGNIZE, NEVERTHELESS, THAT ON OUR CONTINENT BARRIERS EXIST FOR THE MOST VULNERABLE SECTORS OF OUR POPULATION, ESPECIALLY WOMEN AND CHILDREN, IN REACHING THEIR FULL POTENTIAL AND EXERCISING THEIR RIGHTS.
3. WE BELIEVE THAT IN ORDER TO MEET THE CHALLENGES OF SUSTAINABLE HUMAN DEVELOPMENT, GOVERNMENTS AND CIVIL SOCIETIES SHOULD WORK WITH RESPONSIBILITY AND SOLIDARITY PROMOTING CONDITIONS OF OPPORTUNITY AND EQUITY THAT WILL ALLOW THE DEVELOPMENT OF ABILITIES, MEANS OF ORGANIZATION AND PARTICIPATION IN THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS.
4. WE RECOGNIZE THE LINK BETWEEN SOCIAL, POLITICAL, ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS WHOSE INTER-RELATIONSHIP MAKES POSSIBLE THE SUSTAINABILITY OF DEVELOPMENT, AND GUARANTEES THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE QUALITY OF LIFE FOR PRESENT GENERATIONS WITHOUT COMPROMISING THE WELFARE OF FUTURE GENERATIONS.
5. WE REAFFIRM OUR COMMITMENT TO PROMOTE AND SUPPORT POLICIES AND STRATEGIES FOR SUSTAINABLE HUMAN DEVELOPMENT THAT SEEK COMPLETE AND FAIR PARTICIPATION FOR THE MOST VULNERABLE SOCIAL SECTORS.

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6. WE OFFER OUR MANAGEMENT AND MOBILIZING ABILITY TO CONTINUE FULFILLING COMMITMENTS WE HAVE MADE, IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE NATIONAL INTERESTS OF EACH COUNTRY, MADE AT THE MEETINGS OF VENEZUELA, COLOMBIA, COSTA RICA, SANTA LUCIA AND PARAGUAY, AND ALSO TO IMPLEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS AND DECISIONS ADOPTED AT THE WORLD CONFERENCE ON CHILDREN, HELD IN NEW YORK IN SEPTEMBER OF 1990; THE UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT, HELD IN RIO DE JANEIRO IN JUNE OF 1992; THE WORLD CONFERENCE ON HUMAN RIGHTS, HELD IN VIENNA IN JUNE OF 1993; THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT, HELD IN CAIRO IN SEPTEMBER OF 1994; THE SUMMIT ON SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT, HELD IN COPENHAGEN IN MARCH OF 1995; THE IV WORLD CONFERENCE ON WOMEN, HELD IN BEIJING IN SEPTEMBER OF 1995; THE WORLD FOOD SUMMIT HELD IN ROME IN NOVEMBER 1996; AND THE SUMMIT OF THE AMERICAS, HELD IN MIAMI, RELATING TO THE PRINCIPLES OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT; AS WELL AS THOSE EXPRESSED IN AGENDA 21 CONCERNING WOMEN AND CHILDREN.

7. WE COMMIT OUR FIRM SUPPORT TO SOUND AND EFFECTIVE SOCIAL POLICIES AND STRATEGIES THAT THE GOVERNMENTS OF THE HEMISPHERE FOSTER, IN ORDER TO ACHIEVE SUSTAINABLE HUMAN DEVELOPMENT.

8. WE HIGHLIGHT THE ETHNIC AND CULTURAL VALUE OF OUR SOCIETIES AS AN ESSENTIAL FACTOR TO BE CONSIDERED IN FORMULATING AND IMPLEMENTING POLICIES AND STRATEGIES DIRECTED TOWARD WOMEN AND CHILDREN, IN AN ATMOSPHERE OF HARMONY, PEACE, EQUITY, PLURALISM AND DIVERSITY.

9. WE REAFFIRM OUR COMMITMENT OF JOIN EFFORTS, COORDINATE ACTIONS, AND SHARE EXPERIENCES WITH THE PURPOSE OF STRENGTHENING COOPERATION AND INTEGRATION OF ALL COUNTRIES OF THE CONTINENT.

