

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

U.S. SUBMISSION OF INFORMATION RELATING TO THE QUESTIONNAIRE TO GOVERNMENTS ON IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BEIJING PLATFORM FOR ACTION AND THE OUTCOME OF THE TWENTY-THIRD SPECIAL SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

PART ONE. OVERVIEW OF ACHIEVEMENTS AND CHALLENGES IN PROMOTING GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

The United States remains strongly committed to promoting gender equality and women's empowerment, both domestically and internationally. In the 10 years since the 1995 Beijing Conference on Women, the United States has made significant progress towards implementing many areas of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (PfA) and the Beijing+5 Political Declaration and Outcome Document. The following activities are examples of U.S. programs that are yielding positive, tangible results and that correspond to critical areas of concern in the Beijing PfA.

Part Two of this questionnaire describes these U.S. activities in greater detail.

Efforts to Combat Poverty. The Millennium Challenge Account (MCA) is a new development assistance initiative of President Bush that aims to promote economic growth and reduce poverty in targeted developing countries that "govern justly, invest in their people, and encourage economic freedom." This program -- with its focus on initiatives to promote education, health, freedom, economic reform, and justice -- will benefit women, who often lack the skills and resources necessary to better their own lives. Important mechanisms for reducing poverty and empowering women economically seek to ensure that women have equal and secure rights to own and inherit property, and to establish their own microenterprises. The new Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI) specifically includes a pillar to advance economic opportunities for women.

Domestically, the U.S. Government has provided additional funds for child-care services for low-income working mothers, Head Start programs to get pre-school age children ready to learn, and training that moves the poor off welfare and into the workforce with skills and dignity. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) has also increased efforts to collect child support payments and to promote responsible fatherhood and healthy, stable marriages.

Access to Education and Training. Through the State Department's Middle East Partnership Initiative, the U.S. Government works together with the private sector and civil society to expand education and training opportunities for women in the Middle East. U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) programs promote basic education for children in many countries, with a special emphasis on improving opportunities for girls, women, and other underserved and disadvantaged populations. The State Department, which administers the International Visitors Program and Fulbright grants, included Iraqi women in the first group of Iraqi Fulbright recipients.

Domestically, the United States offers assistance for higher education; promotes science and engineering careers for girls in school; expands opportunities for all student athletes; increases educational options for low-income families; and has boosted early childhood education through Head Start, child care and pre-kindergarten programs, which are implementing President Bush's *Good Start, Grow Smart* early learning initiative.

The data show that across educational levels, females are now doing as well as or better than males in many of the indicators of educational attainment in the United States, and that the large gaps in educational attainment that once existed between men and women have significantly decreased or been eliminated altogether. U.S. women have earned more than half of all bachelor's degrees every year since 1982, and have even surpassed men in some fields that were once male-dominated. Nevertheless, there are areas in both elementary/secondary and postsecondary education in which differences persist and are being addressed.

Access to Health Care. To combat HIV/AIDS around the world, President Bush launched his five-year, \$15 billion Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief. While the Plan concentrates on 15 focus countries in Africa, the Caribbean, and Southeast Asia that represent more than one-half of the world's infections, it also encompasses bilateral programs in almost 100 other countries; includes the largest-single contribution to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria; and provides support to initiatives to prevent and treat mother-to-child transmission of the virus.

The U.S. Government funds programs of the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), and other international organizations to improve access to health care including immunizations and reproductive health care, such as the polio eradication campaign (to which the United States is the largest donor), and efforts to expand childhood immunizations and improve age-appropriate reproductive health care. Through USAID, the United States also sponsors programs to reduce maternal mortality. The U.S. Department of State funds health care and related services for refugees, with particular attention to the needs of women, children, and internally displaced persons (IDPs) in certain geographic locations. The bulk of health assistance for IDPs comes from USAID's Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance. The U.S.-Afghan Women's Council Health Advisory Committee matches public and private sector resources with health needs on the ground for Afghan women and children.

Domestic efforts on women's health include expanding prescription drug benefits for senior citizens and the disabled; providing tax-free health savings accounts; creating association health plans; increased awareness and screening of diseases that particularly affect women and an aggressive research agenda into those diseases; expanded pre-natal coverage for low-income women and their children; and food and nutrition assistance to low-income families.

Violence against Women (VAW). During his fall 2003 United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) address, President Bush called attention to trafficking in persons (TIP), a form of modern-day slavery, and launched a \$50 million anti-trafficking initiative for which eight recipient countries have recently been named. U.S. anti-trafficking initiatives include important anti-trafficking legislation (the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000, TVPA, and the Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act of December 2003, TVPRA); programs in

120 countries; training for both domestic and international personnel; more than \$70 million in international anti-trafficking funding in the last year; and releasing the annual State Department *Trafficking in Persons Report*. At the May 2003 UN Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, the United States sponsored a resolution against human trafficking. The United States has also launched a major human trafficking public awareness campaign within the United States through HHS. The United States has worked to eliminate female genital mutilation (FGM) and funded programs to combat domestic violence both abroad and at home.

Domestic programs include U.S. Department of State and U.S. Department of Justice programs; a domestic violence hotline, Family Justice Centers; an increased number of prosecutions in the past two fiscal years; and developing a national protocol for sexual assault forensic exams.

Women in Conflict Situations. The United States seeks to protect women in conflict situations around the world, for example through assistance to the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). Over the past four years, the Department of State's Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM) has funded the ICRC's Women and War project, which addresses the specific protection, health, and assistance needs of women in situations of armed conflict. In addition, PRM addresses the unique needs of refugee women worldwide through support for the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and other international organizations. Its objectives are to ensure that refugee women participate equitably in decision-making in all areas of refugee life, and that protection and gender-sensitive approaches are applied to every stage of program development and implementation.

In Afghanistan, the United States is funding over 200 projects in support of education, access to health care, strengthening civil society, women's political participation, and creating economic opportunities. We have allocated funds for constructing Women's Resource Centers throughout the country, in cooperation with the Afghan Ministry of Women's Affairs. The U.S.-Afghan Women's Council promotes public-private partnerships between U.S. and Afghan institutions.

In Iraq, the Iraqi Women's Democracy Initiative provides training in leadership skills and in organizing political activities, and the new U.S.-Iraqi Women's Network is modeled after the U.S.-Afghan Women's Council in facilitating public-private partnerships. "Women Leading Women in Peace" is a public-private partnership to help women in five designated post-conflict countries.

