First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton

A Dialogue with Chinese Women:

Progress and Challenges in a Transforming Society

Held at the Beijing International Club Hotel

Beijing, China Saturday, June 27, 1998

For the public campaign stressing that it is as good to have a girl as a boy and the importance of valuing our daughters which is something that the President and I are very, very supportive of since, of course, we have a daughter and think that daughters are as important as sons and that girls are as important as boys.

So today I want to listen, ask questions, and learn from the distinguished women on this panel. I have reviewed their resumes; I have studied information about the work they are doing, both in urban and rural areas on behalf of women, and, as I said when I was here in Beijing three years ago, I believe that women throughout the world in every country -- urban and rural -- have very much in common in terms of the issues and the problems that we face. And that we learn much from each other, and we can strengthen each other as we all work to achieve opportunities and rights and responsibilities for women and girls. So I am delighted to be here and thank all of you for coming, and I particularly thank the panelists for taking time out of their busy schedules to be here with me to explain what they are doing and to discuss with me how we can all make more progress on behalf of women here in China and women in my own country and women throughout the world. So with that, I would love to start the discussion and hear from these very impressive women as to what they are doing and the issues on their minds.

Chinese Dialogue from panelist:

Well I want to thank the panelists, I think we should all give them a round of applause. I have been in discussions like this all over the world because when I travel alone or when I travel with my husband, I always seek out women to discuss with me what is happening in their societies, because I do believe that so much of the challenges and opportunities that women face today are similar. They may be different in degree or intensity but every problem that I have heard about today, from the panelists, I've heard about in every country including my own to some degree or another. And because I have been in so many of these discussions, I have learned so much from women like those whom we have heard from today, but I don't think I have ever been a more lively, energetic, informed, exciting discussion as the one I've heard from today with these women. I think that says a great deal about the work that each of you is doing, but also how you represent millions of other women who are worried about poverty, who are worried about education, who are worried about health care, who are worried about the status of women and who are looking for solutions. And the solutions that we have talked about today, and that you are putting into action are ones that will make a difference in the lives of millions and millions of women and will make a difference in your entire society.

I was very pleased yesterday when my husband and I visited a small village outside of Xian to meet both men and women who talked to us about the changes in their lives in the last years, talking about the opportunities that they face and they were taking advantage of. And I was very struck by what I heard in that rural village was very similar to what I use to hear, with my husband, in our rural state of Arkansas, in the United States. And that many of the solutions that we are talking about here are ones that we have also worked on in the United States -- expanding legal rights for women, changing the judicial system to be more sensitive and aware of women's needs, expanding education to girls and women, persuading families, particularly families of minority cultures to educate their daughters, working very hard to increase the number of women who go, not only to primary education, but like the example the professor gave, of women who go on to university because their families sell donkeys or borrow or do whatever is necessary to educate their daughters.

necessary to educate their daughters.

I have also been very struck by how health care is a basic human right and educating women about their bodies, about the health care system, about their opportunities to seek and obtain health care, about reproductive health care is a basic human right for every women in the world. And more work needs to be done about that. I was also very impressed to hear the work you are doing both to create economic opportunity through micro credit and to assist women who need retraining because of the economic changes that are going on in your country. Micro credit has been proven in so many different countries in both rural and urban areas to give women economic opportunity and access to credit that they would not otherwise have.

You know in my own country we are using micro credit to help poor women, particularly women who are coming off welfare because we have changed our welfare system, to start small businesses for themselves. So this is not only a very good strategy for rural China, but also urban China and rural and urban America, and many other countries in every continent that I have visited.

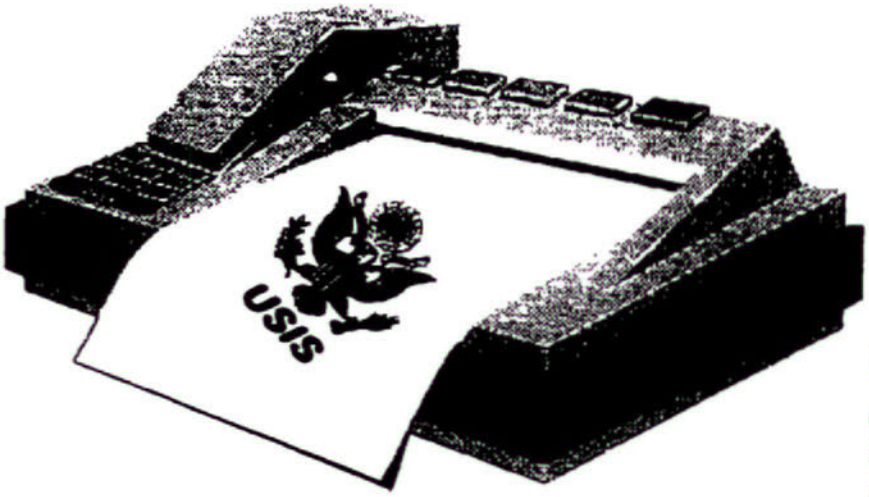
So what I have heard today, the voices that I have heard, are very exciting to me, because I remember so well when I was here in Beijing at the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women, in 1995, there were so many different women from over 180 countries, but we agreed on a platform for action. China signed it, the United States signed and we are seeing results from following that platform for action. What you have told me today are all specific steps and strategies designed to increase the opportunities, the rights and responsibilities for women. I think it is clear as we look at the 21st Century that no society will be successful that does not empower women, that does not educate girls as well as boys, that does not keep girls healthy, that does not provide economic opportunity for women, that does not enforce the laws for the political and civil and legal rights of all people, but particularly for women, and each of you has described very eloquently what is happening that will achieve that kind of opportunity for women in the next century.

Our moderator said that there is the old Chinese saying that women hold up half the sky. I have always like that saying. But of course women cannot hold up their half of the sky if they are not educated, if they are not healthy, if they don't; have their rights, if they cannot enforce their own personal goals and aspirations, if they are not respected by the men in their lives and by their larger society. I particularly liked the saying that you are using as part of your campaign, self respect, self confidence, self reliance and self improvement," now those are goals for women everywhere in the world. But you have very clearly illustrated this morning how much progress is being made in helping women lift up their own voices. Because of course, each of us here on this panel are very lucky because our families respected us, our parents wanted us educated, we have remained healthy so that we could peruse our own dreams of being a professor or starting a publication or translating many books and running projects, but I think that makes it even more important that women like us use our voices to speak up on behalf of the millions of women throughout the world whose voices are silenced. They are not listened, to they are not respected, they are not encouraged, they are not given their rights, and they cannot hold up their half of their sky. So what I want to thank you for is very clearly explaining this morning all of the work that you are doing to create change in the lives of individual women which are sometimes the hardest changes to make. Sometimes the most difficult challenge is to persuade an individual women to have hope, to feel that she is worthy, to go to school, to protect her daughter, and yet you are also through these efforts that you have described, I think, changing the lives and attitudes of women and men. And that will change the society in which you live. Now I don't think any of us who have worked on these issues as long as each of us has is in any way unaware of how hard the challenge is.

There is a great deal of work. Because for every women who does not have her legal rights, there is not a legal center. For every women who needs the information in your publication and in your books, they do not always get it. For every women who should go to Beijing University because she is intelligent and motivated she may not have a family to sell a donkey to send her. So there is much work to be done and I think that there is a lot we have in common that we can work on together that will up-hold the value of each girl and will create an environment in which even more girls and women can participate in panels such as you with your education, your eloquence, your passion, your advocacy and that will do a great deal to create the conditions, not only in China, but throughout the world that will enable us to proudly

enable us to proudly hold up our half of the sky in the next century, so thank you very much for what you said, but thank you more for what you are doing on behalf of girls and women.

Thank you.



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Remarks by First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton

Announcement of Macedonian Clothing Grant
Skopje, Macedonia

June 22, 1999

Mrs. Gligorova, Deputy Prime Minister Ibrahimi, Ambassador Acevska, and other distinguished guests: I am pleased to be here again in the Republic of Macedonia with my husband, the President, our daughter and our delegation – at a time when there is so much more hope for peace and stability in this region.

I want to thank the Ambassador for that introduction and for her leadership, but I wish to give her more credit than she took in her remarks. It was the Ambassador who first spoke to me about the contacts being canceled, and the economic dislocation being caused in this country by the war in Kosovo. And I'm very pleased that today's announcement will help bring more economic security to the people of Macedonia – and more comfort to the refugees of Kosovo.

I want to thank everyone who helped make this possible. I especially want to thank Paul Charron, the CEO of Liz Claiborne, who has shown us what it means to be a good corporate citizen. And now, that label will be worn by thousands of refugees, thanks to the generosity of Liz Claiborne and its CEO. So thank you Paul. I'm very grateful that Mr. Charron could come and be with us for this announcement.

I'm pleased that we're also joined by the Minister of Development, the Deputy Administer of USAID, Hattie Babbit, and other representatives of USAID, Mercy Corps International, other NGOs and many textile workers who will benefit from today's announcement.

When I was here five weeks ago in May, I talked about two of our nation's goals in the crisis in Kosovo. First to help the refugees return home in peace. And second, to ensure that Macedonia continues on the road of progress, including economic progress. I'm pleased that we are moving forward on both fronts.

During my last visit, I met refugees in the camps here in Skopje who told heartbreaking stories about what happened to them and their families. Now, two months later, the Serbian security forces have left Kosovo, the KLA has just agreed to demilitarize and the refugees are returning home.

This is an incredible victory. It's a victory for the international community, who stood together against the evil of Mr. Milosevic. It's a victory for the Macedonian people who opened their homes and hearts to the refugees – and sacrificed so much.

And, as we end this violent century, it's also a victory for those who believe that peace and reconciliation – not hatred and division – must rule this new century.

When I was in Macedonia last time, I heard again from your President, Prime Minister, and your Ambassador about how the war was threatening to reverse the recent economic growth your country had achieved. They talked to me about their hopes that relief organizations would buy goods locally produced in Macedonia. And how concerned they were that U.S. and international companies had begun to cancel their contracts.

I'm pleased that our government has been committed to addressing these concerns – including working with the World Bank to provide $87 million in debt relief and technical assistance. And I'm also pleased that, with today's announcement, one of America's leading clothing businesses has stepped up to do its part as well. Let me tell you how that came about.

The last time that I was here, I met with a small group of business entrepreneurs who produced vegetables, baked goods, crafts, and clothing. One of the women, Danica Georgieva, was the owner of a small textile company. Danica told me very personally what had happened to her business because there were fewer orders for the garments she was making. And she understood why, in the face of the war, companies might be reluctant. She mentioned that one firm she was very proud to work for, Liz Claiborne, had provided important work for them, but because of the war, these orders were being cut back dramatically. Danica is here with us today – and I am pleased to be bringing good news for her and other textile workers throughout Macedonia. Danica, may I ask you to stand for a moment?

I had promised Danica that when I returned to Washington, D.C., I would get in touch with the head of Liz Claiborne. So I called Paul Charron, the CEO, and told him Danica's story. He explained that the war was making it impossible to get clothing into the stores on time. But, he was nevertheless very concerned about the impact these kinds of cutbacks could have on Macedonian clothing factories and their workers.

Within days, he called me back with a promise. He said that Liz Claiborne would continue to contract work with its existing manufacturers in Macedonia – by switching over to less time-sensitive clothing. And it is very stylish clothing – I'm wearing one of the shirts right now.

Paul also came up with a wonderful idea that will bring comfort to the refugees, while making sure that Macedonian workers stay on the job and that the doors to their businesses stay open. Beginning immediately, Liz Claiborne will donate the fabric, designs and expertise to create a quarter of a million shirts and pants for the refugees – and, in the process, provide jobs for 3,000 textile workers at three factories in Macedonia. I want to thank USAID for providing funds to produce and distribute this clothing – and Mercy Corps International for making sure that it reaches the refugees.

And now it is my great honor to introduce someone who is showing that good citizenship is good business. He understands the challenges Macedonia is facing. And he has not only committed Liz Claiborne's resources, he wants to enlist other companies to join together so they can help even more Macedonian workers and businesses get back on their feet and begin to make progress once again.

I am very pleased to introduce the CEO of Liz Claiborne, Paul Charron, who will tell us more about his company's commitment.

"I am deeply honored to receive the Mother Teresa Award because it represents the commitment, the compassion, and the resources that have been brought together to combat the humanitarian crisis in the Balkans. I am especially honored that this award bears the name of Mother Teresa, someone who I had the privilege to know and work with on several occasions, and who dedicated her life to the ideal that peace and reconciliation can endure over hatred and division."

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NATIONAL OCEAN CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS

JUNE 1998

MONTEREY, CA

Thank you. It is a special pleasure for me to be here. This is not an issue that I know much about at all as an expert in any way. But as a citizen and as a person who has always loved the ocean, I wanted to come today just to lend my voice of support to what all of you are doing who understand what is at stake and the crisis that we face as we try to do what we should to respond to the needs of our oceans.

I particularly want to thank the President and the Vice President, Senator Boxer, and the other members of the congressional delegation, including our host, Congressman Farr, for making this a top priority so that people like me all over our country will be able to start thinking about the oceans differently and will understand what those of you who are experts or who sail the seas or who fish for a living or who have some other direct interest in the health of our oceans are trying to tell us.

My husband told me on our flight out here this morning that he had learned that 71 percent of our planet is ocean, and 71 percent of our body is salt water. I just can't stop thinking about that, that there is this extraordinary connection between who we are as human beings and what happens behind us in this magnificent body of water.

I want to commend Commerce Secretary William Daley and Navy Secretary John Dalton, who have been the guiding forces behind this important gathering. I know that they've been backed up by absolutely terrific staff from throughout the government whom I want to thank.

This is an important conference held during the International Year of the Ocean. You've just heard how some of those who are here today will be leaving immediately to go to Lisbon, Portugal, where they're opening up a great Expo about the oceans because this is not just an issue for Americans, it is literally an issue for everyone who inhabits this globe and who, whether they know it or not, directly or indirectly, is in some way dependent upon what happens in our oceans.

I'm privileged today to have a very special honor to introduce someone who is one of those experts, who knows so much about why this conference is so timely and important. Before I do that, I want to urge all of you who are going to remain here in this area to go down to downtown Monterey and attend the Oceans Fair, which is for children and which has a lot more information about what is happening in the oceans. If you know any children or you can borrow any children, take them, because what we're doing here today is probably more about their futures even than ours. I hope that the Oceans Fair is a very big success in attracting a lot of people who want to learn more about what we're learning through this conference.

One of the people we've looked to for guidance about what we should be doing to respond to the needs of our oceans is Dr. Sylvia Alice Earle. She has a title that I think many of us would covet. Could you imagine when you're asked, "What is it you do?" to be able to say, "Well, I'm the Explorer in Residence at the National Geographic"? You know, that just makes me tingle. I just think, what a great way to spend your life.

Dr. Earle also heads up Deep Ocean Exploration and Research, Inc. She's one of our nation's-indeed, one of the world's-most highly regarded marine explorers and oceanographers. She understands how important it is that we map and explore the oceans before they're further damaged. She has committed her prodigious skills and talents toward that goal. She's developing a Sustainable Seas Program, which is designed to help us understand what resources exist in the National Marine Sanctuaries, and she's deeply committed to preserving those precious natural resources for future generations. Her work is supported by both the National Geographic Society and the Ruth and Bob Goldman Foundation, but it's work that all of us should support. It's especially important as we move toward the end of the this century and the new millennium, which you'll hear more and more about.

I think it's important for all of us to pause and consider what it is we want to leave to future generations, and how we'll honor the past and imagine the future and give gifts to those who will live out their lives in the 21st century. There's no greater gift that we could give than to pay attention to the words and the passion of someone like Dr. Earle, who is pointing us in the direction of doing what we must do to preserve our oceans for the future. It's a pleasure to introduce a scientist, an engineer, a teacher, and an explorer, Dr. Sylvia Alice Earle.



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THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary
(Merida, Yucatan, Mexico)

For Immediate Release February 15, 1999

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT
IN PHOTO OPPORTUNITY

Hacienda Temozon
Merida, Yucatan, Mexico

Q Mr. President, do you feel vindicated by the Senate vote? And how do you think you will be able to overcome any damage that was caused in your relations with Republican leaders in Congress?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I have, really, nothing to add to what I said on Friday about that. I think this is a time for reconciliation and renewal. I think what we have to do is to serve the American people. And if we keep that in mind I think everything will be fine.

We can't resolve the challenges of Social Security and Medicare, education, these other things; we can't keep the international economy going unless we have a level of cooperation. I'm encouraged that we have a number of Republican members of Congress on this trip, and I intend to do exactly what I said I'd do last Friday. And I think if everybody just keeps our eye on the ball -- which is that we are here to serve the public, and not the other way around -- I think we'll be fine.

Q Mr. President, do you have any problems with the system the United States has for certifying drug cooperation?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, first of all, it is the law of the land, and the Secretary of State sometime in the next few weeks will have to make a recommendation. I think the question is how can we do better to deal with the

drug problem. President Zedillo said it's his number one national security problem. Neither country has won the drug war. And the fundamental question is are we better off fighting it together or separately, and perhaps sometimes at odds with one another.

Under General McCaffrey, who's here, we put in place a very aggressive antidrug strategy. Finally, we've got a lot of the indicators going in the right direction in the United States.

And cooperation with Mexico has clearly improved under President Zedillo's leadership. The issue is what is most likely to free our children of this scourge in the new century, and that's what will guide my decisions.

Thank you all.

Q Have you encouraged Mrs. Clinton to run for the Senate, sir? What have you said to her?

THE PRESIDENT: People in New York started calling her. I don't think it had ever occurred to her before a lot of people started calling and asking her to do it. I think she would be terrific in the Senate. But that's a decision that she'll have to make. And for reasons I'm sure you'll understand, she hasn't had anything like adequate time to talk to the people who think she should do this, much less people who think perhaps she shouldn't. I mean, she just hasn't had time to deal with this.

But it's her decision to make. I will support whatever decision she makes enthusiastically. She has a lot of other opportunities for public service that will be out there, and she and I both would like to continue to be useful in public affairs when we leave office. But it's a decision she'll have to make. She'd be great if she did it, but she hasn't had anything like the requisite amount of time to talk to people and to assess it, and I'm sure that everyone will understand and appreciate that.

Thank you.

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Message Sent To: _____

Q Has the President talked to any of the members of Congress about Hillary Clinton running for the Senate from New York?