10. WE RECOGNIZE THE IMPORTANCE OF HEALTH IN OUR POPULATIONS, ESPECIALLY FOR WOMEN, IN ORDER FOR THEM TO REACH THEIR FULL PARTICIPATION WITHIN THE ECONOMIC, POLITICAL AND SOCIAL LIFE OF OUR SOCIETIES, FOR WHICH WE STRIVE TO SUPPORT PROGRAMS AIMED AT SOLVING CRITICAL HEALTH PROBLEMS IN THE AMERICAS.

11. WE REITERATE OUR SUPPORT FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF PROGRAMS TO REDUCE MATERNAL MORTALITY, INCLUDING ACCESS TO PRENATAL CARE AND DELIVERY BY TRAINED PERSONNEL; THE DEVELOPMENT OF SERVICES ABLE TO SOLVE OBSTETRIC EMERGENCIES; SEXUAL EDUCATION AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH*, AND DEVELOPMENT OF VOLUNTARY, ACCESSIBLE AND HIGH QUALITY FAMILY PLANNING SERVICES AVAILABLE TO COUPLES. FURTHERMORE, WE REAFFIRM OUR COMMITMENT TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF WOMEN'S HEALTH CARE AT ALL LEVELS OF THE HEALTH SYSTEM AND AT ALL STAGES OF WOMEN'S LIVES.

* Guatemala considers that the term "reproductive health," in accordance with its national legislation, should be understood as "integrated health".

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12. WE REAFFIRM OUR COMMITMENT TO MOBILIZE NATIONAL EFFORTS TO PROTECT CHILDREN FROM MEASLES AND TO ERADICATE THIS ILLNESS FROM THE AMERICAS. WE APPLAUD THE EFFORTS AND SUCCESSES ATTAINED BY ALL OUR COUNTRIES IN THE FIGHT AGAINST THIS ILLNESS AND ALL THOSE ILLNESSES THAT CAN BE PREVENTED THROUGH IMMUNIZATION. WE WILL CONTINUE TO SUPPORT ACTIONS IN ORDER TO MAINTAIN THE HIGH COVERAGE OF IMMUNIZATION SO THAT THE GOAL OF ERADICATING MEASLES CAN BE MET BY THE YEAR 2000.

13. WE ENCOURAGE AND SUPPORT THE IMPLEMENTATION OF A REGIONAL PROJECT DIRECTED TO THE REDUCTION OF MALNUTRITION FROM MICRONUTRIENT DEFICIENCY IN THE HEMISPHERE, AND TO THE HIGH RATES OF ANEMIA AND THEIR SEVERE CONSEQUENCES FOR WOMEN AND CHILDREN.

14. WE EMPHASIZE THE PRINCIPLE ROLE OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN ORDER FOR PEOPLE TO DEVELOP THEIR SKILLS, BROADEN THEIR SPECTRUM OF THEIR OPPORTUNITIES, STIMULATE THEIR CREATIVITY, IMPROVE THEIR INCOME, AND PROMOTE THEIR ADAPTATION TO TECHNOLOGICAL CHANGES THAT WILL IMPROVE THE CONDITION OF WOMEN.

15. WE REAFFIRM OUR COMMITMENT TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION OF THE CHILDREN OF THE AMERICAS, PROMOTING BROAD AND EFFECTIVE EDUCATIONAL POLICIES AND ADOPTING BETTER INTERNATIONAL DIALOGUE IN ORDER TO SHARE INFORMATION AND EXPERIENCES FOR THE PURPOSE OF IMPLEMENTING THE MOST EFFECTIVE EDUCATIONAL POLICIES AND STRATEGIES, IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE REALITY AND REQUIREMENTS OF EACH COUNTRY.

16. WE REITERATE THE IMPORTANCE OF PROMOTING THE EDUCATION AND INTEGRATED TRAINING OF WOMEN, PARTICULARLY IN THE RURAL AREAS, AND PROGRAMS THAT WILL ALLOW THEM TO BENEFIT FROM THE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS OF OUR COUNTRIES.

17. WE RECOGNIZE INTRAFAMILY VIOLENCE AS A PUBLIC HEALTH PROBLEM AND A VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS WHICH AFFECTS IN A SPECIAL MANNER WOMEN OF ALL AGES AND SOCIAL GROUPS. FOR THIS REASON, WE URGE GOVERNMENTS TO DEVELOP PUBLIC POLICIES ORIENTED TOWARDS CONFRONTING THIS PROBLEM IN AN INTEGRATED MANNER.