For more information on programs in Afghanistan and Iraq, go to <http://www.state.gov/g/iw/>

Economic empowerment. Since 1988 USAID has committed over \$1.5 billion to support microenterprises around the world. Women own 70 percent of these small businesses. In various UN fora including the UN Commission on the Status of Women, the United States promotes women's right to own and inherit property, a means of reducing poverty as well as empowering women economically. Domestically, President Bush's economic and job creation policies have benefited women business owners by providing them with financing, tax relief, help with retirement savings, and job training.

Power sharing and decision-making. During the fall 2003 UNGA, the United States sponsored a resolution on “Women and Political Participation” that laid out a blueprint for how countries can increase the participation of women in political processes. Programs are underway to encourage women’s political participation in the Middle East. The U.S. Government also funds leadership exchange and training programs to enable more women in newly democratic societies to get involved in the political process. Domestically, President Bush has appointed more women to senior posts in his administration than did previous presidents.

PART TWO. PROGRESS IN IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CRITICAL AREAS OF CONCERN OF THE BEIJING PLATFORM FOR ACTION AND THE FURTHER INITIATIVES AND ACTIONS IDENTIFIED IN THE 23RD SPECIAL SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

This section expands upon U.S. activities that address several critical areas of concern in the Beijing Platform for Action.

Efforts to Combat Poverty

1) Efforts Abroad

- Millennium Challenge Account (MCA). The Millennium Challenge Account is an initiative aimed at achieving economic growth and reducing poverty in countries that rule justly, invest in their people, and encourage economic freedom. Countries that mistreat women would find it difficult to be eligible for MCA funding. For example, to meet the criteria of ruling justly and investing in their people, countries must advance women's human rights and desist from discriminating against women and girls in education or health. The U.S. Congress provided \$1 billion to the MCA for U.S. Fiscal Year (FY) 2004. President Bush has requested \$2.5 billion for FY 2005, with the aim of reaching his proposed \$5 billion funding level for FY 2006. MCA has selected its first eligible countries. See <http://www.mca.gov/index.shtml> for more information.
- Microcredit programs. U.S. support of microcredit programs is described below under the section on "Economic Empowerment" below.
- Property and Inheritance Rights for Women. The precariousness and ambiguity of women's legal status remains a leading cause of poverty in many parts of the world. Because property rights shape the allocation of resources and decision-making authority, especially in the household, ownership improves women's ability to bargain and gain access to credit, and also motivates women to higher levels of productivity. In negotiations on resolutions in the UNGA (including Resolution 58/142 on "Women and Political Participation" and Resolution 58/147 on "Elimination of Domestic Violence Against Women"), UN Commission on Human Rights, and UN Commission on the Status of Women, the United States has inserted references on property rights for women into various resolutions.

2) Domestic Efforts

- Supporting U.S. Women to Leave Public Assistance. About 90 percent of adults who are receiving cash assistance through the U.S. Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (welfare) program are women. President Bush stands for welfare reforms that provide a helping hand when it is needed, but that also require recipients to move towards independence, gainful employment, and self-sufficiency, and that strengthen marriage. Full-time work participation is the most reliable path to achieving self-sufficiency. In 2002, only 3.4 percent of all households with a full-time year-round worker had incomes below the

poverty threshold. By contrast, 15 percent of families with a working family member who was employed less than full-time year round were poor.

- Child Care for Low-Income Working Mothers. The Bush Administration recognizes that some families, particularly single working mothers who fall into the lower-income bracket, need financial assistance to help provide care for their children while at work. This Administration has been supportive of helping families with day care. However, the Administration also recognizes that many mothers prefer the option of being a stay-at-home mom, believing that this is in the best interest of the child. This is one of the reasons why the Administration has supported a child tax credit. The Administration is continuing the United States' high levels of support for child care. Increased flexibility and rapidly declining welfare caseloads allowed U.S. states to more than triple child care funding between FY 1996 (\$3.6 billion) and 2004 (\$11.6 billion), which will serve an estimated 2.4 million children in 2005.
- Child-Support Enforcement. HHS has significantly strengthened efforts to increase child-support enforcement in the United States, and has proposed further incentives to U.S. states to give more of the past-due child-support payments they collect to mothers and children. Child-support collections hit a record of \$21.2 billion in FY 2003, and served an estimated 16 million child-support cases. The total tax refund offset program collected \$1.5 billion in FY 2003. Of this amount, \$786 million in overdue child support from Federal income tax refund offsets went directly to families, including \$64 million in advanced child tax credit offsets, which benefited more than 700,000 families in FY 2003. In addition, paternity was established or acknowledged for nearly 1.5 million children in 2003.
- The HHS/Administration for Children and Families (ACF) Healthy Marriage Initiative helps couples, who have chosen marriage for themselves, to gain greater access to marriage education, and to acquire skills and knowledge to form and sustain marriages that are mutually enriching, and in which both spouses have a deep respect for each other. President Bush has proposed to dedicate \$240 million dollars of his FY 2005 budget to promoting the formation of healthy families and stable, healthy marriages.

Access to Education and Training

1) Efforts abroad

- Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI). The Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI) began in 2002 and had a budget of \$129 million for FY 2004. One of MEPI's four pillars provides a specific framework and funding for the United States to work with the private sector, civil society, and governments in the region to expand political, economic, and educational opportunities for women. Among MEPI's hallmark projects are regional campaign schools that will provide leadership and organizational training for women who wish to seek regional elective office.

The first program implemented under MEPI was the State Department's Women as Political Leaders International Visitor Program in 2002. A delegation of 50 Arab women political

leaders from the region came to the United States to observe mid-term Congressional elections and receive leadership and advocacy training. See <http://mepi.state.gov/> for more information.