MR. LOCKHART: Not in my presence, so I can't completely rule that out. But I didn't see that and none of that was reported back to me.

Q Has he talked to you about it?

MR. LOCKHART: Yes, we talked a little about it yesterday. I anticipated the question coming yesterday morning, because Mr. Hunt, it's all he wanted to talk about yesterday -- but, so we talked about it a little bit, and basically what he told us is what he told you.

Q Senator Biden and Charles Rangel both said that they think there is a time deadline that Mrs. Clinton has said she'll make up her mind. What is that deadline?

MR. LOCKHART: I don't know. Senator Biden had seemed to indicate that she indicated to him of some deadline, but he wasn't going to talk about it. I am not aware of that, so I can't provide any more enlightenment.

Q Joe, on this subject, the President said she'd make a terrific senator if she decided to run. But is he actively encouraging her to run?

MR. LOCKHART: Everything that I know about this is what the President said yesterday, so I'll leave you to interpret his words rather than me interpreting his words.

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Transcript of Feb. 8 Remarks by President Clinton, Mrs. Clinton, Former Presidents Ford, Carter, Bush to Embassy Staff (2/2)

To: National Desk

Contact: White House Press Office, 202-456-2100

WASHINGTON, Feb. 10 /U.S. Newswire/ -- Following is a transcript of Feb. 8 remarks by President Clinton, First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton and former presidents Ford, Carter, Bush to embassy staff in Amman, Jordan (Part 2 of 2):

AMBASSADOR BURNS: Thank you very, very much. And I would like to ask President Bush to make a few remarks. (Applause.)

PRESIDENT BUSH: President, Mrs. Clinton, Mr. Ambassador and all the Embassy, thank you all very much for all the arrangements. Handling this many people from out of town is not easy. I told the Admin Officer I would do my level best to see we leave on time. (Laughter.)

To the Jordanian nationals in this great Embassy, let me extend to you our most sincere condolences. You may have noticed the great outpouring of affection in our country for your King, and then when you look around and see the numbers of people that came from all around the world, you can't help but feel the affection and respect for him that was worldwide.

I just wish you all well. And I would conclude simply by saying I share President Carter's confidence in the future of Jordan under your new King. He'll do just fine. (Applause.)

AMBASSADOR BURNS: Thank you, President Bush, thank you very much. And now it is my great honor and my great privilege to introduce to you the President of the United States and Mrs. Clinton. (Applause.)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much. (Applause.)

MRS. CLINTON: Thank you all. I just want to express our personal appreciation to all of you for the incredible support that you have given to us in this very difficult time, as we have come here to pay our last respects.

I also, on a personal note, wish to acknowledge the deep sadness that the entire American people feel. You see before you four leaders of our country who really represent many, many Americans who could not be here, but whose hearts are with the people of Jordan.

I also hope you know that the friendship between our families on a personal level, and between our countries is very, very deep -- and we will be there in friendship and support in the months and years ahead.

As I was visiting with Queen Noor a few minutes ago, and expressing our personal condolences, I could not help but think how much better off this region and our world would be if not only leaders, but all of us, stopped to think how would King Hussein have acted, what would he have said. If we could bring the same sense of humility and openness and stability to all of our relationships that he brought, and that I saw him bring not only to Presidents, but to every person he encountered, that would be one way to honor the legacy of this extraordinary man and this very great leader.

Thank you, as part of the American community and the Jordanian nationals who work with the Americans here at the Embassy, for representing our country in good times and hard times. We're grateful to you for the service that you give.

Thank you very much. (Applause.)

PRESIDENT CLINTON: Thank you. Ladies and gentlemen, I would like to begin, if I might, by thanking President Bush, President Carter and President Ford, and this congressional delegation for coming on very short notice all the way to Jordan to make a clear and unambiguous statement about our regard and respect and gratitude to King Hussein and the people of Jordan. I thank them very, very much. (Applause.)

I want to thank Ambassador Burns and all of you in the Embassy community for representing us in a difficult and challenging part of the world, in a wonderful country. I thank all the Jordanian nationals who work for the United States. We are honored by your efforts. And when Jordanians and Americans work

together in our Embassy here in Amman, they symbolize the partnership that we hope will always exist between the United States and Jordan.

Most of what I would have said has already been said so eloquently by those who have spoken before. I would just like to make a couple of points about King Hussein and about King Abdullah.

First of all, Hussein really did bring people together. You know, I was looking at the four of us -- here we are, two Democrats, two Republicans -- we've agreed on many things, we've disagreed on a thing or two over time. But we know that America's interest and America's heart were close to this King and this country.

I looked at the Israeli delegation today, I could hardly believe my eyes. All the candidates for prime minister were there. (Laughter.) They were all walking together. I don't know if they talk at home, but they were all talking here. (Laughter.) I thought, it was as if Hussein was hugging them all, you know? It was really a beautiful sight. People coming from all around the world, countries that are at each other's throat, here meeting in peace and friendship and the sanctity of the umbrella of this great man. He worked with every American President since President Eisenhower. Amazing thing.

The second thing I would like to say is that he really was driven not by the title he had, but by the responsibilities it bore. And he was ennobled not by the title, but by the strength of his own character and his vision and his spirit. It was unbelievable to me when we talked right before we started this last round of peace negotiations at Wye -- and I knew how ill he was -- he said, well, I would be willing to come down there if you think it would help. I said, if I think it would help? This whole thing is about to come apart; of course, it would help. I said, if you come down they won't have the courage to walk away here without an agreement. And so he did.

And he took a house, and some days he could only work 30 minutes or an hour. But every day we needed him in that long Wye peace accord, he was there.

Every day he was needed, he was there. No matter how sick he was, no matter how bad he felt. And his son, the new King, told me tonight, he said, you know, the truth is it put some days on his life because he was doing what he believed in.

And all the icy atmosphere of those tense talks would immediately disappear when Hussein walked in the room because all the differences and animosities and grievances seemed small in the face of this very large presence. And it was almost as if the more frail his body became, the more powerful the essence of his spirit was.

Every Jordanian citizen can be proud of that -- can be proud that on every continent, in every country of the world, people said, that is the sort of person we all ought to be.

The last point I would like to make is that I would like to join the previous speakers in saying that I have great confidence in the young King of Jordan. I had a very good meeting with him today. He clearly understands his mission. He said in the most moving way --he said, I and all of my brothers and sisters have absorbed our father'

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HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON

REMARKS AT THE NATIONAL SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION

WASHINGTON, D.C.

FEBRUARY 5, 1996

Thank you Roberta for that introduction and for your commitment to putting children first. I want to both welcome you all to Washington and thank you for this invitation to speak with you. But more than that I want to thank you for your commitment to education, your work won local school boards, your work through this organization on the national issues that confront us on in attempting to provide the kind of education that our children will need.

As my husband said in his State of the Union address, we live in an age of possibility. But that possibility is linked directly to how well we take advantage of the opportunities that are presented to us and that is a function of how well educated and skilled we are as we move into this new age. And it is an issue that is not just the province of those of you who are on a school board. It is one that should be debated and discussed by every single American. Too often we lapse into a false debate in our country about who really bears responsibility for the education of our children. There are those who say that the responsibility lies only with the parents. There are those who say that education should be the exclusive domain of the local school district. And there are those who say that the federal government should oversee what happens in our classrooms. I think all of those are not sufficient answers. The responsibility for educating our children should not be passed around like a hot potato. Before I came in I met two of your board members who are potato farmers from Idaho, and I thought to myself, is a hot potato politically correct as a form of comparison when I have Idaho potato farmers, but I was comforted by the thought that even mentioning potatoes would be good for **INAUDIBLE** that is being harvested. Whether we have children or not, as a responsibility of supporting the education system of our country and in particular supporting the public education system of the United States.

Roberta mentioned that I have been privileged to this past year to travel and see what is happening in other countries around the world. I know what many of you who have also traveled have seen. I have been in places that don't yet educate girls. I have been in countries that feel no national responsibility whatsoever to provide an infrastructure or schooling for their children. I have seen local communities and tribal organizations in countries desperately working to create enough school rooms so that all the children who wish an education can have one.

I have talked with people who understand the challenge that their particular societies face because they don't have a national commitment to educating all children, no matter who they are or where they come. The contrast could do not be starker. When one looks at the reasons why so many other nations have not achieved stable democracies, have not enjoyed rising

standards of living, have not had the kind of free market economy that depends upon an educated work force and people who understand how to sell and produce products--and you compare them with what we take for granted here in the United States. It often makes me wish that everyone of our citizens particularly our young people could make these journeys with me. When I took Chelsea through South Asia last Spring during her vacation, I wish every American teenager could have been there with me. Both because they would have seen the obstacles in the way of so many other young people, and they are achieving their dreams and aspirations and how they sometimes walk three and four hours to get to the closest schools and how they work day in and day out to save enough money to attend secondary education. They would have seen our own teenagers, what other young people are up against but how they are taking to heart what American ideals have stood for. That with hard work, with education, with a commitment to the kind of opportunities that we provide here, they can be successful. They also would have seen when they returned home, the many blessings we have here, that too often we take for granted. And among those is an education system, that yes needs reform, yes can be made more effective, yes has to be more open to new ideas and new ways of thinking and teaching and learning, but which has served this nation so very well.

And I believe, that what has worked well, certainly since I was a child -- is the partnership, a partnership among the home and parents who believe in the importance of education, who supports schools, support teachers, who like my father used to say, you get in trouble at school you get in trouble at home no questions asked. And local school districts that respect teachers, that work to represent what is best in a community, but are open to new ideas and understand the challenges not of yesterday but of tomorrow that children will face. Of states that put education at the top of the list that understand we cannot possibility solve our social problems unless we educate our young people, and of a national government that is committed to helping all along the way these very functions be fulfilled.

I know that in my own growing up that Sputnik that went up, there are some of you in this crowd that are old enough to remember that, all of a sudden President Eisenhower started talking about how American children needed to do better in math and science. And the teachers in my classroom would things to us like you need to study harder, your President wants you to do that. And then the money started to flow. Money for enhanced math and science teaching, money for better equipped science labs and classrooms so that young Americans could have the same opportunities that we thought our competition behind the iron curtain was enjoying.

Nobody stopped and said that's not proper for the United States to try to meet its challenge as a union of states as a great nation, but nobody also told Miss**NAMES?????** in fourth grade or **NAMES??** in fifth grade how they were supposed to teach math and science. They were just supposed to put more emphasis on it. And the local school board decided what they would do to try to make it possible. The decision about what we would try to achieve as a nation was decided at the national level, whether we would try to be competitive was decided in favor of doing so, but the how was left to those individual teachers, those individual school boards. And when that decision was made, parents were expected to be supportive. That's how public education has to work. Each of us in our own roles taking responsibility. When I look at the debate that is currently raging about public education in our country, I think that we all

should take a deep breath, we should all recognize that for most of us, the public education system has worked well. But at every stage of great change in our history, we have to make adjustments. Compulsory education became a widespread phenomenon in part in the late 19th century into the early 20th century because it became clear that as we move into an agricultural to an industrial based economy, children who had done very well in rural setting, children who had even moved into the city with parents and had been able to do very **inaudible** work, the children of immigrants--all of them are going to need more skills than they had to have or that their parents had to have. That system worked well for most of us into the late part of this century.

Well now we're facing some new challenges. And any time we live through an age of uncertainty and challenge, questions will be raised and they should be raised. Are we doing what we need to do the right way? How can we do it better? What will make the biggest difference in improving teaching and learning? Those are the questions that should be debated in every teacher's lounge, around water coolers in businesses, in supermarket aisles. That is good, that is part of what makes democracy work. But those questions should not lead to the conclusion that we throw out the system that has worked so well for us. That would be a very unfortunate decision. Or that we begin to eat away at the capacity of local school districts to do the work that they know needs to be done.

There are a few federal programs that I wanted to mention because I think they are the kind of programs that help support you in the work that you are trying to do. The first and one that I know is controversial in some quarters, but thankfully not in most, is Goals 2000. The Goals 2000 Act provides funds to states and communities to improve local schools, to raise student academic achievement, to involve parents and to bring technology into the classroom. To upgrade teacher's skills and knowledge and create partnerships with business and community groups. Forty-eight states have already received funding under this program. I think that that illustrated what I at least see as part of the partnership to ensure quality education outcomes.

The federal government helped to bring together people from all over the country some of you who were involved in that process on the various task forces. I know that the National Association was deeply involved to try state what it is that American children should be able to do. Whether you are born in Arkansas or Arizona or Alaska, you may not live there given our time of mobility, so if you cross a state border what is it that you are expected to know as a minimum, as an American student.

But then to turn the responsibility for meeting those goals to local school districts. Even down to the building level--so that what would work in a community in rural Alaska or in metropolitan New York could be tailored for the particular students who were the ones we are trying to have educated.

I know that of those who opposed Goals 2000, they worry about the federal government taking over school districts and telling school districts what to do. I think that is a misplaced worry that has used up a whole lot of energy that could be better spent with people working together to help improve the quality of learning in the classroom. Having lived now in

Washington for three years, it would be mighty hard for Washington to tell anybody what to do on the local school district **inaudible**

I also want to talk a minute about Chapter 1, Title 1. I know that you have had concerns about this and they are well placed concerned. In 1993, under the direction of the President, the Secretary of Education, Richard Reilly, and again a group that included representatives from education groups such as the National Association School Board, made a very honest appraisal about what works in the remediation of math and reading skills. And pointed out that we needed to do some things better. That's exactly what should happen with any government program. They should be evaluated, they should be held accountable, and changes were recommended by the Secretary of Education that were implemented into the law when it was re-authorized.

Title 1 aims at giving schools the resources they need to do the work, to help children as early as possible to improve their skills. We are learning more about what works for certain children. For a long time, those who were reading specialists and math specialists didn't have a very deep knowledge base to fall back on. We were building it up. Why is it that some children respond better to computers and others respond better to one on one mentor and teaching? Why does reading recovery work in some districts and in other districts other methods seem to work? But that's what it took to try to understand what was going to be effective in helping these children. We now know that school **inaudible** programs that utilize the best, state of the art knowledge about remediation, that target the students that need the help and make a difference. It is not the time, now that we have reformed the program, now that we have better targeted the funds of the program, to severely cut back the program. Now is the time to take the reformed program and implement it so that local school districts can see the results of this kind of effort.

Another innovation that the President and the Secretary felt strongly about because they both had been governors. My husband as you know served as the governor very active on behalf of education in our state and on the national level as did Secretary Reilly **???**. And they know, despite the best efforts, legislators in the Congress and those responsible for implementing legislation in the agencies--One size does not fit all. There cannot be a cookie-cutter approach to implementing the federal programs that we hope will help you at the local level. That's why waivers from federal statutory and regulatory requirements have become more common and are in fact urged by this Sec. of Education wherever a local school district or a state has an idea that something could be done better. For example, the Fort Worth, Texas, school district received a waiver allowing it to target an extra portion of its Title 1 to four, high poverty, inner city schools. Those schools were chosen for a complete overhaul due to low achievement and other factors of their student demographics.

Each school uses the Title 1 funds to improve **???** for all its students and to reorganize its staff and to lengthen the school year, to focus on teaching reading and math in the classroom, not just as a pull out program. That school district saw a way that it could use federal funds by giving a waiver that would enable it to skip a lot of the regulations that are frankly put into place to make sure that nobody gets an advantage over somebody else. That because a state or a city has a powerful member of congress they will get more than they should--so it has to be some level playing field. But there also can be opportunities then to come back and say we've got a

better idea, give us a chance to use these funds and these programs to reach students the way we think will work. As part of Oregon's comprehensive school improvement efforts the State Department of education there received a waiver for innovative groupings of school districts including community colleges where the use of Perkin funds. And that's to help them provide high quality vocational education. One of the real opportunities that I see is more cooperation among school districts between school districts and community colleges. We know, for example, we have to remove disruptive students form the classrooms. We cannot pretend that they can be fit in mainstream and not let it affect the education of all the other students. Yet at the same time we know that it is expensive to run alternative programs. So now school districts are looking for ways that they can pool their resources to create maybe one alternative program for the students from a number of school districts. Just as with the vocational education example from Oregon. This is the kind of new thinking about how to make the federal involvement and the federal funds more effective at the local level. The Department of Education has also established what they call Educational Flexibility Partnership Demonstration Program--EDFLEX for short--so that there can be opportunities for the Secretary of Education to waive certain requirements so that again there can be ways that local school districts and states can create their own response to what our nation goals, national aspirations, and to use national funding.

The development of charter schools is a very important new strategy. There is room for choice in a public school system. I believe that embracing charter schools instead of being worried about them gives public schools and local school districts new opportunities to recast what they are always doing to bring in some new ideas and to present a new face to their public. One of the challenges that we confront is the often unfair and distorted view of public education that is too often the only subject that the media talks about when it talks about public education.

Like any great enterprise, there are failures, there are problems, we know that. Name any other enterprise in which there isn't? The private sector has no greater fame to success, businesses go bankrupt, problems develop. So why should the public education enterprise be held to a higher standard than any other human institution? But it is true that after years of pounding on our public schools and blaming them for everything when in fact so many of the changes we are dealing with are a result of deep economic and cultural changes the schools have tried to cope with. The biggest single reason I believe children are harder to teach and that children have more difficulties is the combination of high divorce rate and out of wedlock birth rate and what they see on television and not only the content of what they see but the process of watching it. And that is not the fault of the public education system. That is what the public education system has to work with. With students form the age of two have been handed a remote control device so that can amuse themselves never having to work hard for something, never even playing the way I played as a child, so that I had to make up my own entertainment and the all of a sudden they are put into a classroom and their eyes glaze over because something else is expected of them. That is not the fault of the public education system. That is the public education system having to cope with cultural changes that were driven by the private sector, the commercialization of entertainment and by the desire to trap as many children in front of tv sets for as many hours as possible ???

So I think that we have a role to play in raising our voices on behalf of public education today. Speaking out in favor in what has been one of America's greatest accomplishments and contributions to the rest of the world and speaking up in favor of the unique partnership which we have pioneered in this country. Many European countries that have high levels of education, many Asian countries that have high levels of education have a top down system where literally they do turn the page at the same time on the same day to keep up with the national standards and expectations. Other countries such as those I described before have no national commitment. It is every child for him or herself and whenever it can happen--happens on the local level and it's not bound together in any social statement about what is important. We have as we have done so often in our history, pioneered a different approach that has stood us well. When people start talking about a new American revolution whether it applies to the economy or education, I stop and think I thought we had a pretty good one about 218 years ago and I believe what we have done since then is to create a unique country where people are responsible at different levels and we create a community where all of us have obligations to each other.