18. WE URGE GOVERNMENTS TO DEVELOP PUBLIC POLICIES WITH THE OBJECTIVE OF PROMOTING WOMEN'S EQUAL ACCESS TO THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES AND TO POWER STRUCTURES IN ALL ASPECTS OF PUBLIC AND POLITICAL LIFE. CONSEQUENTLY, WE RECOMMEND FORMULATING AND IMPLEMENTING SPECIFIC PROGRAMS, IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE ORIENTATION AND MEASURES AGREED UPON BY GOVERNMENTS AT THE FOURTH WORLD CONFERENCE ON WOMEN HELD IN BEIJING IN 1995 WHICH ARE DETAILED IN CLAUSE "G" OF THE PLATFORM OF ACTION, WHICH RESULTED FROM THIS CONFERENCE.

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19. WE DECIDE TO STRENGTHEN THE ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE OF THE PRO TEMPORE SECRETARIAT THROUGH ACTIVE MECHANISMS OF CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION, TO FOLLOW UP ON THE COMMITMENTS MADE AT ALL MEETINGS; AND TO FOSTER THE EXCHANGE OF EXPERIENCES AT THE NATIONAL AND REGIONAL LEVELS IN ORDER TO MAXIMIZE OUR ACTIONS.

20. WE RECOGNIZE THE VALUABLE CONTRIBUTION OF INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AND GOVERNMENTAL AND NON-GOVERNMENTAL ENTITIES IN FACILITATING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF PLANS, PROGRAMS AND PROJECTS DIRECTED TO MEETING THE NEEDS OF THE PEOPLE OF OUR COUNTRIES. WE URGE THEM TO CONTINUE TO COOPERATE IN ORDER TO REACH THE OBJECTIVES PROPOSED IN THE PLAN OF ACTION FOR THE SIXTH CONFERENCE OF WIVES OF HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT OF THE AMERICAS

21. WE EXPRESS OUR SATISFACTION TO THE REPUBLIC OF GUATEMALA FOR THE SIGNATURE OF THE PEACE AGREEMENT SIGNED IN OSLO, NORWAY ON DECEMBER 4, 1996 AMONG THE SECTORS INVOLVED, WHICH CONSTITUTES A DECISIVE STEP IN THE PEACE PROCESS OF THIS FRATERNAL NATION

22. WE ACCEPT THE KIND OFFER OF THE FIRST LADIES OF PANAMA AND CHILE THAT PANAMA BE THE SEAT OF THE VII CONFERENCE OF WIVES OF HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT OF THE AMERICAS IN 1997, AND THAT CHILE BE THE SEAT OF THE VIII CONFERENCE IN 1998.

23. WE THANK THE FIRST LADY OF BOLIVIA, AND, THROUGH HER, EXPRESS OUR THANKS TO THE PEOPLE AND GOVERNMENT OF THIS COUNTRY FOR THEIR WARM WELCOME AND HOSPITALITY.

24. SIGNED IN THE CITY OF LA PAZ, BOLIVIA, WITH TWO ORIGINAL DOCUMENTS IN SPANISH AND ENGLISH, ON THE SIXTH DAY OF THE MONTH OF DECEMBER OF THE YEAR ONE THOUSAND NINE HUNDRED NINETY-SIX.

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Jimena Iturralde de Sánchez de Lozada
BOLIVIA

Maria Teresa Carrasco de Wasmoy
Maria Teresa Carrasco de Wasmoy
PARAGUAY

Dora Boyd de Pérez Balladares
Dora Boyd de Pérez Balladares
PANAMA

**WIVES OF HEADS OF STATE AND
GOVERNMENT**

Patricia Bird
Patricia Bird
ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA

Ruth Cardoso
Ruth Cardoso
BRAZIL

Marta Larraechea de Frei
Marta Larraechea de Frei
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Jacqueline Strause de Samper
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Josette Altman de Figueres
Josette Altmann de Figueres
COSTA RICA

Elizabeth de Calderón Sol
Elizabeth de Calderón Sol
EL SALVADOR

Hillary Rodham Clinton
on behalf of Hillary Rodham
Clinton
Hillary Rodham Clinton
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Maria Marietta Mitchell
Maria Marietta Mitchell
GRENADA