- USAID Programs. USAID promotes basic education around the world for both girls and boys. Improving opportunities for girls, women, and other underserved and disadvantaged populations is a priority for USAID. Twenty USAID mission offices implemented education programs in 2002, with 19 of those aimed towards improving opportunities for women and girls. USAID-funded initiatives have achieved good results throughout Africa, the Middle East, and Latin America. See <http://www.usaid.gov/>
- State Department Programs. The State Department administers various programs that focus on women, including the International Visitors Program and Fulbright grants. Iraqi women were included in the first group of Fulbright recipients from Iraq. See <http://www.exchanges.state.gov/education/>
- President Bush's Africa Education Initiative. The President launched this five-year initiative was launched in August 2002 to provide \$200 million of additional funds to support in teacher training, develop and produce textbooks and learning materials, and provide scholarships for girls across Africa.
- Other. In Ghana nearly two-thirds of the 100 Peace Corps volunteers are teachers in community schools. The Peace Corps is also funding over 200 scholarships for Ghanaian girls to complete secondary school. USAID is very active, funding gender-sensitive programs for teachers, principals, and parents of school-age children and food rations for children who remain in school. The Department of Education is training teachers in information technology and hosting a web portal to link them together online.

2) Domestic Efforts to Improving Educational Opportunities for Women and Girls

- Achievement Data. The data show that across educational levels, females are now doing as well as or better than males in many of the indicators of educational achievement, and that the large gaps in educational attainment that once existed between men and women have significantly decreased or been eliminated altogether. U.S. women have earned more than half of all bachelor's degrees every year since 1982. They have even surpassed men in some fields that were once male-dominated. Nevertheless, there are areas in both elementary / secondary and postsecondary education in which differences persist and are being addressed.
- Domestic Higher Education Assistance. Distributed by the U.S. Government, Pell Grants are designed to help students with financial need to pay for college. The President has requested a record \$12.9 billion to support Pell Grant awards for over 5.3 million students in FY 2005. Since 2001, the number of Pell Grant recipients has grown by more than 1 million. Over the same period, funding for the program has increased by \$4.1 billion, or nearly 50 percent. Women represent 56.4 percent of all undergraduate students, but 63.5 percent of Pell Grant recipients, so a substantial increase in Pell Grant funding will significantly benefit women.

- Promoting Science and Engineering Careers for School-Age Girls. A multi-regional technology program called Girls' E-Mentoring in Science, Engineering and Technology (GEM-SET), sponsored by the Women's Bureau of the U.S. Department of Labor, provides group mentoring for girls between the ages of 13 and 18. GEM-SET connects young women with professional women in the science, engineering and technology professions through a listserv and Web site (www.gem-set.org) in 10 regional offices nationwide.
- Opportunities for Student Athletes. The Bush Administration is committed to assuring there is no discrimination in federally-funded education programs. In 2002, U.S. Secretary of Education Rod Paige created a blue ribbon commission of sports experts and educators to expand Title IX opportunities and to ensure fairness for all college athletes. Pursuant to the recommendations of the Commission, in July 2003 the Department encouraged schools to fully use the flexibility the law offers to expand opportunities for both female and male students.
- Increasing Educational Options to Meet Children's Needs. In March 2004, the U.S. Department of Education announced a proposed regulation that would make it easier for schools to offer -- and for parents to choose -- same-sex classes and schools for students. President Bush's No Child Left Behind Act contains a bipartisan provision that directed the Department of Education to issue guidance to local school districts about how innovative single-sex schools and classes could participate in certain No Child Left Behind programs. Research indicates that single-sex educational programs can produce positive results for some students, and this proposed regulation gives parents and schools the option of providing such programs.
- Early Childhood Education. President Bush is working to ensure that the Head Start pre-kindergarten program achieves the goal of preparing children to succeed in kindergarten and beyond.

The President has proposed that the program focus more clearly on school readiness, and would give U.S. states the opportunity to coordinate Head Start, State pre-kindergarten programs, and child care programs. This would also provide support to working parents, by helping them to secure full-day, full-year care for their children.

Since FY 2001, President Bush has requested \$750 million in new funding for Head Start. In addition, Head Start established a National Reporting System to determine which programs are working and which ones are not, and provided training in early learning to over 50,000 Head Start teachers through a "train-the-trainers" program.

Access to Health Care

1) Efforts abroad.

- HIV/AIDS. The United States, through President Bush's five-year, \$15 billion President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, is committed to a multi-faceted approach to combating the

disease; continuing bilateral programs; and using multilateral approaches like the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria. While the Plan concentrates on 15 focus countries in Africa, the Caribbean, and Southeast Asia that represent more than one-half of the world's infections, it also encompasses bilateral programs in almost 100 other countries. The United States, through the President's Emergency Plan, has currently pledged to the Global Fund \$1.97 billion from the inception of the Fund, the largest-single funding commitment from any source. As part of the President's overall Emergency Plan, efforts to prevent mother-to-child HIV transmission will allow up to one million more women to be treated annually and reduce mother-to-child transmission by 40 percent within five years in target countries.

- HIV/AIDS Research. The HHS/National Institutes of Health (NIH) Office of AIDS Research (OAR) reaffirmed its long-standing commitment to international AIDS research with the *Global AIDS Research Initiative and Strategic Plan*. Recent HHS/NIH-supported projects demonstrated (1) that a steady diet of vitamin supplements worked to reduce symptoms of AIDS in a group of Tanzanian women who stayed with the regimen for more than five years, and (2) a single dose of the nonnucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitor Nevirapine – given to women during labor and followed by a single dose administered to their newborns, at a total cost of approximately \$4 – reduced transmission by half, in clinical trials in Uganda.
- Maternal Health. The United States is committed to ensuring the health of women before, during, and after pregnancy. The Division of Reproductive Health of the HHS/Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) provides USAID with technical assistance in a variety of areas to improve both maternal and child health, including through international reproductive health surveys and refugee reproductive health and reproductive health epidemiology. Much of the research on maternal and child health done domestically also has a positive and direct impact on programs sponsored by the U.S. Government overseas.
- Maternal Mortality. The United States has launched a \$5 million initiative (REACH) to provide health-related accelerated learning and basic literacy training for women and girls in Afghanistan. Training will take place in the Women's Centers supported by the Council and will target provinces with the highest maternal mortality rates such as Ghazni, Baghlan, and Badakhshan. The first class of village midwives from Jalabad will graduate in April 2004, having completed an 18-month long program. This pilot program is being replicated across Afghanistan. For each new midwife, the United States is supporting a lifetime of lives saved.