I want to end with a story about our own country because it is what motivated my husband and me to become so involved in education in the state of Arkansas. I was lucky to grow up in a suburb of Chicago where my father was a lifelong die in the war Republican until he met Bill Clinton. He moved us from Chicago to the suburbs, knowing he would pay higher property taxes and wanting to do so--because he wanted to get the best education he could for his children. So I was blessed beyond words, with excellent teachers, wonderful facilities, challenging courses. Other students came from homes like mine where parents were urging them on to be all that they could be. And I didn't realize it, even in other parts of my home state of Illinois and certainly in many other parts of the country, those ?? had not yet jelled. And so when my husband was elected Governor of Arkansas now 1978 and took office in 79--he and I started a tradition to honor our student academic stars the way student athletes were honored. Every small town in Arkansas would have a huge banquet for all their athletes at the end of every year. There were very few who did that for their valedictorians and their ??(salutatorians)?? or their best student in science or math. So we invited all of the honors graduates from all of the schools to come to the Governor's Mansion and we stood in line and shook the hands of the students and their parents because I think parents have to be encouraged and thanked for being the ones who motivate our students. And I will never forget meeting a young man from a rural part of our state, and I was asking all of the students what they were going to be doing because it was already May and at that point 17 years ago only about half were going to college, a lot of financial obstacles in their way, and so they were telling me about their plans. And I asked this one man what he planned to do, he said well you know I know what I want to do, I want to be a doctor--I said that's wonderful, and his mother was with him--just swelled up with pride you could tell that this young man had done everything his mother would have wanted him to do--I said well where are you going to go to college--and he kind of dropped his eyes and he said he didn't know yet because when he went to apply to college they said you did real well at that school but that school didn't prepare you--You don't know enough to be in a pre-med curriculum at the university. And the young man asked the college advisors what could he do--and they said well you could go and try but I don't think you'll make it--or you could go down the road and take a fifth year of high school. I remember standing in the living room of the Governor's Mansion thinking to myself--there's a young man in a family that did everything that they were supposed to do as their part of the bargain. He stayed out of trouble, study hard,

he'd done well by the standards he was supposed to meet. But unfortunately, through no fault of anyone, his local school didn't quite know what the standards were for this particular young man's aspirations. But they were teaching him algebra????? schools across the state or up the road. It was at that moment I think that both my husband and I **????** the products of public schools that were in the 50's and 60's responding to the national aspirations as well as local hopes with parents who supported that--decided that it should not matter where you are born in a state or what state you are born in--you should be held to high standards, we should have high expectations for students behavior, a student's performance. We should have the kind of partnership among adults that my father used to threaten me with. He would say--get in trouble at school--get in trouble at home. Adults presented a united front. My dad didn't know exactly what I was learning everyday but he trusted the school that what I learned prepared me for whatever I chose in life. Every parent in America should have that same feeling of confidence and every local school district should have the support it needs from its local community from its state and from its country to be able to produce that for every single child to live up to his or her god-given potential. That's the dream and the reality of a public education in America and we have to fight to make it to continue to be so.

Thank you very much.

Transcription
Women's Roundtable Discussion

Introductory Remarks by
First Lady Mrs. Hillary Rodham Clinton
10:00 a.m. Tuesday March 30, 1999
Hotel de Ville (City Hall), Marrakesh, Morocco

(Introduction by Princess Lalla Fatima-Zohra):

"Mrs. Hillary Clinton, First Lady of the USA, ladies and gentlemen,

"I am delighted to convey to you my best greetings and to express the overwhelming happiness we all feel as we warmly welcome, for the first time in the Kingdom of Morocco, the First Lady of the USA: Mrs. Hilary Rodham Clinton (applause): a great lady whose initiatives, efforts, human accomplishments and unfailing support are noteworthy wherever the women of the world endeavor to achieve progress and emancipation. (We feel happy) for her persistent support to women's conferences, and meetings -- and to any serious action seeking to activate and implement whatever resolutions and recommendations issue therefrom. Her stance will indeed be recorded out in history with much faithfulness and gratitude.

"Distinguished guest, ladies and gentlemen,

"The Moroccan woman is entitled to enjoy all of the natural rights she is born with especially within the precepts of true Islam which protects her as a girl, sanctifies her as a mother, and guarantees her livelihood as a widow or divorcee. Hence, giving her all the rights given to men unquestionably. As within the Moroccan constitution, where total equality between men and women is fundamentally stated, nothing in our law does her injustice or deprives her of her right to justice. Despite all this, the Moroccan woman has to face up to two battles: one consisting of fighting against deeply rooted tribal customs and family traditions standing between her and her codified and legitimate rights as stated previously. The other battle consists of catching up with the march of progress, and keeping pace with the modern, emancipated woman, wherever she may be.

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"Those battles are being fought during the present Hassanian democratic and constitutional era by means of a constructive and targeted cooperation between women's associations -- whose number in Morocco exceeds 30. Among them, the National Union of Moroccan Women is the oldest and the most widespread. Concerted action unfolds in an environment of genuine fellowship, mutual trust, and constructive cooperation culminating lately in the establishing of the National Commission for the Promotion of the Moroccan Woman, as announced by the prime minister on the occasion of the celebration by the Kingdom of Morocco of the International Women's Day.

"This celebration witnessed the joint participation of the government, the National Union of Moroccan Women, and all other women's associations in various manifestations. This occasion saw the birth of many activities and small-scale projects in favor of women, particularly in rural areas and small towns. We can rightly state that the Moroccan woman today is taking a decisive turn towards a better future.

"Mrs. Hillary Rodham Clinton, ladies and gentlemen.

"Before concluding, I wish to express my gratitude to our distinguished guest for her sisterly visit. As I underline our feeling of pride, I give her again welcome. Thank you for your kind attention . Wa as-salamu alykum wa rahmatu allah wa barakatu (Arabic traditional closing). (applause)

(End introduction by Princess Lalla Fatima-Zohra)

Mrs. Clinton (HRC):

"Thank you so much your Royal Highness for your very warm welcome and for your comments about women and progress and empowerment in Morocco today.

Transcription
Women's Roundtable Discussion
Remarks by First Lady Mrs. Hillary Rodham Clinton
10:00 a.m. Tuesday March 30, 1999
Hotel de Ville (City Hall), Marrakesh, Morocco

"I want to express to everyone the gratitude that I and all who are travelling with me feel toward the government and the people of Morocco: for the extraordinary hospitality that we have been extended during our too-short stay. And, I look forward -- as I told Her Royal Highness as we were walking in -- to returning, in the not-so-distant future sometime, to visit more of the country and have more of an opportunity to meet people. But I am very grateful for this opportunity. As Her Royal Highness said, I have been privileged to attend a number of conferences that deal with women's issues; and I have, as I have traveled around the world, sought out occasions like this where a smaller group of women could discuss with me the common challenges that all women face in the world today and the particular challenges that women in various societies face as well.

"In all of those meetings and conversations I have been struck by a couple of points that I would just briefly make here.

"First, that there are many, many areas of common interest among women -- no matter where we live. The kinds of challenges that we face as women may look different from the vantage point of history, or culture, or religion, or economic advancement; but, very often, underneath that there are some very common experiences that women share that permit women, in open and candid dialogue, to understand one another and the choices that we all face.

"Secondly, there are significant differences, however, in the legal, and social, and political, and economic structures in which women and men live, in the world today and trying to sort out those issues -- that can be dealt with directly, as Her Royal Highness said, through constitution and law, and those issues which must be addressed because they are of tradition, or family, or custom -- is one of the challenges that I see women addressing around the world today.

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"Whenever I have an occasion like this to meet with women, I often find, no matter what country I'm in -- even my own country -- that women from different political backgrounds, different experiences don't talk enough to one another, don't have enough dialogue, don't try to see each other's perspective because, if they do, they can then work better together.

"In a couple of cases, just within the last several months, I have been impressed and pleased to see women who have very different political perspectives working in common on many goals; and I think that goes to this commonality of a woman's experience, regardless of where she comes from or what her position in society might be.

"I just want to listen and learn. I do not pretend to know very much about the experience of women in Morocco, but I am very eager to learn from our panelists about their own experiences and about the challenges that they believe are the ones that should be addressed.

"I would just conclude with two very short stories about my stay in Morocco so far. The very first visit that I made was to a school where I listened to a father, and a little girl, a teacher, and a member of the Ministry of Education. And the little girl, who was a beautiful child, was -- as I sometimes am -- overwhelmed by the cameras, and the attention, and very shy; but she told us that she wanted to be a doctor. Her father then said that he had nine children; he himself was illiterate; and none of his children could finish school; but he was trying very hard to see that this little girl could finish school, and have a chance to fulfill her own dream.

"Yesterday, in the village that I visited, I met with many women who were being able to take advantage of some of the changes that certain projects were bringing to them so that they were able, because of a new cookstove, and they were able to cut the time that they used to spend looking for fire wood; and then they could use that time to engage in income-generating activities. And they could also use that time to attend literacy classes which were being conducted for the first time in the village. And, when I walked in, and I saw those beautiful young women and these two young teachers, and they stood, and they greeted me in English, and then answered questions that were posed to them by their teachers, I saw on their faces the same look of expectancy, of hope, of joy that is on the look of any young woman anywhere in the world who is finding out more about herself and her capacity, and is learning and is understanding what more can be made of her life and her future.

"And so, ultimately, my hope is that we work toward creating circumstances in which all girls and women have the opportunity to make the choices that are right for them, and their choice may not be the choice I would make, or not be the choice someone else would make, but that they're equipped to make the right choices, and they are not circumscribed by law or custom, but they chose what kind of life they wish to lead.

"So with that, I would love, Your Royal Highness, to listen to our panelists and to hear from them. Who would like to start?

End Mrs. Clinton's Introductory remarks.

FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON'S REMARKS AT THE ROUND TABLE ON EDUCATION AT THE MAJMOUAT MADARIS IBN SINA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

You know I am very honored to be here with all of you.

I have long wanted to come to visit Morocco.

Morocco and my country, the United States, have been friends for more than 200 years.

And I want to thank Mr. and the Ministry of Education for their work on behalf of education – particularly your emphasis on girls' education.

And Dr. Donahue I want to thank you for your obvious commitment to the children and to education.

I know that the school from which you come, the Rich School, has made great progress in education.

But I also know that because of the many obstacles which we have heard about, it is still

much harder for girls to be educated than boys in Morocco.

And, I am pleased to announce that my government wants to help the Moroccan government educate more girls.

And USAID will be contributing $1.6 million to improve girls' education in the rural areas.

And, USAID will be working with AMIDEAST And the Ministry of Education as partners in this effort.

After listening to Mr. and our teacher here, I hope that all of the partners in this effort will look at the real obstacles and try to overcome them.

We have learned, as Mr. so eloquently reminded us, that families will prosper if girls are educated.

And that fathers and mothers know today that their children, both their sons and their daughters need more education in today's world.

And because we now know this, we should work together to overcome obstacles like distance, like water, and bathroom facilities which are very serious problems.

And I also hope that USAID and the Ministry and others will follow Mr. B 's suggestion to have more meetings with the principal and the teachers and the parents so that everyone can discuss openly how to solve these problems.

Now I know that our time is short, but I wanted to be sure that if any of our participants have any questions they could ask.

Well, one of the hopes that I have in my visit here to Morocco is to point out the progress that is being made in so many areas affecting education and health and employment for the people of Morocco.

And to also see for myself and hear for myself from the people of Morocco.

And I hope, N , that your dream can come true.

I would love to have a picture of us together, and perhaps if we just stay here, we could get a picture.

Because it is very hard to come and talk in front of all of these people and these cameras.

When I was your age, I could never have done it!

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BODY:

Washington - Following is the text of Mrs. Clinton's remarks at the American University in Cairo on March 23:

Introduction of the First Lady by Dr. John D. Gerhart, President of The American University in Cairo:

Your Excellency the Secretary General of the Arab League Hon. Esmat Abdel Meguid, Members of the Egyptian Cabinet Dr. Mufid Shehab, Hon. Mervat Tallawi, Dr. Yousef Boutros Ghali, Hon. Nadia Makram Ebeid, Dr. Mamdouh Beltagi, our colleague the President of Cairo University, Dr. Farouk Ismail, distinguished ambassadors, beloved alumni, generous donors to the University, wise trustees, industrious students, learned faculty and devoted staff of the University, ladies and gentlemen.

Today is another historic moment in the history of Ewart Hall and The American University in Cairo. When AUC was founded in 1919, the intention of the founders was that the institution would serve as a bridge between Egypt and the United States. We try to accomplish this in several ways: first, by providing a broad liberal arts education for Egyptians in the American tradition; secondly, by hosting some 200 American study abroad and graduate students each year who learn about Egypt at first hand; and thirdly, by publishing some 40 books a year on Egypt and the Arab world for an English- speaking audience.

Another important function of the University is the frequent presentation of speakers and cultural events that enrich the intellectual life of Greater Cairo. Since it was completed in 1928, Ewart Hall has hosted many wonderful events:

-- In the late 1930s, Egypt's most beloved singer, the great Um Kalthoum, presented a series of Thursday night radio concerts from this hall;

-- In 1937, Arturo Toscanini conducted the Palestine Orchestra here;

-- In the 1950s, the great Egyptian intellectual and reformer Taha Hussein lectured here every Wednesday night;

-- Presidents Mohamad Naguib, Gamal Abdel Nasser, Anwar Sadat, and Hosny Mubarak have all attended events in Ewart Hall;

-- In 1987, Senator J. William Fulbright from Arkansas spoke here;

-- Last year, our own favorite alumna, Mrs. Suzanne Mubarak, opened the Model United Nations here.

Today, we are pleased to add a very special world figure to this distinguished list. Let me tell you about her. Hillary Rodham Clinton graduated from Wellesley College in 1969 and completed her law degree at Yale University. She married Bill Clinton in 1975 and their daughter Chelsea was born in 1980. During her twelve years as First Lady of Arkansas, she worked tirelessly for the interests of women and children, while practising law in Little Rock. She demonstrated a deep and incisive interest in many issues including poverty alleviation, low cost housing, micro-enterprise, and health care. In recognition of her accomplishments, she was named Arkansas Woman of the Year in 1984.

After becoming First Lady of the United States in 1993, Hillary Clinton chaired the Task Force on National Health Care Reform, which sought to ensure that all Americans would be covered by health insurance regardless of income. She championed efforts to increase immunization for children, pushed for the expansion of children's health insurance coverage, advocated innovative prenatal care, and raised awareness of the impact of tobacco on children's health. As First Lady, she has travelled widely and brought world attention to problems of human rights, women's employment, low-cost housing, safe motherhood, and the education of girls and women in many countries. To all of these efforts, she has brought a keen intellect, a lawyer's ability to focus on the issues, enormous energy, a compassionate concern for the disadvantaged, and a willingness to take progressive and sometimes controversial positions. By speaking out herself, she has created space for others to speak out and to be heard. In everything she does, she has encouraged young people to get involved. And in so doing she has become a hero to students and parents throughout the world. Ladies and Gentlemen, it is an honor for me to present the First Lady of the United States, Hillary Rodham Clinton.

Address by Hillary R. Clinton:

Thank you so much, Dr. Gerhart, for that very kind introduction. I must say I have never heard anyone receive an ovation for the acknowledgment of the audience before, but it was well deserved and it introduced me to this distinguished gathering.

Ambassador Kurtzer, thank you for being with us today and for your service. And, thank all of you, your excellencies, distinguished guests, one and all. I also want to thank Mrs. Shoeb, who helped prepare the events today.

It gives me great pleasure to be at this University, which for 80 years has been devoted to education and service not only in Egypt but throughout this region. And, of course, to be in this vibrant and historic city is something that I have looked forward to for many years. I have made very short stops and stays in Cairo before, usually on my way somewhere else. Once my husband and I arrived in the middle of the night, spent the evening with the great hospitality of President and Mrs. Mubarak and left at the crack of dawn without seeing anything. When I spoke with the President this morning, he reminded me that he has yet to even see the Pyramids except from the window of an airplane. I assured him that he could return, perhaps when he no longer travels with eight or nine hundred people, and see the city and the sights and meet the people in a more informal way. Because, for anyone who comes here, we know we are not only looking backward but we are looking forward at the same time. And in the past

few days, I've had the great pleasure of seeing some of the sites and meeting some of the people -- on a very superficial level, I admit -- and beginning to get a feeling for the breadth and beauty of this historic place.

I want especially to thank President and Mrs. Mubarak for their gracious hospitality and also the ministers of the government and the people of Egypt for receiving me and my daughter so warmly. It is a great pleasure to begin this visit to North Africa here in Egypt -- a true partner and friend of the United States. And this university certainly symbolizes that remarkable relationship as well.

In just a few days, the people of both our countries will mark the 20th anniversary of the signing of the Camp David accords -- peace accords that enabled this country and Israel to live in peace for twenty years, peace accords that clearly laid the groundwork for what came later with Jordan and what we hope will occur in the future with the Palestinian people and Israel. We will never and must never give up on the dream of peace that was really ignited with the Camp David accords. And the leadership and the example of Egypt is one that we will look to, not only for what can be done and must be done here in the Middle East but around the world as well.

Egypt has a special place in the imagination of people throughout the globe. Certainly Americans are reminded of our ties to Egypt every single day. Just look at the back of our dollar bill. It carries two symbols -- symbols that have their roots in the symbolism of ancient Egypt. We have an eagle that could look, if you squint, like a falcon, like a descendant of the kind of symbolism that one sees in the Egyptian Museum and that I'm looking forward to seeing in Luxor. Certainly, the idea of soaring high, as high as one can go, looking down on the earth arrayed below is one that has special meaning for people everywhere. But we also have on the back of that dollar bill the pyramid, representing man's triumph over death, not with physical life but with the ideas, the values, and the history that one leaves behind.

As I walked through the museum the other day, with the wonderful guidance of some experts who were with my daughter and me, I saw the kinds of things that a pharaoh or a noble person would want to bring with him or her into the next world -- everything that was essential as we embark on the final journey of this life. They believe that they were preserving what was necessary so that they could live in the future and the next life to come.