Bessie Watson de Reina
Bessie Watson de Reina
HONDURAS

Lady Ivy Sylvia Lucille Cooke
Lady Ivy Sylvia Lucille Cooke
JAMAICA

REPRESENTATIVES OF GOVERNMENT

Zelmira Mireya Regazzoli
Zelmira Mireya Regazzoli
ARGENTINA

E. Arnold
Elizabeth Arnold
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Jean Augustine
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María Carmen Oñate
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William Ramón Baez Sacasa
William Ramón Baez Sacasa
NICARAGUA

Martha Chávez de Ocampo
Martha Chávez de Ocampo
PERU

Ismay Patricia D'León
Ismay Patricia D'León
SURINAME

Nelly Leites de Moraes
Nelly Leites de Moraes
URUGUAY

Elsie Schmilinsky de Altimari
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5^{ta.} CONFERENCIA DE ESPOSAS
DE JEFES DE ESTADO
Y DE GOBIERNO
DE LAS AMERICAS
SECRETARIA PRO - TEMPORE

DECLARATION OF PARAGUAY

5TH CONFERENCE OF WIVES OF HEADS OF STATE AND OF GOVERNMENT OF THE AMERICAS

WE, the Wives of Heads of State and of Government and Representatives of Governments and of First Ladies of the Americas gathered in the City of Asunción, Capital of the Republic of Paraguay, on October 16-19, 1995, to exchange ideas and strategies concerning the "Health and Education of Women and Children" in our Region, as a follow-up to the 4th Conference of Wives of Heads of State and of Government of the Americas held in Saint Lucia on October 11-13, 1994 and to the Symposium on Children of the Americas held in Miami last December 10,

WE recognize that our countries face common challenges regarding the health and education of women and children and that by sharing experiences and promoting regional actions through these conferences, we can foster the development and the well-being of our nations.

IN ACCORDANCE WITH THESE CONSIDERATIONS, WE DECLARE THAT WE WILL:

1. Work in favor of the health and education of women and children, under the principles of: comprehensive development, equality, democratization of information and awareness, and family and social participation.
2. Support actions that improve the health of children and women throughout their life cycles by promoting universal and quality health care, thus contributing to the reduction of maternal morbidity and mortality.

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5^a. CONFERENCIA DE ESPOSAS
DE JEFES DE ESTADO
Y DE GOBIERNO
DE LAS AMERICAS
SECRETARIA PRO - TEMPORIS

3. Encourage and support the implementation - while respecting the national interest and legislation of each country - of the agreements and recommendations reached at the World Summit on Children, the United Nations International Conference on Population and Development, the Summit of the Americas, the United Nations World Summit on Social Development, and the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women.
4. Contribute to the attainment of the goal to eliminate measles in the Americas by the year 2000.
5. Promote strategies and activities to improve the health and education of women and children, particularly in poor rural areas and marginalized urban areas.
6. Promote women's and girls' access to formal and non-formal education programs, to ensure

equal opportunity for full participation in society and their active contribution to the development of their countries.
7. Promote a hemispheric dialogue to share information and exchange experiences on education reform efforts which increase school enrollment rates and completion rates, improve the quality of primary and secondary education and expand coverage of non-formal family and community based early childhood education.



Contribute to the prevention and elimination of all forms of violence against women and children through the provision of norms and adoption of necessary mechanisms, as well as fostering respect for human rights.

IN ADDITION:

We agree to express our gratitude to International Organizations and other entities for the interest and support manifested at the Conference of Wives of Heads of State and of Government and Representatives of Governments and of First Ladies of the Americas.

We agree to hold the 6th Conference of Wives of Heads of State and of Government of the Americas in the Republic of Bolivia in 1996; agree to hold the 7th Conference in the Republic of Panama, and form the new Pro-Tempore Secretariat composed of the Offices of First Ladies of Bolivia, Paraguay and Panama.

We congratulate and thank our host, Mrs. María Teresa Carrasco de Wasmosy and the Government and people of Paraguay for their warm hospitality and congratulate the Pro-Tempore Secretariat and the General Coordination Committee for the successful culmination of the Conference.

Signed in Asunción, capital of the Republic of Paraguay on the nineteenth day of the month of October of the year nineteen hundred and ninety-five.