In August 2004, the Department of Health and Human Services, in cooperation with the U.S.-Afghan Women's Council, launched the Afghan Family Health Book. Designed by LeapFrog Enterprises, the Afghan Family Health Book is an interactive "talking book," to bridge the literacy gap and teach the basics of birthing and raising children and providing families with good health. These books are informative, culturally appropriate, easy to use, portable, and entertaining. Each page contains a descriptive story with audio messages that teach basic health and nutrition information. The book is divided into six major sections covering 19 health topics. Within the stories of each page are over 350 critically important health messages, including such topics as immunization, basic disease prevention,

sanitation, prenatal care, and postpartum care, including breastfeeding and child nutrition. 20,000 books -- 10,000 in Dari, 10,000 in Pashto -- and they are on their way to Kabul.

- Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons. The U.S. Department of State and USAID provide health care for refugees and some internally displaced persons (IDPs) in specific geographic locations. Through international organizations and NGO partners, PRM spends between \$50-\$70 million annually on health programs that target refugees and encompasses primary health care, food and nutrition, clean water and sanitation initiatives, and gender-based violence prevention and response.
- Afghanistan. Access to good education and health care are prerequisites to any progress for Afghan women. Afghanistan has the second highest maternal mortality rate in the world. To help reduce maternal and infant mortality rates, the United States has built hundreds of clinics throughout the country, inoculated millions of children, launched a formal training program for rural midwives, and provided assistance and training to the major maternal hospitals in Kabul. The U.S.-Afghan Women's Council Health Advisory Committee, comprised of leaders in government, medicine, and other health-related fields, matches public and private sector resources with health needs on the ground for Afghan women and children.
- McGovern-Dole Program for School Lunches. Working with other governments, NGOs, and the World Food Program (WFP), the United States leverages food aid to do more than reduce hunger. One hundred twenty million children around the world, most of them girls, do not attend school, in part because of hunger or malnourishment. When schools can provide nutritious meals, children and their parents have more incentive to participate in the education that will be their hope for the future. In countries where education for girls is not inherently valued, international food for education programs feed the minds and bodies of girls who might not otherwise be sent to school. The 2003 McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program provides starving children with nutritious meals as part of their education. The U.S. Congress provided \$100 million in FY 2003: in 38 countries around the world, this program feeds seven million children in their schools.

2) Women's Health in the United States.

- Prescription Drug Benefits. The Bush Administration took an important step for senior and disabled women's health domestically by providing a prescription drug benefit under the Medicare program. This year, seniors are already seeing the benefit of the Medicare Prescription Drug Improvement and Modernization Act of 2003 by saving money through Medicare-approved drug-discount cards. Low-income seniors, many of whom are women, can receive an additional \$600 credit on their cards this year to help them pay for the cost of their medicines. Even better benefits will begin in 2006, when Medicare will offer prescription drug coverage for the first time since the inception of the program in 1965.
- Tax-Free Health Savings Accounts. The Administration established new tax-free savings accounts for individuals and groups who purchase low-premium, high-deductible health plans. These accounts will help families save to pay out-of-pocket for routine medical

expenses and offer tax-deferred means of saving for future healthcare needs. President Bush has further proposed to allow individuals who establish health savings accounts to take a tax deduction for premiums they pay for their low-premium, high-deductible health insurance.

- Association Health Plans. The Bush Administration has proposed increasing access to affordable health insurance for the uninsured and underinsured in America by allowing small businesses to band together in association health plans to negotiate affordable health coverage for their employees and families.
- HIV/AIDS. There are a host of questions that remain unanswered about specific anatomical and physiological characteristics of women and girls that might play a role in transmission, acquisition, or resistance to HIV infection. To this end, HHS/NIH/OAR has eight specific research objectives directed towards improving prevention, treatment, and understanding of HIV/AIDS and its impact on girls and women. Under Title IV of the Ryan White Comprehensive AIDS Resource Emergency Act, HHS recently announced 35 new grants, totaling \$24.1 million, to help America's children, youth, and women with HIV/AIDS and their affected families obtain comprehensive HIV/AIDS care and services.
- Women and Heart Disease. First Lady Laura Bush and the HHS/NIH National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute (NHLBI) have launched a nationwide campaign to raise awareness of the devastating effect of the number-one killer of American women.

-- This important campaign encourages women to learn more about heart health, to lead healthier lives, and to talk with their doctors about their risk for developing heart disease.

-- Created by HHS/NIH/NHLBI, the Red Dress is the national symbol for women and heart disease awareness.

- Increased Screening for Breast and Cervical Cancer. President Bush has increased support for HHS/CDC Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program that helps low-income, uninsured, and underserved U.S. women gain access to lifesaving early detection screening programs for breast and cervical cancers. This program has helped increase mammography use by women aged 50 and older by 36% since the program's inception in 1991.
- Expanded Pre-Natal Coverage. HHS has promulgated a rule that allows U.S. states to consider an unborn child to be a targeted low-income child and therefore eligible for coverage under the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP). This permits states to provide vital prenatal services to promote healthy pregnancies for women and their unborn children who would not otherwise be eligible for coverage.
- Maternal Mortality. To battle maternal mortality, HHS/CDC launched the Safe Mother Initiative. In 2001 HHS and its partners held the first U.S. Summit on Safe Motherhood, which brought together a broad coalition of agencies, organizations, and professionals dedicated to improving maternal health and coordinating actions to make it a national priority. HHS continues to be committed to gathering strong, useful data and conducting innovative research on maternal mortality, and educating and training public and private

organizations, health care providers, communities, and individuals who have a responsibility to make safe motherhood a national priority.

- Research on Menopause. With a rapidly growing senior population, over 16 institutes and centers of HHS/NIH are supporting and conducting research in order to better understand the biology, symptomology, and socio-cultural implications of the menopausal transition. This research is essential in addressing the health concerns of the aging female population.
- Food and Nutrition Assistance. In 2004, President Bush secured \$4.6 billion for the Women, Infants and Children (WIC) program, a record level of funding for this important nutrition safety net that focuses on mothers and their young children, and supports an estimated monthly participation of almost 8 million people.
- Information to Parents and Caregivers. The Bush Administration has provided millions of guides to parents, caregivers, administrators, and policymakers featuring the latest research on health related issues. These include the following:
 - 17.5 million copies in English and Spanish of Healthy Start, Grow Smart, a 13-pamphlet series on infant health care and child development.
 - 900,000 copies of Teaching Our Youngest, an early learning guide for teachers and child care providers.
 - Over 40,000 copies in English and Spanish of A Guide to Early Literacy in Child Care: Learning to Read & Write Begins at Birth, a guide to help parents and caregivers support the development of early literacy skills.
 - Over 5,000 copies of Supporting an Early Learning Framework, an interactive CD-ROM includes over four hours of video, featuring Secretary Thompson and other nationally-known speakers and 15 workshops, over 100 print documents, and over 150 Web links - all organized by themes around literacy and learning, professional development and program coordination.
 - Over 150,000 copies of A Child Becomes a Reader: Birth to Preschool, a guide providing advice for parents of children from birth to preschool on how to support reading development at home, and how to recognize preschool and day care activities that start children on the road to becoming readers.
 - Over 60,000 What Works Briefs for child-care providers that describe research-based practices to support young children's social and emotional development and prevent challenging behaviors.