And I thought to myself, what would we take with us? We know so well that we will not, we believe, have use for food or clothing, so what tangible things would we take? Probably, none now. But what of the intangibles, what of the values, what of those things that we cannot necessarily hold in our hand but we leave to our children and our grandchildren?

I was reminded of that as I visited some of the sights here in Cairo. The mosques that I have seen -- mosques that have survived earthquakes, water damage, hot desert winds -- and are still standing because they have been lovingly cared for and are now being restored by successive generations. They, too, symbolize, not in a material way, but in a very deep and profound way, what we want to carry with us, what we may not be able to pack in a box, but which may mean more than anything we could pack -- a priceless material value passed on.

What would we bring with us today? While we stand at a pivotal, and some might even say paradoxical moment in history, an end of a century, an end of a millennium, a time of great promise and opportunity, we can also see as we look around us, a time of anxiety and even of fear at the pace of change that is engulfing us. We would want to bring with us those values, those institutions that can really stand the test of time. We would want to bring with us our human awareness, our knowledge of the past, so that we could be better prepared to navigate through the future.

My husband often says that there is no constant in the world anymore, except the constant of change. And that our challenge as human beings -- Egyptians, Americans -- is to make change our friend, to understand how to harness and deal with the forces that have been unleashed primarily by technology, but also by changing political and economic forces.

So we would want, I believe, to bring with us institutions that would permit us to make this journey into the future, one that we could navigate with some sense of certainty about the direction we are taking. We'd want to bring an economy that provides opportunities for all people -- not only those lucky enough to be in this beautiful and historic hall -- but everyone, everyone who could in his or her way be prepared for that journey. We'd want to bring with us a society in which we not only are consumers, but also citizens, where we recognize the role of spirituality in our lives, not just materialism; in which we would be equipped as best we can, as imperfect beings to be prepared to imagine a better world, not to retreat inward to the past as is the temptation in a time of change.

At the White House, we are attempting to mark the passage of this time by trying to think of ways that we can honor the past and imagine the future. How can we honor this past that is with us, that we have survived in this century? And how can we take from the past what we need? How do we challenge ourselves to address the top questions that have always been with human beings but which today because of the conditions around the world, seem even more pressing?

I often think of society with a very simple metaphor: a three-legged stool. One leg is the government, one leg is the economy, and one leg is what we call civil society. Now, obviously, we could not sit on that stool if there were only two legs or even just one. We could not sit on it if one leg was much more powerful and longer than the other two. Creating that balance in society among these principal institutions that govern and in many ways define our lives together is something we are constantly striving to achieve.

We know we need governments -- effective, competent, functioning governments that can do what individuals cannot do for themselves and can do what market economies cannot do or produce, governments that protect our freedoms and defend our lives, respect human rights and the rules of democracy.

But even a government, no matter how well functioning, cannot in and of itself create citizens. The free market economy can create jobs and wealth and consumers and it needs to unleash the potential that is within so many people to have a better economic life for themselves. But the market economy, which can do many things, cannot create citizens. Only civil society, that third leg of the stool, can fulfill that important challenge.

So I want for just a few minutes to concentrate this morning on that third leg of civil society, of citizenship. Because if we are imagining this journey, a journey that the pharaohs took into the next world, a journey which we take while living into the world being created around us, we need to bring with us functioning, effective, competent governments that know their limits, but can produce the kinds of services that citizens need and we need to bring with us the unleashed power and energy of a free market economy that can take someone selling in the bazaar and give him as good a chance for the future just as the head of the largest corporation.

But when it comes to civil society, that is a constant act of creation. Because creating citizens who understand democracy, who protect democracy, who appreciate the human rights of themselves and others, can only be done in the space that exists between the government and the economy, the space that, after all, really makes life worth-living, the space we create in our families, the space that we fill with the associations we freely choose, the space that is the quality of life as we measure it.

We know what we mean sometimes by civil society, but we can't always describe it. We know that it is that element of human association and existence that really defies description because, at the end of the day, it is what makes life worth living.

So how do we nurture this civil society? In our religious associations, with the freedom of the expression of our religious beliefs, with the spirituality that we choose to follow, with the voluntary associations, even the soccer clubs we support, we are creating civil society.

It has never been more essential because we have never had more people living in democracies than we have now at this point in human history. And living in democracies forces us to confront some issues that in the past we didn't have to think about. Government made those decisions for us, a planned economy made those decisions for us, or in the case of some societies, anarchy basically abdicated the space that both government and an organized economy should fill.

And so here we are at the end of this century, thinking about how we will make this journey and wondering to ourselves how we create more, stronger civil societies. I think that there are several lessons that we have been learning around the world as we look to see how we better prepare for the future. First, we know now we have to invest in all people, in their education, in their health care, in providing the credit and economic opportunity to them that allow individuals, both alone and together, to live up to their God-given potential.

It was five years ago that thousands of people gathered here in Cairo for the International Conference on Population and Development. The further in time we move from that conference, the more remarkable it seems, because for the very first time I've been able to find in history, there was a world gathering which reached the conclusion that we must do more to develop the potential of all people, particularly women, if we expect to live in a prosperous, peaceful, stable world.

So instead of mechanistically focusing on just one aspect of our life, with respect to population control, a broader view was taken, a more human view that said: "No, we need to look at the entire person, we need to respect the entire woman, we need to educate the minds as well as care for the bodies, we need to

provide opportunities so that people feel that they have a future that they can invest in."

With the entire world listening, the results of that conference sent a clear, clarion call. No nation can move forward if half of its citizens are fed last or least, uneducated, under-educated, overworked, denied credit and health cares, subjected to violence inside or outside of the home or are otherwise left behind.

We agreed to a set of goals. We agreed to make family planning a right. We agreed to reduce infant, child, and maternal mortality. We agreed to make education a right for all, not a privilege for the few. And I want to congratulate Egypt publicly, as I congratulated President Mubarak yesterday morning, on the progress that has been made in this country in meeting those fundamental goals. I have been privileged to see just a few of the examples of that progress over the last day and a half, and I expect to see more in the days to come.

Yesterday, I met with three entrepreneurs whose businesses and fortunes have risen because of small, micro-credit loans. As they showed me their shops and the bazaar, as they pointed with pride to the products which they have produced with their own hands and the hands of employees, they could tell me clearly that what they are doing now is giving them a sense of dignity and pride that they expect to be able to use with great effect in they years to come.

One was crafting metal by hand. He had learned his trade from his father who in turn learned it from his father and father's father. And the women that I spoke with said that they had been able to expand their operation, that they now had money to invest in improving their housing and the educational opportunities for their children. Just a small amount of money given to people with the spark of enterprise and the willingness to move forward enables them not only to have dignity but also to support themselves and their families. And all of that at a repayment rate of 97-99%. Now that is the kind of repayment rate that most commercial banks have never seen. But in micro-credit, which is a civil society function, you enable people to move into the larger economy -- out of the informal economy into the formal economy -- which benefits them and the larger society.

I also visited a brand new health center where women and children were receiving their pre-natal care, their immunizations, their family planning, and the other services that they need. The room that we met in at the new health center was filled with university professors, physicians, nurses, and staff members who were committed to ensuring that poor women had the same access to health care as rich women. That is a change throughout the world that I have observed.

As I walked around the state-of-the-art surgery and intensive care units, the Minister of Health explained how Egypt is attempting to make sure that women in every part of the country have access to quality health care. And the results are there to be seen. The rates for infant mortality, maternal mortality and population are all going down. That is the right direction.

At a youth center, I met with a remarkable group of girls and women who are taking part in a program appropriately called "New Horizons." They are seeing beyond the more limited horizon that had only been available to their mothers

and their grandmothers and they're seeing new roles for themselves. I told them that I don't know I've ever been in a group of more lively and dynamic girls and women. They showed me some of the videos that they're making that they use to teach community members about education or nutrition, female circumcision and health care. They were eager to talk about what these programs had meant in their own lives. There was even a woman of 65 who was there who had taken literacy classes and now she can read the street signs and read any newspaper and her children, she told me with pride, are proud of her.

I saw these kinds of important lessons being passed on from one generation to the next. There were three women, the mother, the daughter, and the grandmother, who have each learned how to improve their own options in life.

Time and time again, we have learned around the world that the single best investment any country can make is the investment in education and particularly, in girls' education. I know that Mrs. Mubarak has been a great champion of girls' education and the results are there to be seen. There and more girls going to and staying in school in Egypt, and that is creating a higher level of education, which is one of the principal ways we will be able to navigate into the future. It is hard to create and maintain civil society, it is hard to create citizenship, if we do not have educated people.

Secondly, if we want to create and strengthen civil society then we have to help people understand and ultimately exercise their rights and responsibilities. I will be travelling to Luxor and tomorrow I will visit a democracy school where I will see at first hand how citizens are helping their children learn the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.

From what I've heard, they've begun to put those lessons to work. They've been collecting clothes and donating to the victims of a recent flood. They've even petitioned public officials to clean the city streets. Being married to a public official, I know that sometimes those of you who are in government wish that people would not exercise their rights and responsibilities, because it can become quite a burden when people demand services, when they argue with you, when they claim that they know how to do something better than all those people who are in public life. But that is the way democracy operates. And to have people who before did not understand citizenship all of a sudden realizing they have rights and responsibilities is the way we move ourselves forward both in civil society and ultimately in democracy itself.

That is what each of us does when we are involved in our child's education, when we cast our vote in an election, we participate in an organization or help ourselves or help others. I've heard of so many groups like that throughout Egypt. The burgeoning of NGOs (non-governmental organizations) in Egypt is one of the ways that I can see that civil society is vibrant and that the entire society is moving forward. Groups like the Egyptian Center for Women's Rights, which reaches out to poor and illiterate women and teaches them about their legal rights. I have seen similar groups operating in countries as far away as China or back in my own country where women are given the tools, the legal tools they need to protect themselves and to understand that they are people with rights. They are therefore, citizens.

I've met some of the leaders of the NGO groups here in Egypt, leaders and human rights activists, who have worked very hard on all kinds of issues that really are at the heart of how we empower people and particularly women. And

I'm grateful that among the leadership roles that Mrs. Mubarak has taken on is an NGO, the Integrated Care Society, that has given girls in some of the poorest neighborhoods the chance to open up books and therefore open up their minds.

The Egyptian Red Crescent Society supports low cost medical services and I want to salute Mrs. Mubarak for her tireless leadership and support for NGOs for which she is known and admired around the world. But it isn't only those who are in positions of leadership or high-visibility that are expected to and must do the work of creating civil society. That work has to be done at all levels of our societies wherever we might live. I know that there are many people in this hall today who have touched lives and, literally, transformed them because of the services that you have provided. I read about the services provided at one NGO-run health clinic where one girl wrote about how she envisioned the new life she felt she was creating and the right to claim. She decided she would not get married before 18, but when I do, she wrote, my husband and I must decide together on the size of our family, that girls are as valuable as boys and have a right to education and work just as boys.

Her letter was posted on the wall of the community center but I would like to see it posted on the global Internet because it is not only relevant to girls in Egypt, it is relevant to girls everywhere.

No words could better describe the aspirations dreamed and the progress being made. At the grass roots level, in individual lives, with the millions and millions of decisions that are made every day here in this country, I remain personally convinced and become even more convinced when I see NGOs in action, like the ones I've briefly referred to, that are a critical and necessary component in building open, democratic societies. We have to do more to make sure that they can perform their work. We also, though, have to make sure that NGOs understand they have to be held accountable as well, that if they are going to be players in the civil society, partners with the government and the economy as one of those legs of the stool, they have to also exercise transparency and be willing to have their accountability held and measured as well. We cannot permit any group in any democratic society to have unchecked, unaccountable power.

Third, we have to treat our diversity as a source of strength, not division -- a force that binds us together instead of tearing us apart. History is replete with instances of people who believe they could build themselves up by knocking others down, who peddled hatred as an antidote to fear.

We can look around our world today and know that history is repeating itself. There are leaders, there are governments, there are peoples who decide on a daily basis, unfortunately, that they have a right to push others back instead of understanding how we can come together to harness the power that we each bring to any endeavor in order to make life better for all.

It is understandable that when societies face rapid change, when so much of what has been familiar becomes different, new, that we have fertile ground for those differences to serve as a pretext for hatred or violence or inhumanity. Hatred may take the shape of terrorism. It may be called ethnic cleansing. It may result, as it did for a few years recently in my own country, in church burnings or racial discrimination and crimes of hatred. But in each case when someone is diminished like that, it takes a toll on all of us. It causes each of us to wonder what is it that we are as human beings that permits us to violate

the human rights and selfhood of others.

There are many freedoms and rights that we have to protect in a democracy: freedom of expression, freedom of association, freedom of the press, freedom of religion. All of those are fundamental and cannot be plucked out and held up as only one. They have to work in concert. When we look around the world today, we can see how ethnic and religious and racial differences are fueling violent encounters.

Just yesterday though, I stood on a small and sacred patch of land here in Cairo surrounded by what is believed to be the oldest synagogue in the world, the oldest Coptic church, a Greek Orthodox church and, in the background, the city's many mosques. It gave me a vivid sense of the diversity that exists in this great country. Now that can either be a source of division or a blessing.

That is certainly how I view it in my own country. We are home to countless ethnic groups, religions, and nationalities. We have struggled for more than 220 years to end racial intolerance and discrimination, to provide equal rights under the law to men and women, to welcome our successive waves of immigrants, and we've made a lot of progress. But I could not stand here before you or any audience and say that we are perfect, that we understand how to deal with this wide diversity of humanity. It is a daily struggle. Democracy is never perfected. It takes constant work and I think our founders knew that when they talked about creating a more perfect union that it would be something that every generation would have to confront. Well, I don't think it is any different in any country. We must look to our history and honor it, but we cannot be imprisoned by it. We have to bring forward those lessons of tolerance and understanding that truly do stand the test of time and we have to reject the calls to violence and prejudice and discrimination.

Here in Egypt, I know that throughout the ages, Muslims and Copts have lived and prospered together. The Coptic Church has hosted annual iftars for Muslim colleagues, Muslims have attended church to share in the joys of the weddings of Coptic friends and each community has reached out to help in times of trouble, as during the terrible flood of 1994.

But we also know that in every religion there are those who would drape themselves in the mantle of belief and faith only to distort its most sacred teachings, preaching intolerance and resorting to violence against believers of other faiths. We know that that kind of enmity that can exist between peoples, stirred up by those who have an advantage to be gained, can rip apart the fabric of communities.

I remember so well visiting Bosnia after the peace accords were signed. I met with a group of Bosnians, Muslims, Serbs, and Croats -- I couldn't tell by looking who was who -- and they began talking to me about how they had lived peacefully together for many years and then, all of a sudden, neighbor turned against neighbor. Now, it didn't happen just by accident. It happened because there were those who stirred up that religious and ethnic intolerance, who used the media to deliver messages of hate instead of unity. And so people who had been friends, who had visited in each other's homes, who had attended the weddings and funerals of loved ones, saw their neighbors going in and pulling out neighbors out of houses, burning homes, burning crops, and they couldn't understand how that inhumanity had been once again sparked after years of knowing one another.

One of the women who was there said to me, "You know, I said to one of my neighbors, we know each other, we've lived with each other, we've practiced our faiths side by side. Why have you joined these people?" And the neighbor responded, "Because of what I saw in television, because of what I read in the newspaper. They told me that you were going to come after me and that we had to come after you first." So we not only have the age-old problems of inhumanity, we now have new tools of communication that can stir up divisiveness in the blink of an eye. Someone can go on the Internet and put out a message of hate that with the press of a button can be everywhere in the world. And that is why leaders and citizens together have to work even harder at tolerance and to prevent discrimination so that we seed the bed of citizenship with those values.

And so when the leader or the advocate or the fanatic tries to stir up hatred, it will not fall on the ears of receiving people but it will be rejected, as it should be. Egypt has long been a symbol of tolerance, and I applaud you for that. And I applaud you for continuing to stand against it in every way possible. We've been working on that in my own country as well. Islam is the fastest growing religion in the United States, but until my husband and I came to the White House, we had never celebrated or recognized the great celebration of Ramadan. We'd had all kinds of celebrations for Christmas and Hanukkah and we'd had people bringing their children to the White House to see the Christmas decorations or the menorah that was displayed. And so starting a few years ago, we began holding Eid celebrations at the White House, bringing in hundreds of Muslim women and men and children to celebrate the Eid and to share with us the stories and values embodied in Islam: love of family and community; mutual respect; the power of education. These three great monotheistic religions that come from this part of the world have so much to give one another as well as to people everywhere. But that can only happen if we respect and we listen and we care about the traditions and values that each of us hold dear.

Think if you will, about the values you would take to the next world. What would you pack if you were to go? If a tomb were to be built for you today and you didn't bring any of the seed that you needed or the clothes that you would wear, what would you take with you?

I hope that all of us think about that as we approach the end of this century. I hope among the values we take and the lessons that we've learned are to respect the dignity of all individuals, and particularly, to give women and girls the rights and responsibilities of citizenship, to work to make sure that our societies are balanced with functioning, effective governments, strong and vibrant economies and civil societies that bring people together, not drive them apart.

I hope we will bring with us our respective religious beliefs and faiths and we will also bring with us the tolerance and respect we should have for others. As we move into that uncharted terrain of the next century, navigating our small boats, I hope we will recognize that we are blessed indeed, to live at the end of this century -- the most violent in human history -- because I hope we will have learned how to honor the past, rejecting the lessons of history we do not need to take with us anymore, and carrying the ones we should value and hold dear as we work to create a better present and future for ourselves and our children.

When Dr. Gerhart introduced me, he referred to Um Kalthoum. I was told of a line in one of her famous songs, "I am the people, I am the people," she sang.

"I do not know an impossible." Those are words that we should think about as well.

This extraordinary country and its citizens have proven over thousands of years that the impossible can be rendered possible and I look to you to continue to demonstrate that, not only here at home, but abroad as well. It would be a tragedy of great dimension were we to lose this opportunity in human history to do more to realize our own humanity and to create the conditions that will enable us, well into the next century, to look back and say, "I lived my life as well as I could, I made my contributions. And when I left on my final journey, I hope I left behind those values and ideals that will enable people to live more peacefully, with prosperity, respect, dignity, and tolerance well into the future."

Thank you very much.