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First Ladies
Members of the Pro Tempore Secretariat

Janice Compton
Saint Lucia

Hillary Rodham Clinton
United States of América

María Teresa Carrasco de Wasmosy
Paraguay

Ximena Iturralde de Sánchez de Lozada
Bolivia



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First Ladies
*Participating at the 5th Conference of Wives of
Heads of State and of Government of the Americas*

Aline Chrétien

Aline Chrétien
Canada

Marta Larraechea de Frel

Marta Larraechea de Frel
Chile

Josefina Villalobos de Durán Ballén
Josefina Villalobos de Durán Ballén

Josefina Villalobos de Durán Ballén
Costa Rica

Josefina Villalobos de Durán Ballén

Josefina Villalobos de Durán Ballén
Ecuador

Ma. Eugenia Morales de De León

Ma. Eugenia Morales de De León
Guatemala

Janet Jagan

Janet Jagan
Guyana

Bessie Watson de Reina

Bessie Watson de Reina
Honduras

Lady Yvy Sylvia Lucille Cooke

Lady Yvy Sylvia Lucille Cooke
Jamaica

Nilda Velasco de Zedillo

Nilda Velasco de Zedillo
Mexico

Dora Boyd de Pérez Balladares

Dora Boyd de Pérez Balladares
Panama

Liésbeth Venetiaan Vanenburg

Liésbeth Venetiaan Vanenburg
Suriname

Zalayhar Hassanali

Zalayhar Hassanali
Trinidad and Tobago

Christine Vau

Despacho de la
Primera Dama
de la Nación





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DE LAS AMERICAS
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*Representatives of Governments
and of First Ladies of the Americas*

Zelmira Mireya Regazzoli
Zelmira Mireya Regazzoli
Argentina

Vera Queiroz da Costa e Silva
Vera Queiroz Da Costa e Silva
Brazil

Maria Cristina Dussan
Maria Cristina Dussan
Colombia

Vilma Espin Guillols
Vilma Espin Guillols
Cuba

Claudia Mariela Avila
Claudia Mariela Avila
El Salvador

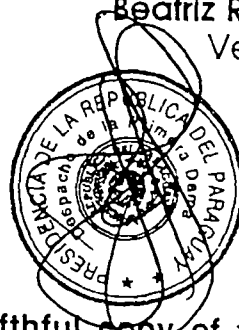
Maria Auxiliadora Matus
Maria Auxiliadora Matus
Nicaragua

Martha Chávez Cossio
Martha Chávez Cossio
Peru

Yocasta Morales de Aybar
Yocasta Morales de Aybar
Dominican Republic

Laura Albertini
Laura Albertini
Uruguay

Beatriz Rodríguez de Walter
Beatriz Rodríguez de Walter
Venezuela



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RECOMMENDATIONS AND PROGRAMS OF THE 5TH CONFERENCE OF WIVES OF HEADS OF STATE AND OF GOVERNMENT OF THE AMERICAS

As advocates for the health and education of women and children within a framework of equality, peace, freedom, solidarity, social progress and sustainable human development, we recommend consideration of the following strategies and programs:

A. Concerning Women's Health:

1. a. Support the resolution of PAHO's XXIII Pan American Sanitary Conference which encourages Governments of the Americas to establish "policy of comprehensive attention of women's health for the prevention of morbidity and the reduction of maternal mortality by at least 50%, to be achieved by the year 2000".
- b. Promote the allocation of resources to allow for the adequate implementation and follow-up of the "National Plans of Action to Accelerate the Reduction of Maternal Mortality and Morbidity in the Americas," elaborated in collaboration with PAHO and other international organizations.
- c. Promote the disaggregation of morbidity and mortality rates by sex.
2. Create mechanisms in those countries which are engaged in the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) Project, "Prevention of Adolescent Pregnancy,"



to contribute to more efficient implementation of this project in response to the following needs:

- a. Encourage the participation of local UNFPA offices in the elaboration, implementation and follow-up of the local components of the Project, so as to guarantee the coordination of this initiative with similar projects funded by other international cooperation agencies, both bilateral and multilateral.
 - b. Widen the scope of action of the project, whenever necessary, so as to include activities related to the reduction of maternal mortality.
 - c. Analyze the possibility of redistributing unallocated financial resources, among those countries which are already implementing the project and need additional resources.
 - d. Adjust the project in order to support, while respecting the national interest of each country, the implementation of the recommendations from the United Nations International Conference for Population and Development and the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women.
3. Support the proposal of the Association of Ibero-American Leagues Against Cancer (ALICC) to continue and expand the program "Latin America in the Struggle Against Cancer" to countries in the region.