Violence against Women

1) Initiatives to Battle Trafficking in Persons Worldwide

- Trafficking Victims Protection Act. The Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (TVPA) is a landmark piece of U.S. legislation in the fight against trafficking in persons. It provides protections and assistance for victims of trafficking, enhances Federal criminal laws against traffickers, and increases prevention measures to forestall victims' becoming trafficked in the first place.

Assistance to victims in the United States includes cash assistance, medical care, food stamps, housing, pro bono or low-cost legal services, and services from victims' organizations, including domestic violence and rape crisis centers. Certified victims are protected from removal from the United States: they may be authorized "continued presence" to temporarily remain in the United States if Federal law enforcement determines that they are potential witnesses to trafficking. They may also apply for T non-immigrant status ("T visa"), a status available to victims who have complied with reasonable requests for assistance in investigating or prosecuting acts of trafficking.

The TVPA provided for assistance to foreign countries to deter trafficking; authorized the creation of programs to assist victims; and enhanced cooperative efforts among foreign countries to assist in the reintegration and resettlement of trafficking victims.

More details on various aspects of the Act appear below.

- Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act. The Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act (December 2003) mandated new information campaigns to combat international child sex tourism; refined certain aspects of Federal criminal law; and created a new civil action provision to allow trafficking victims to sue their traffickers in Federal district court in the United States.
- President's \$50 Million Trafficking in Persons Initiative. In his address to the UNGA in 2003, the President announced a \$50 million initiative to combat trafficking in persons. In July 2004, the Administration selected the following partner countries to work with the United States to carry out this initiative: Brazil, Cambodia, Indonesia, Mexico, Moldova, Sierra Leone, and Tanzania. India was subsequently added to this list.
- Interagency Cooperation to Combat Trafficking and Aid Victims. In July 2004, HHS, DOJ, and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) announced a Memorandum of Understanding to ensure the smooth and timely delivery of benefits and services to trafficking victims and the sharing of information on victims, investigations, and prosecutions between agencies.
- Investigating and Prosecuting Trafficking Crimes. From FY 2001 to FY 2003, the Bush Administration opened 210 new investigations (more than double the number opened in the previous three fiscal years), and prosecuted 110 traffickers during this period (nearly a three-fold increase compared with the previous three fiscal years). With 3,200 arrests in the first year alone, the DHS' Operation Predator, launched in July 2003, targets those suspected of child sex crimes, including traffickers.

- Anti-Trafficking Training. DOJ continues to provide anti-trafficking training to Federal, state and local prosecutors and law enforcement agents and officers, to NGOs and to officials of foreign governments. It is developing a model curriculum for the victim-centered approach to identifying and rescuing trafficking victims and investigating and prosecuting their traffickers and abusers. It also issues an annual report on trafficking within the United States.
- Anti-Trafficking Task Forces. The Bush Administration has convened anti-trafficking task force coalitions in Philadelphia, Phoenix, Atlanta, and Tampa and plans to convene a dozen additional task forces by the end of 2004. These cities have now been identified and efforts are underway. These task forces bring together Federal, state, local, and non-governmental sectors to combat trafficking and provide comprehensive assistance to victims. Additionally, the U.S. Government has issued public service announcements in Spanish, Russian, Polish, Chinese, and Korean to inform victims of their rights.
- Assistance for Victims of Trafficking. Since FY 2001, President Bush has provided more than \$35 million to 36 faith-based and community organizations across the country to aid victims of trafficking with emergency shelter; legal, mental, and health services; and English-proficiency instruction. In addition, HHS has launched a referral hotline to help victims escape by providing access to local service providers. The hotline has handled over 600 calls since it began in April 2004. The Trafficking Information and Referral Hotline number is (888) 373-7888.
- Immigration Relief for Trafficking Victims. The Trafficking Victims Protection Act created a new class of visa (T-visas) that allows trafficking victims to remain in the United States for three years with work authorization and access to benefits and services offered by HHS. At the end of three years, T-visa holders may apply for permanent residence. In 2002, the Department of Homeland Security created a specially trained corps of adjudicators to handle applications for immigration relief for trafficking victims, and this team is steadily increasing the number of T-visas issued each year.
- Support to Combat Trafficking and Provide Assistance to Victims Abroad. Since 2001, President Bush has provided more than \$295 million to support anti-trafficking programs in more than 120 countries. Funding goes to governments, NGOs, and international organizations to create specialized law enforcement units; train prosecutors and judges; strengthen anti-trafficking laws; provide emergency shelter and care for victims; offer voluntary repatriation assistance; make available long-term rehabilitation assistance, vocational training, legal advocacy, and psychological and medical assistance for victims; and launch information campaigns.
- Cooperation for Investigating and Prosecuting Trafficking Crimes. U.S. cooperation with other countries has contributed to the prosecution around the world of nearly 8,000 perpetrators of trafficking crimes, resulting in over 2,800 convictions. In addition, 24 countries have enacted new anti-trafficking legislation and 32 countries are in the process of drafting or passing new anti-trafficking legislation.