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Washington - Following is a partial transcript of the roundtable discussion, including the First Lady's introductory remarks:

Introductory Remarks by First Lady Mrs. Hillary Rodham Clinton 10:00 a.m. Tuesday March 30, 1999 Hotel de Ville (City Hall) Marrakech, Morocco

(Introduction by Princess Lalla Fatima-Zohra):

"Mrs. Hillary Clinton, First Lady of the USA, ladies and gentlemen,

"I am delighted to convey to you my best greetings and to express the overwhelming happiness we all feel as we warmly welcome, for the first time in the Kingdom of Morocco, the First Lady of the USA: Mrs. Hillary Rodham Clinton (applause): a great lady whose initiatives, efforts, human accomplishments and unfailing support are noteworthy wherever the women of the world endeavor to achieve progress and emancipation. (We feel happy) for her persistent support to women's conferences, and meetings -- and to any serious action seeking to activate and implement whatever resolutions and recommendations issue therefrom. Her stance will indeed be recorded out in history with much faithfulness and gratitude.

"Distinguished guest, ladies and gentlemen,

"The Moroccan woman is entitled to enjoy all of the natural rights she is born with especially within the precepts of true Islam which protects her as a girl, sanctifies her as a mother, and guarantees her livelihood as a widow or divorcee. Hence, giving her all the rights given to men unquestionably. As within the Moroccan constitution, where total equality between men and women is fundamentally stated, nothing in our law does her injustice or deprives her of her right to justice. Despite all this, the Moroccan woman has to face up to two battles: one consisting of fighting against deeply rooted tribal customs and family traditions standing between her and her codified and legitimate rights as stated previously. The other battle consists of catching up with the march of progress, and keeping pace with the modern, emancipated woman, wherever she may be.

"Those battles are being fought during the present Hassanian democratic and constitutional era by means of a constructive and targeted cooperation between women's associations -- whose number in Morocco exceeds 30. Among them, the National Union of Moroccan Women is the oldest and the most widespread.

Concerted action unfolds in an environment of genuine fellowship, mutual trust, and constructive cooperation culminating lately in the establishing of the National Commission for the Promotion of the Moroccan Woman, as announced by the prime minister on the occasion of the celebration by the Kingdom of Morocco of the International Women's Day.

"This celebration witnessed the joint participation of the government, the National Union of Moroccan Women, and all other women's associations in various manifestations. This occasion saw the birth of many activities and small-scale projects in favor of women, particularly in rural areas and small towns. We can rightly state that the Moroccan woman today is taking a decisive turn towards a better future.

"Mrs. Hillary Rodham Clinton, ladies and gentlemen.

"Before concluding, I wish to express my gratitude to our distinguished guest for her sisterly visit. As I underline our feeling of pride, I give her again welcome. Thank you for your kind attention. Wa as-salamu alykum wa rahmatu allah wa barakatu (Arabic traditional closing). (applause)

(End introduction by Princess Lalla Fatima-Zohra)

Mrs. Clinton (HRC):

"Thank you so much your Royal Highness for your very warm welcome and for your comments about women and progress and empowerment in Morocco today.

"I want to express to everyone the gratitude that I and all who are travelling with me feel toward the government and the people of Morocco: for the extraordinary hospitality that we have been extended during our too-short stay. And, I look forward -- as I told Her Royal Highness as we were walking in -- to returning, in the not-so-distant future sometime, to visit more of the country and have more of an opportunity to meet people. But I am very grateful for this opportunity. As Her Royal Highness said, I have been privileged to attend a number of conferences that deal with women's issues; and I have, as I have traveled around the world, sought out occasions like this where a smaller group of women could discuss with me the common challenges that all women face in the world today and the particular challenges that women in various societies face as well.

"In all of those meetings and conversations I have been struck by a couple of points that I would just briefly make here.

"First, that there are many, many areas of common interest among women -- no matter where we live. The kinds of challenges that we face as women may look different from the vantage point of history, or culture, or religion, or economic advancement; but, very often, underneath that there are some very common experiences that women share that permit women, in open and candid dialogue, to understand one another and the choices that we all face.

"Secondly, there are significant differences, however, in the legal, and social, and political, and economic structures in which women and men live, in the world today and trying to sort out those issues -- that can be dealt with directly, as Her Royal Highness said, through constitution and law, and those issues which must be addressed because they are of tradition, or family, or

custom -- is one of the challenges that I see women addressing around the world today.

"Whenever I have an occasion like this to meet with women, I often find, no matter what country I'm in -- even my own country -- that women from different political backgrounds, different experiences don't talk enough to one another, don't have enough dialogue, don't try to see each other's perspective because, if they do, they can then work better together.

"In a couple of cases, just within the last several months, I have been impressed and pleased to see women who have very different political perspectives working in common on many goals; and I think that goes to this commonality of a woman's experience, regardless of where she comes from or what her position in society might be.

"I just want to listen and learn. I do not pretend to know very much about the experience of women in Morocco, but I am very eager to learn from our panelists about their own experiences and about the challenges that they believe are the ones that should be addressed.

"I would just conclude with two very short stories about my stay in Morocco so far. The very first visit that I made was to a school where I listened to a father, and a little girl, a teacher, and a member of the Ministry of Education. And the little girl, who was a beautiful child, was -- as I sometimes am -- overwhelmed by the cameras, and the attention, and very shy; but she told us that she wanted to be a doctor. Her father then said that he had nine children; he himself was illiterate; and none of his children could finish school; but he was trying very hard to see that this little girl could finish school, and have a chance to fulfill her own dream.

"Yesterday, in the village that I visited, I met with many women who were being able to take advantage of some of the changes that certain projects were bringing to them so that they were able, because of a new cookstove, and they were able to cut the time that they used to spend looking for fire wood; and then they could use that time to engage in income-generating activities. And they could also use that time to attend literacy classes which were being conducted for the first time in the village. And, when I walked in, and I saw those beautiful young women and these two young teachers, and they stood, and they greeted me in English, and then answered questions that were posed to them by their teachers, I saw on their faces the same look of expectancy, of hope, of joy that is on the look of any young woman anywhere in the world who is finding out more about herself and her capacity, and is learning and is understanding what more can be made of her life and her future.

"And so, ultimately, my hope is that we work toward creating circumstances in which all girls and women have the opportunity to make the choices that are right for them, and their choice may not be the choice I would make, or not be the choice someone else would make, but that they're equipped to make the right choices, and they are not circumscribed by law or custom, but they chose what kind of life they wish to lead.

"So with that, I would love, Your Royal Highness, to listen to our panelists and to hear from them. Who would like to start?

End Mrs. Clinton's Introductory remarks.

First Lady, Hillary Rodham Clinton, Your Royal Highness, Ladies, Distinguished guests, on behalf of the business community I would like to bid you welcome, and also express our pride in being able to attend this meeting and also our appreciation and consideration for your efforts that you've put forth in terms of defending general causes, and particularly defending women's issues. This historical meeting is taking place at a time when many political changes are occurring in Morocco in terms of Democratic alternation, and Moroccan women know that their participation to the development process is paramount as there shall be no democracy with no advancement with no development and no development is possible without the participation, the true participation of women, so therefore, against a business background, women are very active in various areas, and certainly this meeting that serves as a forum for various forces as represented here will enable us to address a number of issues that will undoubtedly contribute to designing and conceiving a contribution to a general perspective of women of Morocco, their achievements, and also in terms of the impediments that they are facing, and these impediments are definitely due to inequalities. So let us open the floor for debate and I should now give the floor to Miss Amina Lemrini, who leads and chairs the Democratic Women's Federation and she also represents the community of academia.

Thank you Madame Chair. I certainly will not dwell on further welcomes extended to the First Lady as this will take up of our very limited time. Now ... Madame Chair, let me focus on an item that you emphasized in your introduction with regard to the impediments facing Morocco and I would speak particularly about education. Certainly this subject matter has witnessed or this area has witnessed great advancement in Morocco since independence. It simply suffices to say that our generation as represented through this round table is not the generation of our mothers. Education is one of our achievements, the achievement of our generation and when we talk about the impact of education there is certainly a general impact in terms of improving and bettering the lives of women, but considering that this is an Arab and Islamic country this impact is of particular effect. On the one hand it contributes to lift a number of traditions and also in terms of increasing the age of marriage and fertility rate and also in terms of the relations between women within families and it contributes tremendously to make that headway that is necessary for women to go from their homes out on the streets. So this simply illustrates clearly that there has been great progress achieved during the past decades; however there is a great want in our country and definitely we need to recognize this deficit. There is great disparity. The gap is too wide between the cities and the rural areas and between women and men. If a women is living in the hinterland it would mean that this woman is doubly eliminated from the benefits of education and there are great challenges that we need to face. The first challenge being to raise the level of schooling rate of young girls in terms of enrollment and also in terms of staying in school until they can acquire a certain level of education. There is also another challenge in terms of fighting illiteracy of mature women and this is unfortunately very strongly present in our country. There is also the other challenge whereby we need to improve the education environment because we cannot generalize education without consistently improving the education general environment and curricula and on the other hand education requires a great support in terms of establishing a spirit of equality through schools and also through the various skills that are acquired at schools. There is great debate taking place in our country at this time and maybe one of the positive indicators is that the Ministry of National

Education has fixed the short term objectives and this objective we are certain that once they are reached they would certainly depend on the schooling of young girls because actually the particular feature of the lack of education needs or the want or the deficit in terms of education needs to be tremendously addressed in the hinterlands. I should also say that in the past we relied heavily on the state. We used to rely on the providence state, but now there is a change of mind, an indicator of a greater social awareness with regard to education and certainly considering this close relationship with the issue of development, you have a greater participation of NGO's, women NGO's, development NGO's, and there's also a greater sensitivity on the part of the private sector -- tomorrow we'll be organizing an event in this sense -- and there is also the role played by International cooperation -- a number of states and a number of organizations in terms of multilateral and bilateral cooperation. These organizations and institutions are playing a tremendous role in terms of schooling young girls and we hope that these institutions will play a greater role in terms of this broader partnership so as to enable young Moroccan school girls to achieve this very crucial and important objective. Thank you very much.

Thank you Miss Amina Lemrini. The floor goes now to Miss Hakima Himmich, who teaches Medicine and she also chairs the Moroccan Association Against AIDS. Your Royal Highness, First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton, as a physician and the President of an NGO against AIDS I will address general health issues and I would also address the issue of women and AIDS. Now with regard to Health I know Madame that I am speaking here to a great specialist. During the fourth conference, Women's Conference in Bejing where I've had the pleasure and delight to listen to your address you have said ....all of these issues are present in a number of countries and in our country too, so besides the number of positive achievements made ever since independence we still have a number of drawbacks. I should also affirm that in terms of positive developments that circumcision in Africa as practiced in Africa is totally a practice that is not adopted at all in our country so what USAID Morocco has engaged in is to a family planning program that is quite performing and that has contributed to the birthrate that is at about 3.7 today. Women and men are getting married at an older age which actually matters tremendously in terms of the health of young women. Now in terms of drawbacks, let me say that about 60% of pregnant women would enter into labor and deliver their babies at home with no medical supervision. Maternal mortality is very high and Miss Belafraj has just said that in the West it's only at about 12 or 17 percent. Abortion being prohibited by the law, it is often practiced in conditions that would jeopardize the health and the lives of these women. Apart, the issue of health, mothers, and children there is no program that would specifically address the health issues of women. With regard to AIDS, Morocco and Maghreb countries the prevalence is very low. The policy of the Ministry of Public Health is fully compliant with the recommendations of WHO, and we are proud to affirm that in Morocco there is no discriminatory measure taken against AIDS patients in any area and that access to Health Care is possible, of course provided that we have the right financial resources. The Ministry of Public Health and the NGO movement that is quite developed in Morocco we have undertaken a number of preventative activities and our association would distribute condoms that are provided free of charge by USAID in every city, but unfortunately this supply will stop very soon, and this is an appeal I would like to make. Our association is working with women, our association also works on prevention with sexual workers and with low income women. The prevalence rate for AIDS was 8% in 1988 and 30% in 1998 taking social, cultural, and economic vulnerability factors and as in every developing country, contaminated women were contaminated at 50% of occurrences by their

husbands. So in closing, the health of women depends tremendously on the legal status of women and also on the perception of religion as an instrument for justice and not as a dogma that would impede the emancipation and development of women. Thank you very much.

Thank you Miss Hakima Himmich. Miss Hinde Taarji, a reporter, you have the floor. Thank you. Your Royal Highness, First Lady, good morning, I'll try and talk about my area of activity, the media. Whenever we talk about media, we have to essentially address expression and visibility and this is actually totally in opposition to the condition of women in Moroccan society. By entering the media, women have actually separated themselves from the stance that used to be that of women for centuries, and also by making fundamental claims, because at a time when the speeding up of developments imposes upon Morocco deep changes. Women in the media, as in other areas of public life, are taking part in the double emergence of the individual and the citizen. There contribution and action fit or go beyond women's issues or go within a framework of democracy and human rights. In Morocco, the print and visual media are relatively young, although the freedom of expression is a very very fragile achievement, so during the past ten years women are of course far less numerous than women in the area of media and considering that quality is better than quantity, women are the voices that prompt the expression of the silence and also it leads society to think of its future in a very clear way so we have various individual experiences, but with the same constant, the will to exist, to lead a full fledged existence. Let me here make mention of some achievements. The voice of women in the media is heard differently. Women who are very active with the feminist review, tell about the condition of women, denounce and condemn oppression, claim the equality of rights, and this had actually helped women tremendously in Morocco. We also have the experience of Kalima in Morocco. We've had a cooperation between men and women in order to address the issue of social condition, and in terms of the relationship men and women, and the subversion of this effort resides in the fact that the veil was left over a big taboo that of young domestic workers, and the oppression of women by men in general. So Kalima actually really put it's finger on the issue, but however the gavel was carried forward, first of all by 2M, the private television network and particularly within this structure, also, the gavel was carried forward by women. We have had here for example a talk show called "Eklikake" that had actually increased viewership tremendously by addressing taboos and political issues. So in this male, macho backyard, those who will cause ripples will be women. In TV, this had actually caused many of them to be embargoed. So after Kalima, today we have more feminist magazines, but even in here the subversion exists, so as to really shake up censors, so actually the conquest of expression is a global conquest. In the media, as elsewhere, women have a hard time expressing their concerns, but we need to be louder and louder than men. I apologize for taking up a few minutes of your time.

Thank you, and Miss Ouafa Hajji, a Municipal Counselor and also the President of a Moroccan women's NGO association. Thank you Madame Chair. Your Royal Highness, First Lady, as chairwoman of an association that defends the right of women and that endeavors to improve social and economic conditions, and as an economist I will address the issue of women in active life. Following Morocco's Independence a number of factors such as schooling, the developing of industry, migration phenomena, urbanization has actually contributed to easing the participation of women in active life and this had actually led to the increase of the number of working women during the past decades and to also put a feminine face on a number of areas of activity that we here make mention of

services provided to the community, such as health, hygiene, education, manufacturing industries in general, and also in banking, insurance, and services provided to corporations; therefore, Moroccan women have progessively engaged in a number of activities, and today they represent an active force in economic life and take actively to generate the national wealth. So this integration has turned women into a much needed partner, therefore easing the claiming of our rights, and contributing to therefore to the autonomy, emancipation, and development of women. A number of constraints still hinder this integration. Let me make mention of four constraints here. First of all the level of qualification of women. That remains pretty low. Over two thirds of women who are active hold no degrees and therefore, we can see that there actually a predominance of women working in the field, in the hinterland, and working also as domestic workers in the cities. The second finding is that there is a great number of people working in the formal sector are for the most part women, and I should also say that in terms of equality, women are still subject to discrimination because of the culture prevailing within the administration of the private sector. Finally as a forth constraint I shall say that Morocco's effort in terms of structural logistics translated into tension on the job market during the past few years. A job market where women, because of their lack of qualifications, skills, and competence, and also because of the prevailing cultural mentality women are far more exposed and therefore they are exposed to a greater popularization and social marginalization. So how do we face these challenges, and how do we lift these constraints? During the past few years, a number of initiatives were taken and implemented. Some initiatives were official and others were implemented by NGO's and Civil Society. Here I'm talking about revenue generation, activities such as micro-credit cooperatives, and self assistance for self employment, and also in terms of putting in place social protection mechanisms. I think that this is a very important subject matter, and also how within in terms of globalization and the challenges stemming from globalization, how do we think about integrating women by putting in place new mechanisms for acquiring new know how, because competitiveness, international competitiveness compels us today to acquire new mechanisms for acquiring new know how and I think integration with the right processes and approaches to face these challenges would ease work of women within one country, and the work of women internationally. I thank you very much for your attention.

Thank you. With that Miss Malika Baradi is a professor of law. Thank you Madame Chair. I am addressing here the first lady, Hillary Rodham Clinton, an eminent legal expert and very sensitive to women's issues rather well. Any legal expert in Morocco is actually struck by the ambivalence of the legal system in Morocco. We have a modern, Western-inspired set of laws whereas the family relations are still covered by an Islamic set of laws and therefore this is a clear illustration of the ambivalence of the legal environment in Morocco. On the street, women are considered as citizens, they are judges, lawyers, members of parliaments, professors, and so on. But at home notwithstanding their social condition, notwithstanding their position within the family they are still subject to the family relations act that was developed in 1957 and the royal initiative and review of the family relations act in 1992 in parallel with efforts made so as to sensitize society by NGO's has actually the merit of (desacrilizing) the code, the family relations act. However, it is still based on a patriarchal ideology that translates into a matrimonial relationship that is actually marked by the predominance of the husband over the wife and the propriety of the links of marriage. So this code or this act actually makes women inferior beings and puts them in a (garble) position and this actually could undermine greatly the ambitions of Morocco because the impact of the

Family Relations Act has in other areas is in fact undeniable. So that is why all women and civil society and particularly women's associations are claiming and are actually calling for the review and amendment of provisions that constitute a flagrant and blatant discrimination and that would seem to represent the crystallized view of Islamic Sharia and that would simply reflect the attitude of imams and religious scholars whom at a certain time has developed and accepted a number of precepts that do not at all reflect the real values of Islam being human dignity notwithstanding their gender. Also considering social changes and considering also the role of women and their place in society and also considering the requirements of human sustainable development and the priorities to be addressed in terms of democracy and international conventions as ratified and subscribed to by the Kingdom of Morocco we need to review a number of these provisions particularly that of matrimonial tutelage, age of marriage, the suppression of repudiation whereby discretion is given to the husband and also the suppression and elimination of bigamy and polygamy and also the right of women to have legal representation over their children, the right of custody that should not be denied to women whenever that woman is to remarry and also a fair distribution of assets as acquired within wedlock.