B. Concerning Women's Education/Training:

1. Recommend the disaggregation of data by sex and analyze these data in such a way as to take into account the condition and position of each sex within



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specific social contexts.

2. Promote mechanisms through which women can be active participants in the design, implementation and evaluation of projects that promote social equality of women.
3. Based on the experiences of the Projects, "Rural Women in Latin America and the Caribbean" implemented through IICA and "Promotion of Women's Participation in Development," request the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) to expand and continue, respectively, the projects to other countries in the region.
4. Request the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) to study the possibility of creating a fund to finance specific projects that improve the quality of life of rural women.

C. Concerning Children's Health:

1. Promote and follow-up on progress made toward achieving the goals of the World Summit for Children by the year 2000.
2. Work with Ministries of Health, the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) and other international organizations on the campaign to eliminate measles transmission from the Americas by the year 2000 and strengthen the surveillance of preventable diseases by vaccination.
3. Request the World Health Organization (WHO) to extend the "Program on Substance Abuse and Street

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Children in the Americas" and urge the Mentor Foundation to continue funding this Program.

4. Urge mass media to dedicate prime time on a daily basis to the dissemination of health education information.

D. Concerning Children's Education:

1. Promote activities that contribute to investment in the education of girls and women of the Americas, as well as the reduction of school repetition and drop-out rates, by encouraging governmental institutions and civil society to improve the quality of primary education in schools by:

- a. Supporting more active child-centered teaching practices, which increase and improve the availability and use of non-sexist textbooks while ensuring effective time for learning in schools.

- b. Supporting non-formal community and family-based child development programs and enhancing the level of knowledge of parents and care givers.

- c. Promoting, disseminating and monitoring the "child-friendly school initiative"

E. Concerning the Fourth World Conference on Women:

Promote the implementation, -- according to the national interest and the legislation of each country, -- of the commitments made at the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women, held in Beijing,





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China, during September of this year.

F. Concerning the topic of Violence against Women:

1. Promote the ratification and/or adherence and implementation of the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women, adopted in Belém do Pará on June 9, 1994.
2. Promote the joint PAHO / IDB initiative which is designed to implement the regional program on violence against women: "Establishment of Community Networks".
3. Urge mass media to promote awareness and educational campaigns to prevent and combat violence.

G. Concerning the U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child:

- 1.a. Promote the fulfillment of the agreements of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- b. Promote the elimination of social and family violence against children and put the topic of violence against Children on the political agenda of countries.
- c. Promote the elimination of child labor for girls and boys under 12 years old.

**Ninth Conference of Spouses of Heads of State and Government of
the Americas**

Ottawa, Canada, September 29 to October 1, 1999

Preliminary Program for NGOs



Thursday 30 September, 1999

THEME 1: A Healthy Start: Investing in Children from Zero to Six

CONGRESS CENTRE (Colonel By Room): NGO FAIR

- | | |
|-----------------------|---|
| 9:00 to 10:00 | Set-up |
| 10:00 to 11:15 | Tour by representatives of NGOs, Canadian federal government departments and international cooperation agencies
60 NGOs from the Americas whose missions are relevant to Theme 1: A Healthy Start: Investing in children from 0 to 6, Canadian Federal government departments and international cooperation agencies will present their activities to one another through table-top displays. |
| 11:30 to 12:30 | Tour by Spouses
Spouses will tour NGO Fair. |
| 12:30 to 13:15 | Tour by Spouses' delegates
Delegates will tour NGO Fair. |

GOVERNMENT CONFERENCE CENTRE

- | | |
|-----------------------|--|
| 13:30 to 17:00 | Internet Café
<i>Main Hall</i>
An Internet Café will be set up to allow NGOs to become more familiar with the Internet and conduct specific searches on the theme of early childhood development. |
| | Exhibits
<i>Main Hall</i>
Canadian government department and international cooperation agency kiosks. |
| 13:30 to 14:30 | Luncheon
An opportunity for NGOs to network and exchange ideas with the international cooperation agencies and Canadian Federal government departments. |
| 14:30 to 15:30 | Workshop # 1 - Early childhood development
Workshop # 2 - Integrated Management of Childhood Illness
Each workshop will focus on a project to be endorsed by the Spouses this year. It will begin with a brief presentation of the development problem, and of the project designed to address it. The subsequent discussion will allow NGOs to share their related expertise and experiences and to explore other ways they might contribute to the implementation of the endorsed project. |
| 15:30 to 16:00 | Break |