- International Anti-Trafficking Initiatives. Under the leadership of the United States and Norway, in Istanbul in June 2004 the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) adopted a comprehensive plan to help combat worldwide trafficking in persons. NATO personnel will support the efforts of authorities in host countries to combat trafficking while working with NGOs and anti-trafficking experts.
- State Department TIP Grants. In FY 2003, the U.S. Department of State awarded seven grants designed to combat trafficking in Southeast Europe and Eurasia. These projects support U.S.-based and in-country training for government officials, journalists, and NGO leaders.
- UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) and Trafficking. The U.S. Department of State's Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons has funded a six-month project entitled "Awareness and Training for UN Peacekeeping Operations on Human Trafficking and other Forms of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse." It seeks to ensure that from the outset of any peacekeeping operation, commanders and troops recognize as a serious form of exploitation and abuse that the force must manage in order to achieve core UN and peacekeeping objectives. The project's three primary activities are awareness and training for peacekeepers; discipline, accountability, and community relations; and support to anti-trafficking activities.
- U.S. Department of State Trafficking in Persons Report. In June 2004, the U.S. Department of State issued its fourth annual Trafficking in Persons Report, mandated by the TVPA and intended to raise global awareness of human trafficking, spur governments to take effective actions against it, share information, and partner in new ways to fight it. The report includes an analysis of the efforts of 140 countries to combat trafficking, descriptions of successful efforts worldwide, a summary of U.S. action to fight trafficking at home and new data on the scope of trafficking.

A country that fails to take significant actions to bring itself into compliance with the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking in persons receives a negative assessment. Such an assessment can trigger the withholding of non-humanitarian, non-trade-related assistance from the United States.

This year's report focuses attention on sex tourism and the demand it creates for children exploited by traffickers and pimps. The United States plays a leading role in fighting sex tourism by identifying and prosecuting under the PROTECT Act of 2003 any U.S. national who travels abroad to engage in acts of prostitution with children. For more information, see <http://www.state.gov/g/tip/rls/tiprpt/2004/>

- UN Crime Commission Anti-TIP Resolution. During the 2003 UN Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, the United States drafted and co-sponsored a resolution on trafficking in persons, particularly women and children. It urged member states to consider ratifying or acceding to the human trafficking protocol of the UN Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime (TOC), strengthen their capabilities to prevent and combat trafficking in persons, and provide assistance to victims. The resolution also encouraged

Member States to raise public awareness of trafficking in persons and sexual exploitation and to examine the role of prostitution in contributing to human trafficking.

- Supporting Local Anti-Trafficking Efforts Communities Across the United States. The US Department of Justice is publishing a request for proposals seeking applications for \$14 million over three years to law enforcement agencies and service providers to implement and support local efforts to identify, rescue and restore victims of trafficking. As many as 25 communities in the United States will be eligible to receive this funding.
- Providing a Model State Statute. DOJ has drafted a model anti-trafficking law for U.S. states.

2) Female Genital Mutilation (FGM).

- Efforts Abroad. USAID has supported activities to eliminate FGM in a number of countries, including Burkina Faso, Egypt, Eritrea, the Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Kenya, Mali, Senegal, and Yemen. This includes training health care providers about the long-term implications of FGM; data collection on the prevalence of FGM; and development and testing of strategies to end FGM. In addition, U.S. embassies in countries where FGM is practiced have provided funding to local NGOs and locally initiated projects to eliminate FGM in countries including Chad, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Ghana, Senegal, Somalia, and Togo.
- Efforts in the United States. In 1996, the United States passed a federal law that make performance of FGM on a person under the age of 18 a federal crime, punishable by a fine and/or imprisonment. Over 15 states in the United States have passed laws against FGM. The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) has provided funding under some of its existing refugee, women's health, and family programs in the United States to educate immigrants about the effects of FGM. HHS is concentrating on the immigrant communities in Los Angeles, San Diego, Houston, New York, and Boston, where immigrants from countries practicing FGM tend to live. HHS also funded a technical manual on treating complications of FGM that includes suggestions for counseling women and girls on this issue. The manual has been distributed throughout the United States to schools of nursing, medicine, social work, and osteopathy.

3) Preventing Domestic Violence against Women

Efforts Abroad

- Department of State Programs on Domestic Violence. The Department of State provides funding and training in many countries for police and government officials on domestic violence. In Ghana it has funded training of law enforcement officers and contributed funds for shelters and crisis centers for victims of domestic violence. The Department provided grants to train attorneys in domestic violence prosecutions in Brazil. In the town of Bani in the Dominican Republic, which has the highest rate of domestic violence in the country, the Department contributed money for construction of a shelter for victims of domestic violence and for maintenance of services including health and legal professionals on the staff. It has

also funded training programs on domestic violence for law enforcement officials, as well as for judges, lawyers, and medical personnel in Russia.

Efforts in the United States

- Funding for Violence against Women Programs. The Bush Administration is committed to preventing domestic violence and addressing its effects on individuals and families. According to DOJ's Bureau of Justice Statistics, each year nearly one-third of female murder victims in the United States are killed by an intimate partner.

President Bush has secured historic levels of funding for Violence Against Women programs at the U.S. Department of Justice, which offer state and local communities in the United States with the resources and tools they need to prosecute offenders for domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking, and to assist the victims. In FY 2002, President Bush secured a nearly \$100 million increase in funding for these programs, which brought the total to \$390 million. The President has continued to request similar levels of funding each subsequent year. In FY 2004, Congress appropriated \$383 million for these efforts.

- U.S. Domestic Violence Hotline. HHS funds programs crucial to protecting and assisting victims of domestic violence, including battered women's shelters and the Domestic Violence Hotline. The Hotline receives an average of 15,000 calls per month.
- Family Justice Centers. During Domestic Violence Awareness Month in October 2003, President Bush announced a new initiative to help local communities provide comprehensive services under one roof to victims of domestic violence. The DOJ Office on Violence Against Women has provided \$20 million in grants with FY 2004 funds to help establish and support Family Justice Centers in 15 communities.
- Safe and Bright Futures for Children. In October 2003, President Bush announced the Safe and Bright Futures for Children Initiative, which will provide \$5 million in grants through HHS to community- and faith-based organizations to help children who witness domestic violence to prevent the cycle of violence from continuing from one generation to the next. The Stop Family Violence fundraising postage stamp, released for sale in October 2003, will raise money for domestic violence prevention efforts, including the HHS grants.
- Increasing Prosecutions. The Administration believes that the Federal Government has a duty to vigorously prosecute domestic violence crimes. Federal prosecutions for crimes of violence against women crimes, which include offenses such as possession of a firearm while subject to a protection order and interstate domestic violence, increased 53 percent in the past two U.S. Fiscal Years.
- "Take the Pledge" Campaign. In October 2003, DOJ's Office on Violence Against Women launched a campaign to enlist the support of men in the national effort to end violence against women. The campaign included a public service announcement (PSA) that featured Attorney General John Ashcroft asking men to "take the pledge" not to condone or commit domestic violence. The PSA has been shown over 2,500 times in more than 40 U.S. states.