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: March 31, 1999

REMARKS BY FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
TUESDAY, MARCH 30, 1999
HOTEL DE VILLE (CITY HALL)
MARRAKECH, MOROCCO

"Thank you so much your Royal Highness for your very warm welcome and for your comments about women and progress and empowerment in Morocco today.

"I want to express to everyone the gratitude that I and all who are traveling with me feel toward the government and the people of Morocco: for the extraordinary hospitality that we have been extended during our too-short stay. And, I look forward -- as I told Her Royal Highness as we were walking in -- to returning, in the not-so-distant future sometime, to visit more of the country and have more of an opportunity to meet people. But I am very grateful for this opportunity. As Her Royal Highness said, I have been privileged to attend a number of conferences that deal with women's issues; and I have, as I have traveled around the world, sought out occasions like this where a smaller group of women could discuss with me the common challenges that all women face in the world today and the particular challenges that women in various societies face as well.

"In all of those meetings and conversations I have been struck by a couple of points that I would just briefly make here.

"First, that there are many, many areas of common interest among women -- no matter where we live. The kinds of challenges that we face as women may look different from the vantage point of history, or culture, or religion, or economic advancement; but, very often, underneath that there are some very common experiences that women share that permit women, in open and candid dialogue, to understand one another and the choices that we all face.

"Secondly, there are significant differences, however, in the legal, and social, and political, and economic structures in which women and men live, in the world today and trying to sort out those issues -- that can be dealt with directly, as Her Royal Highness said, through constitution and law, and those issues which must be addressed because they are of tradition, or family, or custom -- is one of the challenges that I see women addressing around the world today.

"Whenever I have an occasion like this to meet with women, I often find, no matter what country I'm in -- even my own country -- that women from different political backgrounds, different experiences don't talk enough to

one another, don't have enough dialogue, don't try to see each other's perspective because, if they do, they can then work better together.

"In a couple of cases, just within the last several months, I have been impressed and pleased to see women who have very different political perspectives working in common on many goals; and I think that goes to this commonality of a woman's experience, regardless of where she comes from or what her position in society might be.

"I just want to listen and learn. I do not pretend to know very much about the experience of women in Morocco, but I am very eager to learn from our panelists about their own experiences and about the challenges that they believe are the ones that should be addressed.

"I would just conclude with two very short stories about my stay in Morocco so far. The very first visit that I made was to a school where I listened to a father, and a little girl, a teacher, and a member of the Ministry of Education. And the little girl, who was a beautiful child, was -- as I sometimes am -- overwhelmed by the cameras, and the attention, and very shy; but she told us that she wanted to be a doctor. Her father then said that he had nine children; he himself was illiterate; and none of his children could finish school; but he was trying very hard to see that this little girl could finish school, and have a chance to fulfill her own dream.

"Yesterday, in the village that I visited, I met with many women who were being able to take advantage of some of the changes that certain projects were bringing to them so that they were able, because of a new cookstove, and they were able to cut the time that they used to spend looking for fire wood; and then they could use that time to engage in income-generating activities. And they could also use that time to attend literacy classes which were being conducted for the first time in the village. And, when I walked in, and I saw those beautiful young women and these two young teachers, and they stood, and they greeted me in English, and then answered questions that were posed to them by their teachers, I saw on their faces the same look of expectancy, of hope, of joy that is on the look of any young woman anywhere in the world who is finding out more about herself and her capacity, and is learning and is understanding what more can be made of her life and her future.

"And so, ultimately, my hope is that we work toward creating circumstances in which all girls and women have the opportunity to make the choices that are right for them, and their choice may not be the choice I would make, or not be the choice someone else would make, but that they're equipped to make the right choices, and they are not circumscribed by law or custom, but they chose what kind of life they wish

to lead.

"So with that, I would love, Your Royal Highness, to listen to our panelists and to hear from them. Who would like to start?

FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
REMARKS AT AL-BADI PALACE RUINS
MARRAKECH, MOROCCO
MARCH 30, 1999

"Thank you very much. Thank you, Your Royal Highness, for that excellent and very moving address. Your Royal Highness, ministers, ambassadors, distinguished guests...

"I want to begin by thanking His Majesty King Hassan II, for his extraordinary hospitality to me, my daughter, and my party. But I also wish to thank him for being such a strong voice on behalf of expanding political participation, ensuring peace in the Middle East and throughout the world, and promoting tolerance for us all.

"Over the last few days, I have been very impressed by all that I have seen, by the people I have met, and the places I have visited -- from the Sahara Desert to the Atlas Mountains, from Tasselmante, to these spectacular ruins. This has been a trip that has been, for me, very personally rewarding; and I hope it has -- as we wished it would do -- bring our two nations and peoples together.

"The friendship between the United States and Morocco goes back more than 200 years. In fact, I learned that, in 1780, our United States Congress sent its first communication to the Sultan of Morocco. It said, "We assure you of our earnest desire to cultivate a sincere and firm peace and friendship with your majesty and to make it lasting to all posterity."

"I have come here on behalf of my husband, our government, and our nation to reaffirm that message of friendship, and to underscore our mutual commitment to work together for a peaceful, prosperous future for our people.

"Every year, children in both our countries learn about an important date: the year 1492. For us, this was the year that America was officially discovered by Europeans, although people had long lived there before the arrival of Columbus. For Morocco, it is the year of the Spanish Inquisition, which brought to this land Jews and Muslims together who were fleeing religious persecution.

"Since then, both of our nations have been, at times, places of refuge for those escaping injustice and inhumanity. Both are blessed by a diversity of people and cultures. As I have met Moroccans on this trip, as I have been privileged to watch and listen to great musical performers, and seen dancers, and interacted with people, I have seen on the faces of Moroccans the diversity of your people.

"When Pope John Paul II made his first visit to the Muslim world, here in 1985, he told 80,000 young people in Casablanca that, "Morocco has been a meeting point of civilizations. Morocco has a tradition of tolerance."

"This evening, standing here within the walls of this historic place, we can reaffirm, as Her Royal Highness has just stated, that tradition of tolerance; and we can remember some of those who have passed on that tolerance to the generations that followed. We can remember His Majesty King Hassan II's father, King Mohammed V. During World War II, His Majesty King Mohammed V, who was young at the time and had every reason to wish to develop a good relationship with France, decided that when the Vichy government asked for lists of Jews to be handed over, that he would say 'no.' He explained that such an action would be inconsistent with Moroccan laws -- because all Jews and Muslims should be treated equally. So, he sent a message to his people, calling on all Muslims to stand together with their Jewish brothers and sisters -- saying that Moroccans aren't Jews or Arabs, only Moroccans.

"Those who study that period, before and during World War II, know that the Nazis were able to pursue their crimes against humanity precisely because they were able to limit the circle of those defined as human. The mentally ill, the infirm, the gypsy, the Jew -- all were identified as lives unworthy of life. Such a process of dehumanization arises from a cold, dark region of the human soul, where people first withdraw understanding, then empathy, and finally personhood.

"Now this phenomenon is not unique to Nazi Germany. We all know that it has occurred in many places, at many times. And, even when the capacity for evil does not result in specific acts of hatred or violence, it can still poison the atmosphere in which we live and work.

"The only answer to those who would deny another's humanity, and deny those who they have defined out of the circle of human dignity their human rights, is the one that individuals and leaders -- like King Mohammed V and King Hassan II -- have given time and time again. Those who have helped expand the circle of human dignity, those who have proclaimed we are all part of the same human family, that we all have human rights -- the right to food and shelter, education and health care; the right to speak and be heard; the right to live free from violence in and out of the home; the right, in a word, to be fully human.

"Over the last two days, I've seen many examples of how this country -- both by its government and its people -- are working to expand the circle of human dignity as widely as possible here in Morocco.

"I just came, for example, from a housing project where my government, through USAID, is working with the Moroccan government to help people build new homes, new lives, and entire communities. This morning, I met with a group of extraordinary women, many who are part of a growing NGO community, to talk about the progress made and the challenges that remain in ensuring that women also are full participants in the economic, social, and political life of Morocco. Everywhere I've gone I have seen people with energy and determination, committed to their country, and very much determined to help it be the very best it can.

"At a school in Er-Rachidia, I met a beautiful young girl who, understandably, was a little taken aback when I arrived with press and cameras for a conversation about education. In a whisper, she told me that her dream was to be a doctor. Sitting by her side was her father. He has nine children, none of whom has yet finished school. He talked with pride as he explained that he hoped this daughter could grow up to be literate, unlike himself. He had the same dreams for his children that circumstances sometimes make impossible to achieve, but do not die. The same dreams we have for our own children.

"I visited the Tessalmate village and saw in people's eyes the same look of pride I've seen around the world when citizens join together to work on behalf of their common goals. Through cooperation among a newly formed women's association, an NGO working here in Morocco, USAID, and the Moroccan government, they are working to create a water supply system so that where women once had to haul water home, now they can turn on a faucet. Where once they spent five to six hours looking for firewood, now -- with some new cooking stoves being made -- they can cut that time in half because they are more fuel efficient.

"And I visited a classroom where two young teachers, themselves only fifteen years old, are teaching both girls younger than they, and women far older, to be literate and to learn what it means to be able to read and write. I also saw in action what is being done to improve access to health care. We know that far too many women around the world still die in childbirth. We know that far too many people still suffer from preventable diseases; but I was able to see yesterday how a hospital, clinics, mobile health units and visiting nurses are helping to take care of families.

"I also saw how women are beginning to earn income that will help raise the standard of living of their families. For the first time they are now taking their own beautifully hand-woven rugs to the market.

"I learned that this village was a place where all sorts of weary travelers, crossing the Atlas Mountains, had stopped, over hundreds of years, because they felt safe there. The name, in fact, means 'peace' or 'peace offering.' In many ways these villagers are carrying on that tradition because in today's era of globalization, peace offerings can consist not merely of the absence of conflict, but of the creation of true opportunity; and that is what I have seen happening here.

"Yesterday, I visited a simple, serene 11th century mosque cut from the earth; and, later, I walked through the Jewish cemetery here in Marrakech which, for 444 years, has never suffered a single act of desecration. While I was there, I was honored to light a candle for Henri Kadoch who, as many of you know, was President of the Jewish Community in this city -- and a leader and inspiration for all people. His son told me that, on the day of the funeral, there were thousands of citizens, both Jews and Muslims, lined up to pay their respects.

"And he told me a great, moving story about how this city had offered to light his father's resting-place. That was appropriate because this was a man who had helped to provide light to others, who wanted to give back what he had been given. A man whom the king called a son of all Morocco.

"Now, despite these examples -- and there are many we could cite, both of individuals and of institutions working to create light and opportunity, there are still those among us, throughout our world, who claim that we cannot or must not expand the circle of human dignity because, they argue, the differences among us -- of race, gender, ethnicity, tribe or religion -- are more important than our common humanity.

"My husband often talks about those who try to lift themselves up by pushing others down. Yet our great religious traditions should tell us the opposite. In the monotheistic faiths -- Islam, Judaism, and Christianity -- we are all children of God; we are all children of Abraham. We are implored in our respective Holy Scriptures to treat others as we would be treated. Tolerance and love lie at the foundation of the great religions of the world. They do not lie in lessons of hate or hurt, discrimination or degradation.

"As His Majesty King Hassan II said two years ago when talking about Islam, and I quote: 'This is the religion of tolerance, of cohabitation, and not one of violence and extremism. It is a religion, which defends the human rights and honors the being.'

"Yet, despite the king's words, there are those who still persist in perverting religion for their own ends. They claim that human rights are just a luxury of the West and that they have nothing to do with Africa or Asia.

"And, yet, we know -- if we look into the eyes of a child, or listen to the stories of men and women alike -- that human rights are not the product of any one culture or country; they are universal and timeless. They belong to every person. And they depend on each of us to defend.

"What, then, do we do when we see extremists -- from all religions, all backgrounds -- hijack holy traditions, not to lift people closer to God, but to push them apart? What do we do then, when we see differences, old and new, religious and ethnic, racial and tribal, used as a pretext for violence and hatred? How many times have we seen people deal with fear by pointing their finger at the "other," and trying to constrict the circle of human dignity?

"Well, we do what leaders like His Majesty King Mohamed V, His Majesty King Hassan II, and the president of my country try to do -- both by words and deeds -- to stand for peace, and tolerance and respect, and to stand against fear and hatred and division.

"If this violent, war-filled century teaches us anything, it is that whenever the dignity of one of us is threatened, the dignity of all of us is threatened as well. I'm told that King Mohamed V said that if the Jews had to wear yellow stars, everyone else would wear

them, too.

"Imagine how life might be different in many places throughout the world today if they were governed by people with that kind of sensitivity. If they had leaders who worked to bridge differences rather than to create them. Imagine how life might be different in Afghanistan today, if the Taliban saw women as full human beings with dignity and rights. Maybe, then, they wouldn't keep young girls shut out of school or sentence widows to beg on the streets to feed their children because they're not allowed to work outside the home.

"Maybe they wouldn't make women who need health care face a terrible dilemma because they cannot be treated by male doctors, and the government has banned all female doctors. They are not only oppressing systematically one-half of their population, but they are consigning themselves to the past.

"Because we now know that no country will be able to move ahead economically and socially in the next century if it doesn't respect the lives and choices of half its population.

"Imagine how different life could be on this continent today if the civil wars and ethnic conflicts in Angola, Algeria, Rwanda, the Congo and Sudan gave way to reconciliation and dialogue -- and if the senseless border dispute between Eritrea and Ethiopia were resolved at the bargaining table, rather than on the battlefield.

"Imagine what could be achieved in the Middle East if the people and leaders of all parties agreed once and for all to forsake all unilateral steps and commit themselves to negotiating a comprehensive settlement in order to build a secure and lasting peace. And, of course, imagine how different life could be in Kosovo today, had one man, one leader, not pursued the cruel policy of expelling an entire people.

"As the United States and its NATO allies try to stop this ethnic slaughter, before it spreads and claims more innocent lives, it is important, as we speak about tolerance, to remember how the fighting there began.

"For the most part, people of different religions and ethnic groups lived there together, often in the same villages and neighborhoods, usually finding ways to get along. Nothing in that region's history or ethnic groups predestined its people to fight with one another.

"The violence began because, ten years ago, the leader of Serbia, Slobodan Milosevic, started fanning the flames of ethnic and religious division. He did it for his own personal political advantage. Tolerance, he thought, would not give him any advantage; but exploiting the consequences of division, waging war on his neighbors and his people, is what he thought was in his own personal interest.

"It is hard to imagine why a leader would choose war over peace. Yet it is difficult, very

difficult in today's world, to make some of the hard decisions that must be made in peace. How do we educate all of our children? How do we provide healthcare to all of our people? How do we empower everyone economically? That is hard work. Waging war is easier. That is what is still happening today. And it is what NATO is trying to stop.

"Because we are seeing in Kosovo, as we saw earlier in Bosnia, ethnic cleansing, ethnic Albanian refugees, most of whom are Muslims, are streaming by the tens of thousands out of their homes, seeking refuge from Serbian military and police forces that are burning homes and destroying entire villages. The Serbian forces, as they did in Bosnia, are separating men and boys from their families and executing them in cold blood.

"Now this is happening because this was the plan that President Milosevic chose to implement long before the bombing began. He had a strategy to try and drive from Kosovo all the Albanians.

"Before there were ever peace talks, or NATO bombings, during most of 1998, fighting instigated by the Serbian forces had already forced more than more than 250,000 Kosovar civilians out of their homes.

"I met with a pediatrician who is taking care of those refugees. Because when we see these conflicts on our television sets, or read about them in our newspapers, it is easy to keep a distance from them. The faces, the stories, they seem so far away. But sitting and listening as I have to people who have suffered through these atrocities makes them seem very real to me. This doctor has seen countless women and children coming down from the mountains. They'd line up often 50 or more at a time, scared and sick with disease and malnutrition, often needing access to more medicine than she had available. And if they were not physically injured, they bore the psychological scars of what they had seen and experienced.

"The Serbian forces offensive did not even stop while their representatives were negotiating a peace agreement in France just a short time ago. During the final days of that discussion, they massed over 40,000 troops and hundreds of tanks, in and around Kosovo, poised to strike. So, while the Kosovar representatives were saying yes to peace, the Serbians were planning a campaign of massive and systematic destruction.

"That is why my husband and our NATO allies could not stand and look the other way. They could not permit this to go on with impunity until most of the Albanian population was either dead or displaced. It is also why my husband and our NATO allies are determined to persevere until Milosevic has embraced peace or NATO has significantly limited his ability to make war. And I want to thank the Government of Morocco for saying they hope the current actions will lead to "a permanent, peaceful solution" to the tragedy in Kosovo.

"Now that is the most current example we have of leadership that is intolerant for personal and political gain. We know that making peace anywhere will not be easy. It is not an easy task to make sure that ethnic tensions, when they exist, are resolved by the force of argument, not the force of arms -- because it is no easy task, as history teaches us, to expand the circle of dignity to all people. We cannot simply take a vote or pass a law. We have to struggle every day.

"In my own country, it has taken most of our 223 years, very brief by Moroccan standards -- and many of those years have been bloody, and few of them have been easy. We started with a very small group of white property-owning men who had citizenship. Then we fought a civil war to extend that right to black men. And then, finally, a year after my mother was born, to women.

"We have learned that governments can enforce rights and can pass laws and can create a fertile climate for tolerance. But only individuals can decide whether they are going to love or hate, decide whether there will be genuine harmony between different faiths, nationalities and ethnic groups. Only individuals will decide, finally, whether to stand up for those who are discriminated against. And only individuals are the ones who will determine whether someone's skin color, gender, or where they worship is reason enough to treat them as though they were not human. This is the work, therefore, not of governments alone, but of generations.

"And all over the world, I have met people who have seen the worst of what human beings can do, but have summoned up the best of their humanity to bring peace and dignity to all. I have seen it in places as far from Morocco as Guatemala and El Salvador, where former combatants have sat down and created peace, and are now working to implement it.

"I have seen it in Northern Ireland, where the difference is between Christians, Catholics and Protestants, who have hated each other for years as much as any peoples of entirely different religions have done. Yet, I have seen people, particularly women, working for peace even there, working to do simple things, like build playgrounds where children of both denominations of Christianity can play together. That may sound uncontroversial, but most of the children in Belfast, Northern Ireland, have never been able to play outside on a glorious day like this because of the bombings and the shootings.