16:00 to 17:00

Workshops # 3 - Registration of Children

This workshop will focus on a project to be endorsed by the Spouses this year. It will begin with a brief presentation of the development problem, and of the project designed to address it. The subsequent discussion will allow NGOs to share their related expertise and experiences and to explore other ways they might contribute to the implementation of the endorsed project.

Workshop # 4

This workshop will relate to the themes endorsed by the Spouses in the past and present. Specific workshop proposals from International Organizations, Canadian government departments and Canadian and hemispheric NGOs will be considered.

NETCORPS presentation and training on Internet

This session will allow interested NGOs to improve their navigation skills on the internet to access specific resources related to the theme of early childhood development.

18:30

Departure - Social evening

The Minister for International Cooperation, the Honourable Maria Minna, will host a reception and dinner in honour of NGOs, international cooperation agencies and Federal Departments on the 9th floor of the Lester B. Pearson Building, Ottawa.

Friday 1 October, 1999**THEME 2: Women's Health****CONGRESS CENTRE (Colonel By Room): NGO FAIR**

8:30 to 9:30

Set-up

9:30 to 10:30

Tour by representatives of NGOs, Canadian federal government departments and International cooperation agencies

60 NGOs from the Americas whose missions are relevant to Theme 2: Women's Health, Canadian Federal government departments and international cooperation agencies will present their activities to one another through table-top displays.

10:45 to 11:45

Tour by Spouses

Spouses will tour NGO Fair.

11:45 to 12:15

Tour by Spouses' delegates

Delegates will tour NGO Fair.

GOVERNMENT CONFERENCE CENTRE

12:30 to 16:00

Internet Café**Main Hall**

An Internet Café will be set up to allow NGOs to become more familiar with the Internet and conduct specific searches on the theme of women's health.

Exhibits**Main Hall**

Canadian government department and international cooperation agency kiosks.

12:30 to 13:30

Luncheon

An opportunity for NGOs to network and exchange ideas with the international cooperation agencies and Canadian Federal government departments.

13:30 to 14:30

NETCORPS presentation and training on Internet

This session will allow interested NGOs to improve their navigation skills on the internet to access specific resources related to the theme of women's health.

Telehealth Presentation

Congress Centre

NGOs, international cooperation agencies and Federal government departments can view the presentation to the Spouses on Telehealth on a giant screen. This will include a 10-minute introduction on Telehealth, a 30-minute live demonstration of telehealth technology as an efficient and effective means of providing health care services to rural and remote communities, and a 15-minute video.

Workshop # 1 - Peri-natal health and maternal mortality

Workshop # 2 - Prevention of AIDS in mothers and children

These workshops will focus on two of the projects being endorsed by the Spouses this year. They will begin with a brief presentation of the problem and of the project designed to address it. The subsequent discussion will allow NGOs to share their related expertise and experiences and to explore other ways they might contribute to the implementation of the endorsed project.

14:30 to 15:00

Break

15:00 to 16:00

Workshop # 3 - Domestic Violence

This workshop will focus on one of the projects being endorsed by the Spouses this year. It will begin with a brief presentation of the problem and of the project designed to address it. The subsequent discussion will allow NGOs to share their related expertise and experiences and to explore other ways they might contribute to the implementation of the endorsed project.

Workshop # 4

This workshop will relate to the themes endorsed by the Spouses in the past and present. Specific workshop proposals from Canadian government departments and Canadian and hemispheric NGOs will be considered.

Workshop # 5 - Rural Women

Workshop presented by Inter-American Institute for Cooperation in Agriculture (IICA). Clara Solis-Araya will present the project PADEMUR - Program for Economic Development for Rural Women, that was endorsed at the 7th Conference of Spouses of Heads of State and Government of the Americas. The subsequent discussion will allow NGOs to share their related expertise and experiences and to explore other ways they might contribute to the implementation of the endorsed project.