- Sexual Assault Forensic Exams. The U.S. Department of Justice's Office on Violence Against Women is developing a national protocol for sexual assault forensic exams that will be issued in September 2004.

3) Protecting the Youngest and Promoting a Culture of Life

- President Bush believes in promoting a culture in which every child is welcomed in life and protected by law. There are compassionate alternatives to abortion, such as maternity group homes and encouraging adoption. In addition, the Bush Administration is working to prevent unintended pregnancies by promoting abstinence education.
- The President supports passing laws requiring parental notification and waiting periods before teenage girls have an abortion.
- In April 2004, President Bush signed into law the Unborn Victims of Violence Act, which recognizes unborn children who are injured or killed in a Federal crime as crime victims. Therefore, causing death or bodily injury to an unborn child while committing any of 68 Federal offenses is now treated as a separate Federal offense.
- In August 2002, the President signed into law the Born-Alive Infants Protection Act. This law ensures that every infant born alive, including an infant who survives an abortion procedure, is considered a person under Federal law.
- President Bush signed into law the Partial-Birth Abortion Ban Act of 2003. The Department of Justice is vigorously defending the law in the U.S. courts.

Women in Conflict Situations

- Afghanistan. Since the removal of the Taliban, the United States has implemented over 200 projects in Afghanistan to support education of girls and women, increase their access to health care, help build civil society, create economic opportunities, and increase the political participation of women. The United States has allocated \$2.5 million for construction of 17 Women's Resource Centers across the country, and three other provincial centers geared towards education and health needs, jobs skills, and women's political training are being built. Through the U.S.-Afghan Women's Council, the United States has provided an added \$1 million in education training at these centers. The Council, created in 2002 by President Bush and Afghan Interim Authority Chairman Karzai, promotes public-private partnerships between U.S. and Afghan institutions.
- Iraq. With strong U.S. backing, Iraq's Governing Council repealed a decree that imposed discriminatory religious laws on women, and adopted a new basic law that provides equal rights for all. In addition to other aspects of reconstruction that will help women, the U.S. Congress has set aside \$27 million for special programs targeted at women in Iraq. In March 2004, the United States announced a \$10 million Iraqi Women's Democracy Initiative, which will provide training in leadership skills and in organizing political activities. The

first of approximately 10 grants under this program were awarded in August 2004 after an open competition for the best proposals from all interested organizations. The United States also announced the U.S.-Iraqi Women's Network, a new public-private partnership modeled after the U.S.-Afghan Women's Council.

- “Women Leading Women in Peace.” This U.S. initiative launched in October 2002 is a public-private partnership in cooperation with the Fortune 500's most powerful women, aimed at facilitating exchange and interaction between leading U.S. businesswomen and women in five post-conflict countries: Afghanistan, the Balkans, Cambodia, Colombia, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.
- Refugee Women. The United States recognizes the dire and distinct needs of refugee women, but also the unique resources they bring to their families and communities. The U.S. Department of State has been a leader in supporting programs on their behalf. The policy goals that help to shape the Department's emphasis on refugee women include several broad areas of concern: protection, standards of care, education of girls, and the promotion of the participation of refugee women in camp management and food distribution. In addition, the Department has developed policies that address violence against women, sexual exploitation, trafficking in persons, empowerment and control in decision-making, and fostering gender awareness in political life.

Economic Empowerment

- Microcredit. Since 1988, USAID has committed over \$1.5 billion to support micro-enterprise development. Micro-enterprises are defined as businesses with fewer than 10 employees, a low level of assets, and low income of the owner. Each year for the past five years, the United States has provided an average of \$155 million per year in global microcredits. 70 percent of the clients are women who are starting their own small businesses, who USAID provides with loans, training, and technical assistance. See http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/economic_growth_and_trade/poverty_reduction/microenterprise_development.html

In Sierra Leone, a U.S.-funded project established a micro-enterprise and self-reliance program that includes a strong percentage of women clients. The program provides a combination of small business loans with business training and marketing advice for returning Sierra Leonean refugees.

- U.S. Women Business-Owners. U.S. women business owners are the fastest-growing sector of the small business market, and are some of the biggest beneficiaries of the Bush Administration's economic policies.

U.S. women are starting businesses at twice the rate of men, and over 10 million U.S. women currently own their own businesses. The number of majority-owned, privately held women-owned businesses grew by 14 percent from 1997 to 2002, compared with seven percent for all U.S. businesses.

Women business owners are also benefiting from President Bush's job creation policies. Between 1997 and 2002, employment increased by 18 percent at women-owned and equally-owned firms, compared to eight percent among all privately held firms. At majority-owned, privately held women-owned businesses, employment increased by 30 percent compared with 18 percent nationally. Like all business owners, female business owners are seeing the benefits of three tax relief bills the President signed into law since 2001:

- The small-business expensing provision helps small businesses to purchase the capital equipment they need to grow.
- The provision accelerating the Bush tax relief allows small-business owners to retain earnings and use them for reinvestment and expansion.
- The reductions in the capital gains tax and the taxation of dividends are lifting equity markets, spurring investments, and making it easier for small businesses to raise additional capital.

In tax year 2004, 23 million small business owners, of which 10 million are women, will receive an average tax relief of \$3,001.

President Bush has also phased-out and eliminated the so-called U.S. "death tax" or "estate tax." Eliminating this was a matter of basic fairness that would provide relief to thousands of family businesses, farms, and ranches of the excessive costs of complying with this abusive tax. As a fast-growing segment of America's small-business owners, women entrepreneurs would have been increasingly subject to this tax.

- Government Contracts to Women-Owned Businesses. As part of the President's Small Business Initiative, the Bush Administration holds U.S. government agencies accountable for eliminating unnecessary contract bundling. In 2002, U.S. Federal government contracting dollars going to women-owned small businesses increased by 25 percent, from \$5.5 billion to \$6.8 billion. Certain U.S. agencies exceeded the five percent federal requirement, including Housing and Urban Development (19.8 percent), Commerce (8.5 percent) and the Executive Office of the President (7.7 percent).
- Women's Business Centers. The U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) operates 87 Women's Business Centers around the country, which provides counseling, financing, and practical workshops to women who are seeking to start or grow their businesses. In FY 2003, these Centers assisted 106,612 clients seeking to start and grow their own businesses through counseling and training. Additionally, those served by the Women's Business Centers formed 3,592 start-up businesses and created 6,538 jobs.
- Financing to Women-Owned Businesses. In 2003, SBA lent or guaranteed \$2.4 billion in financing to women-owned businesses. The value of loan and investments to women-owned businesses increased at a faster rate than SMB assistance to businesses overall.
- Mentoring for Businesswomen. Through the Women's Network for Entrepreneurial Training, the SBA and its resource partners including the Women's Business Centers have hosted 210 mentoring roundtables.