"In Bosnia, I met with a group of women, Orthodox Christians, Catholic Christians, Muslims, representing each ethnic group who, in the aftermath of the Bosnian conflict, were rebuilding their lives, their families and their communities. They gave me a small statue -- about this high -- of a woman. Embedded in her knee is a piece of shrapnel, a tangible symbol of the war and pain the people there endured. But on her heart is her hand, and on her hand is a dove of peace, and on her face is a confident smile that seems to say, "'I will dream and work for my children to live in peace.' Looking at that statue, one cannot identify the ethnic or religious affiliation of that woman.

"Peace. Tolerance. Respect. They cannot be legislated; but they can be passed down. As Her Royal Highness reminded us, that is the way they come to live in the hearts and minds of people: They are passed on in the millions of decisions we make, the words that are spoken, the actions that we take. They are passed on in how we treat our neighbors. When we talk to our husbands or wives or friends.

"When we look into the eyes of people with whom we have profound differences, but we are seeking to resolve them in good faith and peace. And they are, most importantly, passed down in the values we teach our children as we tuck them into bed at night.

"In the last few days, I have asked some of the Moroccans I've met the same question: How did Morocco become such a tolerant country? How have your children learned tolerance? And I've received the same answer: They have learned it in their homes from their parents. They have learned it in their schools from their teachers. They have learned it in their places of worship, and they have learned it by example in their communities -- every time they see an adult refuse to stereotype or degrade another human being.

"I think about it in the stories I've been told about Morocco. Think about the lessons of tolerance children in Ourika Valley learn when newlyweds are asked to enter the shrine of a Jewish saint to reaffirm their wedding vows. Think of what the children of Casablanca learn when the number one Hebrew Student at the Jewish school is a Muslim, and think about the message sent by his Majesty King Hassan II when he asked all Moroccan Jews to come home.

"For what is a home but a place where you should always be welcome, always respected, always valued. A home is a place where you can celebrate your successes and talk freely about the obstacles yet to be overcome. I think about my own home. I think about my own family; and I, especially, was reminded as Her Royal Highness spoke about the lessons she learned from her father. That is truly the challenge we face to create a world of tolerance.

"A well-known Moroccan writer, Fatima Mernissi, once wrote: "If you stand up against scorn and dream of a different world, the planet's direction will be altered."

"We can alter the direction of this planet when it comes to how we treat one another. We can start by changing our own hearts and minds, by ensuring that our children are taught, as you have taught generations of Moroccan children, to be respectful and tolerant. We can alter the direction of the planet when we follow leaders who speak of peace and work against war, who serve their people by healing divisions, not creating them. We can alter the direction of this planet by dreaming of a different direction that we all can take in our own lives.

"And when we do, finally, see the realization of the dreams of so many who have come before, we will be keeping faith with everyone who ever stood for tolerance, who ever

taught his children the meaning of respect, and standing for leaders like His Majesty and his father; and, when we do that, we will have done our part, as individuals and as nations, to make sure that the circle of human dignity is finally wide enough to include us all.

Thank you, and thank you very much for all you have done to make that possible.

FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
CONFERENCE IN MARRAKECH, MOROCCO
"EDUCATION AND THE PRIVATE SECTOR; A DEVELOPMENT IMPERATIVE"
MARCH 31, 1999

"Thank you very much, Mr. Minister, for that kind introduction and for explaining to us how we came to be here today on behalf of this very important issue. It is a pleasure and an honor for me to join so many distinguished dignitaries and leaders, from both the public and the private sectors, as well as the non-governmental organizations. You are here because you recognize the vital connection between education, and economic development, and human progress.

"I want to thank the Ministry of Education for co-sponsoring this event, and I'm pleased that so many other ministers have taken the time to be here and participate. I also wish to thank Wafabank and its president. It is extremely important for the private sector to recognize the stake that business has in these issues. And I am very grateful that Mr. Bennani has become a leader in this country's commitment to education. I also wish to thank the General Confederation of Moroccan Enterprises and the international partners who are participating: USAID, UNICEF, UNESCO and the World Bank.

"I have long looked forward to coming to Morocco, and I must say that the gracious hospitality extended to me by His Majesty, by the government, and by the people of this beautiful country has exceeded any expectation I could have ever had. I also have been heartened to see first hand the progress that you are making to increase your commitment to your common future.

"So, I'm particularly pleased to join you to discuss what I believe is the single most important investment that any country in today's world can make -- and that is an investment in the education of its people. We will pay particular attention, in this conference, to the education of girls.

"Minister Alaoui said that he attended a conference sponsored by USAID in Washington, D.C. last year. I, too, was there because it was one of the most important conferences that USAID has ever sponsored. It was an international conference on girls' education. We heard strong calls to action, to redouble our efforts to educate girls, to open up more opportunities for women so that they could take their rightful place in their societies.

"As we have just heard from the minister, many participants from

throughout the world returned from that gathering filled with a new energy to promote girls' education.

"There is a wonderful story, that I learned in preparing for this trip. It is about how King Mohamed V set an example for the people of Morocco by educating his own daughter, Princess Lalla Aicha. After completing her schooling, the Princess traveled across Morocco, from village to village, from city to city, explaining why it was important to educate daughters as well. I've read how in 1947 -- at the very young age of 16 -- she electrified a crowd of thousands in Tangiers, speaking passionately in three different languages about the value of educating girls, and the importance of women as citizens.

"She based her arguments, I am told, on an Islamic principle that, in front of God, both men and women are full human beings, and that both have a right to everything that is important in life. Her call for the universal right to education may have been spoken more than 50 years ago, at a different crossroads in Moroccan history; but her call is still clearly relevant to today because, although progress has been made, all over the world there is much that is left to be done.

"I have worked on the issue of education and economic enterprise for more than fifteen years. In the state where my husband was governor, we had many young children who were not well educated. The schools, ~~and~~ especially in the rural areas, were not well equipped. And we understood from a very early stage that, if we did not change the approach to education, if we did not upgrade the standards that were to be expected, then we would not see the progress we wanted to see in one small part of America.

"One of the ways we did that was to form alliances with private business. I remember very well how we persuaded the leaders of the most important businesses in that state, that included some of the most successful businesses anywhere in the United States, that their future economic prosperity and the stability of their society depended on education.

"I was serving at that time on the board of the corporation Wal-Mart; and Sam Walton, who at that time was the richest man in the world, with his family became utterly convinced, as many of you who are business leaders in Morocco have been convinced, that his bottom line, his future profits, depended on an educated workforce. And he had to make a commitment to bringing that about.

"Well, there is much evidence that progress is being made in my country, but it is also difficult, and we have a long way to go to ensure that our

public education system provides the best possible education to every child, boy and girl, rich and poor, black, white and brown.

"So, I come with some sense of the challenge you face. And I believe that your challenge, or course, is much greater than the one we face in the United States. You have a widely dispersed population, in some very difficult terrain to reach; and so you, in a way, have to be even more creative than we have had to be to deal with our educational problems.

"The very first stop that I made when I came to Morocco was in a small school in a village outside of Er-Rachidia -- where I spoke to a young girl about her aspirations for her future. `My dream is to become a doctor,' she said.

"That simple statement echoed the dreams and voices of millions of girls and boys around the world. Her father was sitting next to her, and he told us that he had nine children, and none of them yet had been able to finish school.

"I'm illiterate," he said, "but I want a better life for my children." And he hoped that the young girl sitting next to him would be able to fulfill her dream. That is really why we are gathered: to equip all of Morocco's citizens and, indeed, the world's citizens with the tools they need to make better futures for themselves.

"As I have traveled around the world, I have met with many government officials, private business leaders, and those who work in the non-governmental sector, who have banded together to try to improve education. My husband has a saying that he started speaking many years ago -- that in the future what you earn will depend on what you learn. And no matter what the stage of development of any country might be today, that is a true statement. Some countries have further to go than others, but everyone must recognize that the globalization of the international economy means that forces are at work that will leave no society untouched. And the goal must be to educate people to be flexible and able to learn and keep learning as they go through their work lives.

"We also know from research done by the World Bank and others that educating girls is the single best development investment a nation can make because, when we educate a girl, we improve her health and the health of her family. We make it possible for her to earn income to supplement a family's income.

"We see that, not only do we improve health and decrease poverty, we also create leaders, leaders in families and communities.

"There's a wonderful phrase that I've heard, that mothers are schools, and we know that an educated mother is the single biggest determinant as to whether a child will be educated; and so when we educate a girl, we are not only educating that one student, we are educating many others who will be touched, by her in the future.

"Now, how do we increase the enrollment of girls throughout the world? Well, first, you have to set that as a goal; and I know that Morocco has accomplished a great deal. Primary school enrollment has increased by fifty percent since 1960. Yet, I also know that you've set some new goals. In the last 12 months -- I want to congratulate you for enrolling far more first graders than last year; and even more impressive to me, you have dramatically increased the number of girls in rural communities who now have the opportunity to go to school -- in just one year.

"I know that His Majesty King Hassan II has underscored his commitment by creating a new education commission to explore ways of providing greater educational opportunities for Moroccan people in the twenty-first century. I have seen in other gatherings like this, in other countries, the fruit of such labors. Many different plans have been tried to reach rural girls.

"I have visited schools in rural areas, in countries like Bangladesh which has also many problems of illiteracy; and (I have noted) the fact that many girls do not stay in school even if they start. There I saw some experiments with communities being able to provide, through the government, scholarships for primary school and secondary school, and even, in some communities, food commodities so that the family would not suffer from the loss of the labor of a daughter.

"In Uganda, where the president there has committed himself to universal primary education, I've been in classrooms that for the first time ever have the same number of girls as boys. Because girls' families are being urged to send them to school to help rebuild that country after the terrible troubles it endured in the 1980's.

"I've also seen private businesses in countries starting schools in villages or in poor urban neighborhoods, supplementing what the government has been able to provide. I understand that, this afternoon, you'll be hearing about some of the progress that is being made in Guatemala, where that government is trying to close the education-gap between the indigenous, native population -- the Mayan Indians -- and those who are more privileged, in the urban areas.

"When I visited Guatemala last year, I met some of the students who are benefiting from the government's new program, young girls who have

been given scholarships so that they can buy the books and the uniforms that they need -- and, also, so that there is a little money left over so that the family can keep an income coming in that they may have lost because the girl is no longer working in the fields or selling fruit in the market place.

"Now, those are just a couple of the examples that I have seen and learned about around the world. There are success stories in Morocco, and in every country; but clearly there is a huge gap that is getting bigger. In many countries, the proportion of people in the population that are under twenty-one is anywhere from thirty to fifty percent. If those young men and women are not educated, as the economy continues to expand through technology, and information technology in particular, they will not find a place in the workforce. They will be unemployed.

"They will be idle, and they will cause social and political problems for every society. "I was very pleased when I visited Tesselmante and saw first-hand some of the ways that people in Morocco are coming together to deal with the difficult issue of delivering education in some of your remote rural areas. They had started a class, not only for girls, but also for young women and older women.

"Because one of the problems is that, if a girl does not start primary school on time, because perhaps her family cannot afford to send her or they are not yet ready to send her, then if she tries to enter the formal education system at an older age, the school does not want her in the classrooms with the younger children, and there is no place for her. So, many young women who would otherwise want to be educated, here and elsewhere around the world, are not able to enter the formal education system after the time of the usual entry of around six, seven, or eight, whatever it is, has passed.

"In this classroom, however, there were girls and women of all ages; and the two teachers were the only two girls who had graduated from primary school. Any nation would be proud to have these two young women. They handled themselves with great poise as they conducted the class in front of me and the entourage that was with me; and I could see on the faces of the girls and women their excitement and their eagerness to please those two young teachers.

"As I talked with the students and the teachers, and later with some of the parents, I realized that this initiative came out of the energy that was created by the beginning of a women's association in the village. And that was helped by a foundation, our USAID, and the Moroccan government coming together to help start a women's association so that the women could have some say over what they needed in their village. And they

needed things like better cooking stoves that used less wood, that would cut the time that they spend looking for firewood; they needed a good water system; and they needed education. In every area, progress has been made because of the partnership that I saw in action. That is really the goal that many people around the world now see as the achievable way of creating educational opportunity.

"It is very difficult for any national government, in a centralized way, to reach out and cover a country that is as diverse as this one is. It will take the national government, the Ministry of Education, the private sector, and the not-for-profit sector, working together as I saw at Tasslemante, to create opportunities for people to seek out and achieve these goals on their own. If that occurs, then there is the need for more teacher training and teacher education because there have to be teachers for all these new educational initiatives.

"And the teachers themselves have to be trained differently in today's world. They have to understand that they are not just teaching by rote memorization, because that is no longer adequate for the challenges of the future. They have to understand that their real goal is to teach people how to learn throughout their lives: how to read to find useful information, how to write, how to acquire the kind of knowledge and skills that will be available to them across the lifetime.

"I met a teacher who had been through a training program and was deeply committed. She returned to her village to set up a school and, with the help of the local representative of the Ministry of Education, was given permission to set up an experimental literacy-training program. On the first day of the training, only two women showed up; but, by the fourth day, there were 80 participants eagerly lined up for their literacy class. Today, these women can read and write in Arabic, and do simple math.

"And, maybe most importantly of all, they began bringing their daughters with them. So it will take time; it will take some experimentation; and it will take flexibility and decentralization in order for this partnership you are discussing today to work.

"I have thought about some of the issues that you confront; and they are quite significant challenges; but I am convinced that, with a gathering like this, with the energy and resources represented here, there is no reason why Morocco cannot continue to make the impressive gains that you have demonstrated in the last year.

"I've also heard about how Wafabank is working to strengthen education at a small school in Casablanca. I would urge other businesses to adopt a

school, to adopt a village, to be willing to have your resources, and even your employees, work with people, work with parents, work with women's associations, to understand how best to organize themselves in order to proceed with an educational effort.

"There's also the great need to make sure that, as you proceed, you are not discouraged by mistakes or setbacks. There is no simple formula or easy answer about how to overcome the educational gap that exists here and elsewhere. I know that, for every company that makes a commitment in Morocco, you will be rewarded by what you learn about what happens in the lives of many ordinary citizens. I understand that Wafabank's vision is for every company in Morocco to eventually sponsor a school and contribute resources and expertise. Well, I think that is a very worthy goal.

"Where I have seen in my own country, in some of the most distressed neighborhoods in America, companies that have adopted a school, change occurs. All of a sudden the walls get painted, the outdated schoolbooks are replaced by the ones that need to be in the classroom, and many of the people working in the businesses are willing to he tutors and support teachers in order to improve the atmosphere for learning.

"This cooperation is showing results everywhere. In India, the Industrial Credit and Investment Corporation is partnering with the local government, the community, and an international donor to set up 1700 preschool centers. In Uganda, an agricultural company is contributing seeds to a school district to establish school gardens, so that the children can have something to eat during the school clay.

"In Guatemala, coffee producers are administering a government program that currently supports thousands of scholarships for girls in over 2600 schools. In Malawi, a South African publishing house is printing supplementary school materials for the students there. I saw and heard when I was in Egypt about the business community's commitment to underwrite the construction costs of more than fifty girls' schools; and, here in Morocco, the Moroccan Bank for External Commerce has plans to build 100 schools in rural areas.

"There are many other examples of good corporate citizenship that we could discuss today. Businesses can sponsor scholarships, mentor students, build schools, or build protecting walls around schools. I've also heard first-hand that many families do not let their girls go to school because there are no adequate restroom facilities. That's an issue that businesses could also take on -- constructing such facilities.

"I've also heard that many girls cannot go to school because the school is

too far from their home in their families' eyes; they don't want their girls walking home by themselves, coming home after dark, so they just don't go to school. There might very well be ways to improve transportation or provide transportation that would permit such girls to come and go from school.

"And, finally, in listening to the girls, and the men and women in this country who are committed to girls' education, I think that one idea that should be looked at is boarding schools for girls, that are all female-staffed, safe places, where girls can attend Monday through Friday as they advance in their education; and, perhaps, some of the brightest and most capable girls could be identified for such an effort.

"There are many more, creative ideas that I'm sure you know of and have already discussed; but the real issue is what will we do after this conference. Sometimes, conferences don't have any follow-up. People come together with energy and enthusiasm; but, then, somehow it just never gets implemented into action. Well, we are here today in part because the minister of education attended a conference that sparked his commitment, and his understanding of what was happening around the world. If this conference has the same effect, than I am confident there will be great strides made in education, in general, and in educating girls, in particular.

"I have often heard that knowledge is like water and air. Well, it is true, especially today; and it will be more true in the future. In the twenty-first century that we are about to enter in a brief time from now we have to have an educated citizenry and an educated work force. That is a great challenge that can be met. If a nation harnesses its commitment with resources, and energy, and if individuals, both in the public and the private sector, take this on a mission.

"I'm often reminded as I visit schools and talk with teachers arid meet with students like the young girl that I met, that every child has the spark of god within him or her. Every child has dreams; some may not express it well, and some may not even feel they have a right to a dream. But every child, boy and girl, is a gift from God. If we do our work in treasuring these gifts, then we will have fulfilled the most essential of our human responsibilities to nurture the next generation. To make life better for our children and our grandchildren. One only needs to turn on the television news today to see how much strife and conflict exists in this world. We may not be able to end it everywhere, but we can make a very strong commitment to ending the deprivation and the feelings that too often stalk a country when people don't think they have a future of hope.

"Education is one of those gifts that you are now going to be given in increasing numbers to thousands and thousands of the Moroccan children who will be able to take their rightful place in helping to build a stronger nation for the next century.

"Thank you very much."

ADDRESS BY FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
CONGRESS PALACE
TUNIS, TUNISIA
MARCH 26, 1999

Thank you very much for inviting me to address this important gathering, and I want to thank Madame Ben Ali for her very strong statement and her commitment to making the words of laws that mandate equality true in the lives of people.

She and I just came from visiting a village that has just received new housing, through the National Solidarity Fund, 2626, and I was very impressed by what I saw, especially the joy on the faces of the men and women. And I asked one woman, who was cooking her very first meal in her home, how she felt, and she was overcome with emotion. And I also learned that the house will be held jointly in the names of both husband and wife.

I am grateful for this opportunity and wish to thank President and Madame Ben Ali for their hospitality and for their gracious welcome. I also want to thank the Minister of State for Women and Family, Madame Zarouk, for her work. And I want to thank our hosts, Madame Kefi and the Tunisian National Women's Union, and Madame Bou Aziz and the Women's Research Studies and Documentation Center. And I want to welcome all of the women who have come to Tunisia, as I have, from Morocco, Algeria, Mauritania, and Egypt for this important conference.

I am delighted to have this chance to visit Tunisia. Tunisia has been an ally of the United States for more than 200 years. We have been through good times, where we have celebrated, including your independence. And we have weathered some challenging times as well. But our bonds of friendship and partnership remain very strong, and I wanted to, on behalf of my husband, the President, and the American people, do what I can in my short visit to strengthen the bonds between our nations, and to see for myself, firsthand, the progress that is being made in Tunisia, and especially the progress on behalf of women and women's rights, which is a model, not just for the Arab world, but a model for the entire world.

Americans have learned about Tunisia over the years, but one event that made an impression on a number of American women, and introduced Americans to the history of the Tunisian women's struggle, came in the form of a movie that was distributed to quite a bit of acclaim over the last five years. When people watched the movie "Silences of the Palace," they saw the challenges and the terrible difficulties faced by generations of women before Tunisia won independence, before women won their legal rights. Living with her mother, virtually enslaved in a palace, a teenage girl was taught that it was better not to know who her father is, let alone anything else. She says in that film, "in the palace, we were taught one rule, silence."

Silence has been a burden that women have suffered under for millennia throughout the world. I am told that American women, when they saw the film, wept and identified with the struggle of the Tunisian women. Not just because their hearts went out to the Tunisian women, but because they, like women everywhere, identified so closely with the Tunisian women's struggle for equality, identified with the feeling one has to be discriminated against because you were born a girl, identified with being told "keep your dreams and thoughts to yourself, keep them locked up in silence." What is so amazing and wonderful to behold is that the silence has been broken in Tunisia. The voices of women have been raised from barely a whisper to a loud shout of pleasure, as I heard today in the village I visited. Those voices have been raised with the tools and the skills that all people, including women, need to have in the world today -- health care and family planning, education and economic opportunity -- and they have been raised because the mothers and the grandmothers and, yes, some of the fathers and the grandfathers knew, that it was time for the silence to end.

Every time a woman in this country, or any country, breaks a new barrier, or as we talk about it in the United States, breaks through the glass ceiling that can't always be seen but which keeps women down and in their place, we can give thanks to the courageous mothers of Tunisia, the unsung heroines who inspired a generation of successful women. They had been told they couldn't have health care or education or jobs, but they struggled and sacrificed so their daughters could. Their dreams became their daughters' reality. Their silence gave way to their daughters' voices.

I was told about a young Tunisian widow who many years ago was left to care for six daughters, ranging in age from three to 12. Determined to give them a better life, she did something that was unthinkable at the time -- she left the olive grove and set up a carpet weaving business. Her neighbors were shocked by her behavior. "What will become of your daughters?" they asked. But she persevered, withstanding taunts and scorn, working hard and inspiring her daughters to do the same. And what became of those daughters? All six of them were educated in universities and given chances and choices their mother never had. One is a Tunisian diplomat, one is a high-ranking civil servant, one is a painter, one is a journalist, one is a mother who stays home with her children, and the one I met yesterday is the director of a nongovernmental organization in Tunis. I know that we could fill this great hall with similar stories. Stories of mothers who sacrificed and worked, who often had to scurry home to the market in back alleys, so that they could avoid being seen. But today, you are the results of their work and their sacrifice. As I look out and see the faces of all these Tunisian women, I want to give a salute and a word of thanks to the mothers who helped them find their way here.

Breaking the silence, raising the voices, the vital voices, of women is a challenge that faces women everywhere. And we all need to work together to bring that voice of women out into the open to be heard. Four years ago, as Madame Ben Ali told us, 180 countries gathered in Beijing to bring out the issues affecting women into the open. Just as I look out at this crowd today, I looked out at that crowd then. The delegates wore different clothing, spoke different languages, came from very different communities. But

in one voice they proclaimed for all to hear that women's rights are human rights and human rights are women's rights. Since then I have been surprised by the number of people who have asked me what I meant when I said that.

I remember being on a call-in radio show, sponsored by the Voice of America, and one male caller, from the Middle East, called in to ask me a question. He asked me, "What did you mean when you said 'women's rights were human rights.'" And I asked him to close his eyes for a second and think about all the rights that he, as a man, had and took for granted -- the right to education, the right to health care, the right to live free from violence in one's home or walking on the street, the right to be treated with dignity and to express one's feelings, to be heard; the right, in a word, to be fully human. Those are the rights that women want.

Now every man does not make the same choices with his rights, as every other man, and neither will, and should, every woman. But to be recognized as fully human and cloaked in the rights of humanity means that women, like men, will be able to make the choices that they choose to make, that they consider to be right for themselves.

In the years since the Beijing Conference, we have seen the circle of human dignity expand, through this region and through the world. In Mauritania, attendance in elementary schools has dramatically increased for girls; in Morocco, the government has created an action plan to address women's issues, ranging from legal protections to social security. In my recent visit to Cairo, I have heard quite a bit about what is going on with Egyptian women. And I was privileged to visit a project "New Horizons" that is giving girls a chance, a voice, by teaching them life skills and helping them tackle tough issues, like early marriages, the environment, and education. But it wasn't just for the young girls that I saw at "New Horizons" that these changes were being brought about. I talked with one 65-year old woman who had gathered up the courage to take a literacy course herself. And she smiled as she told me how she felt to be able to read the street signs or the newspaper, and how proud her children were of her. Her voice has now been amplified even though she is a lot older than her daughter or granddaughter, but she has realized it is never too late to take advantage of the opportunity to become all that you can be, to live up to your own God-given potential.

Yesterday, here in Tunis, I visited the ENDA Center and in different rooms I met women who were learning skills that would enable them to make earn incomes and better support themselves and their families. They are making clothing, beautiful bridal costumes, that would then be rented or sold so that other women could enjoy that very special time in their lives; making colored rugs and other items that could be sold in the marketplace. I met a group of entrepreneurs who had received micro-credit loans that had allowed them to expand their businesses. A fashion designer, who is making those beautiful bridal dresses, explained she had gone from receiving a small loan and working by herself to receiving increasingly large loans so that now she could employ 20 people. She was making it possible for other women to find their voices as well.

The Director of ENDA told me that "We are learning that the poor are bankable." And I have seen that across the world, how with a small loan and a big idea, people, particularly women, can achieve dignity and self-sufficiency. And I am always proud to say, as I am here in Tunis, that when women receive those loans, poor women with no collateral, but who have the working ethic, that they are willing to work hard to make something of themselves, they repay those loans at a rate of 97 or 98 percent. There are many, many male-run businesses that do not return their loans at 97 or 98 percent in the world today.

I am pleased to announce that the United States Agency for International Development will be sending ENDA representatives to a micro-enterprise training course, in the United States, at the end of June, because our government recognizes that one of the best ways we can help to alleviate poverty around the world is to encourage that more poor people be given means to lift themselves up out of poverty. I am sure you know that in every culture there is a variation on a saying that if you really want to help a poor person, don't just give them a fish, teach them how to fish. And what we are doing through micro-credit is teaching people to take better care of themselves by giving them the tools to increase their own incomes.

We are also seeing a lot of progress since Beijing around the world in enabling people to be full citizens in democracies. In Senegal, the first time I visited there a few years ago, I went to a village that was learning about democracy, both the men and the women. They were being taught how to debate issues, how to vote on issues, how to create changes by talking and discussing and not arguing and fighting, but instead learning how to be citizens in a democracy, learning how to compromise. They started talking about the practice of female circumcision. That conversation led to a vote in that village, and that vote led to the banning of FGM in that village. And when they had voted to ban that ancient practice, they knew they were doing it because they themselves had decided to do it. Not that a law had been passed and they had been ordered to do it, but they had learned about health, they had learned about the risks to girls and women from this practice and they themselves, through democracy, had voted to end it.

After their vote, two older men in the village began to walk from village to village, talking with others about what they had done. And they had studied the Koran and they pointed out there was nothing in the Koran, there was no religious basis for the practice. And so, slowly but surely through this process of democratic discussion, one village after another voted to end the practice. And then finally a large group of villages petitioned the government, and just last year Senegal passed a law outlawing FGM for the entire country.

Now that started from a very small village that was learning how to practice democracy. And so we see these changes that are slowly but surely sweeping the globe, and yet despite progress on this and other fronts, there are still those who claim that human rights, like women's rights, are a luxury. That they are a product of the West, that they have nothing to do with Africa or Asia, that they are not alienable but alien.

What I think we want to make clear, as we did at Beijing, that human rights are not the product of any single culture or country. They are universal and timeless, they are found in the writings of Sophocles or Confucius or Ibn Khaldoun. There are those who say human rights will undermine prosperity and compromise stability, but one only has to look at Tunisia to see that is not true when it comes to women's rights.

There are those who practice their religions and claim that human rights and religious beliefs are incompatible. I have heard this argument, I have heard it from people who want to keep other people silent. And I think we must, with our voices say clearly that nothing debases religion more than using it as a weapon of intolerance or as a means of stripping others of their dignity and freedom. The belief that we should treat one another, men and women alike, with respect as we would treat our neighbor, lies at the core of all the major faiths of the world. And the reason we want these rights is not just to be part of a political movement, it is so that we can be respected as members of families and communities, that we can help build countries that we are proud of.

I have heard many references, in just the short time I have been in Tunisia, to the personal status code and the family status code and what a wonderful gift that code was. But there are some even in Tunisia who worry that the protections and rights of that code could be taken away or could be usurped. And we cannot permit that to happen. This generation must guard their rights as jealously as their mothers and grandmothers fought for them. And at this point in history, making it clear that women's rights are not a passing fad, that they are here to stay, that they are imbedded in who we are, is one of the challenges we face. And we do it not just for those of us fortunate enough to have good educations, to have families that supported our desire to be educated, who have affluence, who have traveled to other countries. We do it on behalf of all women.

We must use our voices to speak up for women in this region and around the world who are still suffering in silence. If this troubled 20th century taught us anything, it is that when the humanity of one of us is questioned the humanity of all of us is questioned as well. We have to speak out whenever laws or customs treat women like second-class citizens, when women are blocked from inheriting property, having custody of their children, choosing who they wish to marry, we must speak out.

We must speak out to protect women from untold violence in and out of the house. There can be no silence when rape is used as a weapon of war, or child soldiers kidnaped from their homes are used as human shields. We must speak out when women are stopped from organizing NGOs, from freely expressing their views, or participating in the political process. We must speak out when women who need health care are denied. Six hundred thousand women die during childbirth each year. Most of them from causes that could have been prevented. Many women are certainly doing equal work but not receiving equal pay. Some are still told by their parents that their brothers but not their sisters can go to school. And some are still shamed into avoiding seeking help for family planning and putting their own health and their children's health. ???

Women have always worked side-by-side with men. I can remember driving through Sub-Saharan Africa with some experts. And I saw women working in the fields, women working in the marketplace, women carrying firewood on their backs, women carrying water on their heads. And I said look at what all of these women are doing to keep this economy going. And an expert said to me, "But their work is not part of the economy. Their work is part of the informal economy, it does not count." But if every woman who worked both inside and outside the home stopped working, the entire world would stop working as well. So women's work must be respected wherever it occurs. And women must be given the respect and dignity they deserve for the work that they do.

And we also must speak out against the unspeakable. We must speak up for the women and people of Algeria, who are victims of a war that is civil in name only. Over the past seven years, tens of thousands of people have been brutally killed, children, elderly, teachers, journalists, peasants, people from every walk of life. And more often than not, those savagely murdered were women.

We hear stories of girls whose legs were burned with acid because someone deemed their skirts too short. We hear stories of young women who were raped and pressed into slavery, women whose throats were slit and bodies thrown into a well. Those who perpetrate these hateful deeds pervert the great religion in whose name they claim to act. The Algerian peoples' rallying cry has become "Seven years are enough." That must become our cry as well. It is time for the political process to include all who oppose the use of violence and it is time for the violence to end so that Algerians can once again be free to live in peace and in safety in their homes, on their streets, and in their country.

We also must speak up for the women of Afghanistan who are being brutalized by the Taliban, once again in the name, the misused name, of religion. There are many stories coming out of Afghanistan. Women doctors no longer permitted to practice medie long war that has been

supporters of their families. They are begging on the streets to feed their children because they are forbidden to work to earn income to buy the food their children need. Think of the young girl sitting at home because her school doors have been slammed shut. Think of the woman whose health care has all but vanished, victim of a terrible dilemma in which women cannot be treated by male doctors, and the government has banned all female doctors.

The fight for human rights and women's rights must be waged not only in places like Algeria and Afghanistan, it must be waged in every land and in every home where rights are under assault both big and small. We know it is no easy task in my own country, or any country, to make human rights a reality. It is not done when a law is passed or a constitution drafted. It is a never ending daily struggle to live up to our ideals. In my own country it has taken most of our 223 years, some of them bloody, few of them easy, to

extend the benefits of citizenship to all Americans. We went from a very small group of white, property-owning men, who had citizenship, and gradually expanded it after the Civil War to black men.

And then, finally, a year after my own mother was born, to women. So we know that it takes time, but one must be vigilant and constantly challenging anyone or any institution that would take away the rights that have already been achieved. Because rights don't just happen in law, they don't just happen on paper. It is not just the government that enforces rights. A law can be passed banning a practice, but unless peoples' hearts and minds change, that law does not have any meaning.

I spoke yesterday with an accomplished professional woman here in Tunisia who said what I have heard from women in many places around the world. She is a leader in her field. She has always thought of herself as emancipated and modern. But she finds herself raising her children, a daughter and a son, sometimes talking to her daughter differently than she talks to her son. She finds herself telling her son not to cry, to be a man; she finds herself telling her daughter, "don't be quite so pushy"; she finds herself telling her daughter what her own illiterate mother told her. And she stopped and asked herself, "Have I made the transition to freedom and equality in my own mind, even though I am an accomplished professional, if I am not passing those lessons of the heart and the mind on to my daughter and my son." Holding tradition is an important part of the human experience, but we know that there are some traditions we have to give up if we expect to create for the next generation a world in which more young men and women are free to choose their own destinies.

When we talk about women's rights, we know that we have a lot of work that will never end, and part of that work must be done by every women who now enjoys the rights that have been fought for and gained here in Tunisia and elsewhere. The struggle to safeguard human rights happens in the millions of decisions and words that are spoken and taken every day. It happens when we talk with our children. It happens when we tuck them into bed at night. It happens when we talk with our husbands. It happens when we talk with our neighbors. The women in the Muslin and Arab world have long been in the forefront of battles to make sure that we live our lives with greater rights and dignity.

Algerian women were among the leaders of their nation's tenacious fight for independence. In the war ravaged area that we, as adherents to the great monotheistic religions, call one of our holy lands, Palestinian and Israeli women have been working together courageously to help find ways to resolve conflict and ensure a lasting peace.

And here in Tunisia, not only did your mothers and your grandmothers work for the independence of your country, you have continued that work to make equality and freedom live in the hearts and the minds.

I like what I read from a Tunisian poet, named Imena Said, who once wrote: "Host of the

earth, we have crossed the centuries. With behind us the breath of the ancients, time also breaks us and destroys the archives of silence."

That theme of silence, as it affects the poor and the oppressed everywhere, and as it affects particularly women's voices, is one that I think we have to continue to raise. When the archives of silence have been destroyed, it will be because of women like you and those who came before and who will follow you. The leaders who wrote the laws, the mothers and fathers who believed in their daughters, who educated them, who sacrificed for them. When the archives of silence have been destroyed, it will be because you raised your voices in Tunisia, and around the region, and throughout the world so that the next generation of girls will not know silence, but will only know their own vital voice and will seek to find ways that their voices can be realized.

The vital voices of women in Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco, Mauritania, everywhere that women live and work are breaking through the silence. And, hopefully, the archives of silence will only be a distant memory as we move into this new century.

Thank you for the work that you are doing. Thank you for the example you are setting. I hope to continue to learn more about the work and the sacrifice that the women in the Arab world are making on behalf of themselves, their daughters, and their sons.

Thank you. Aid Mabrouk!

STATEMENT BY FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
USAID HOUSING PROJECT
MARRAKECH, MOROCCO
MARCH 30, 1999

Thank you for this warm welcome. I feel very pleased to be here to celebrate the partnership between the American and Moroccan people, a partnership that's improving the everyday life of families and children by turning temporary shelters into permanent family homes. I'm pleased to be joined by so many government and community leaders for this community event. I'm pleased to be joined by the Minister of Regional Planning, Environment, Urban Development, and Housing; and also the Minister of Housing; representatives of the Moroccan Shelter Upgrading Agency; and the Wali of Marrakech and the Governor; and I'm pleased that representatives from USAID are here with us as well.

I want to commend the Government of Morocco for making it possible for those living in previously unauthorized settlements to claim these homes publicly. This project is the work of many people. I'm very pleased that among those who have helped is my own country through USAID working with the Urban Environment Credit Program. That program provides the Moroccan government with loan guarantees to borrow from American private investors which allows the National Shelter Upgrading Agency to carry out the work which I've seen in this community.

But most of all I want to thank and recognize the people here in Koudia who through their own work made these changes possible. This program has been successful because the Moroccan Government doesn't give families money to build houses, instead it encourages families to save their money to build their own homes. Sometimes it may even take years, but when a family has finished building their own home, they know they've made a great investment in the future. The program also requires families and neighbors to work together. Everyone has to agree about the new housing to be built and about the basic services such as sewer lines to be installed. All the neighbors have to agree to pay for their services before any work in the community can be done.

This is a very good model, not only for Morocco, but for the entire world. Therefore, in support of the work that the Moroccan Government is doing with the people, I am pleased to announce that USAID is making available loan guarantees totaling 7.8 million U.S. dollars this year for Morocco. These funds will enable His Majesty's government to continue the work we see here today. But I also want to be sure that the people here know that you are doing the real work, and that you are by your cooperation making it possible for more houses and more services to be prepared here. Neighbors have to help neighbors. Now I'm very privileged to share a special moment with some of the people here today. I will be honored to present some of the people with new building permits and other documents which will enable them to start a new life in their homes.

You have done a great service by showing how people, if given some help, can work to better their own lives and the lives of their children. And that is, after all, what each of us should be working for, to build a better peaceful world for our children. Thank you.