- Support for Women-Owned Businesses. Women-owned businesses will benefit from President Bush's economic plan to make tax relief permanent; increase access to health insurance through Association Health Plans; lower health-care costs through medical liability reform; reduce the burden of lawsuits on our economy; ensure an affordable, reliable energy supply; streamline regulations and paperwork requirements; and open new markets for American products and services.
- Online Resources. The U.S. Government created www.Women-21.gov as a premier one-stop U.S. Federal Government online resource for information, registering for online programs, and networking opportunities to help women entrepreneurs navigate the ever-changing business world.
- Conferences. The U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) has sponsored a series of conferences to help empower more women to become business owners and support the over 10 million women who currently own their own business with information, access, and programs that will enable their businesses to grow and employ more workers.
- U.S. Women Benefit from President Bush's Family Tax Relief Policies. President Bush' tax relief policies benefit America's women and their families and support marriage by accelerated marriage penalty relief, the increase of the child tax credit, and the expansion of the 10 percent tax rate bracket.

As a result, in 2004, 81 million women will save, on average, \$1,878 due to President Bush's tax relief packages. This includes 49 million married women whose taxes will decline, on average, by \$2,602 and 11 million single mothers whose taxes will fall, on average, by \$921. Forty-three million families with children will see their taxes fall, on average, by \$2,090 in 2004.

- U.S. Women in the Workplace. Saving for retirement is crucial for women. Women's employment patterns differ from men's. They are more likely to work in part-time jobs that do not qualify for pension coverage, or to work fewer years in pension-covered employment because of interruptions in their careers to take care of family members.

To address women's particular needs, President Bush signed the Economic Growth and Tax Relief Reconciliation Act (EGTRRA) in June 2001, giving powerful incentives for workers to build retirement savings. In recognition of women and their special needs in retirement, EGTRRA includes a subsection titled "Enhancing Fairness for Women". The Act:

- Increases the annual limit on deductible contributions to Individual Retirement Accounts (IRAs) and 401(k)-type retirement plans and allows workers age 50 and older to make additional "catch-up" contributions. These changes will be particularly beneficial to women, who are more likely to have taken a break from the workforce to meet family responsibilities and, as a result, might not have saved enough for retirement;

- Improves the portability of retirement plans, so that women and other workers can roll the funds from one kind of account to another when they change jobs, or when they enter or leave the workforce; and
 - Shortens the vesting period for employer matching contributions to 401(k) plans from five years to three. This will make it more likely that women who change jobs will accumulate retirement savings.
- Job Training and Labor Policy. Many employment and training programs administered by DOL primarily serve women. For example, of individuals receiving services under the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) system's adult programs, 57 percent are women. Roughly half of the individuals who have been laid off and who are seeking retraining and employment through the WIA Dislocated Workers program are females.
 - Significant reforms proposed to the major U.S. Federal government worker training grant programs will double the number of workers receiving job training, ensure those programs work better for America's workers, and close the skills gap so a well-trained American worker fills every high growth job.
 - The Women's Bureau within DOL has focused a number of demonstration projects on women and technology, emphasizing programs that encourage young women to explore careers in higher-paying fields, such as science, engineering, technology and nursing. To date, more than 2,000 young girls have benefited from e-mentoring by 375 professional women in these fields.
 - DOL has co-sponsored more than 150 financial education and/or retirement seminars for women that reach more than 10,000 customers. As part of this effort, the Women's Bureau at DOL has planned "Las Mujeres y el Dinero" ("Women and Money"), a series of 10 financial education conferences designed for Hispanic women who face unique challenges in achieving financial security. To date, more than 3,000 women have attended five conferences, with five more scheduled throughout the remainder of the year.
 - The Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP) within DOL is continuing to expand its efforts to find and remedy compensation discrimination against women. In FY 2003, OFCCP recovered nearly \$12 million in financial remedies for 7,118 women who were subject to unlawful employment discrimination; performed a record 52 "Glass Ceiling Audits" that ensure women do not face discriminatory barriers to advancement into management and executive positions; and hosted more than 600 compliance assistance events to advise contractors on how to ensure against discriminatory employment practices.
 - Wage Protections. DOL's final overtime rule will guarantee overtime protection to 6.7 million low-income salaried workers -- including 4.0 million women -- regardless of their duties. This includes teachers' aides, secretaries, bookkeepers, nursing aides, cashiers, and many administrative support jobs. The final rule also strengthens overtime protection for licensed practical nurses and other similar health-care employees.

Power Sharing and Decision-Making

- “Women and Political Participation.” During the fall 2003 UNGA, the U.S.-sponsored resolution on “Women and Political Participation” gained 110 co-sponsors. The resolution reaffirms basic principles on women’s participation and empowerment, and suggests practical measures that governments and civil society actors can take to achieve these goals. In every region of the world, the United States is actively trying to implement the principles called for in this important resolution. A number of Member States have translated it for use in their own countries, and used it as a blueprint for programmatic changes to increase women’s participation.
- Efforts in the Middle East. The President’s Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI) was launched to help governments in the region work with the private sector to expand political, economic, and educational opportunities, with an emphasis on women. Regional campaign schools will provide leadership and organizational training for women seeking elective office. Thanks to the work of the State Department, the International Republican Institute (IRI), and the National Democratic Institute (NDI), the first school opened in Doha, Qatar in December 2003. In Iraq, the United States is committed to the equal participation of women in shaping the new political landscape of Iraq, including participation in the upcoming elections. To prepare the ground for this historic transition, the Department of State and its partners have sponsored or currently are sponsoring numerous political workshops and related programs for Iraqi women. See <http://www.state.gov/g/wi/rls/35165.htm>
- Efforts in Afghanistan. In Afghanistan, U.S. programs educate women on the importance of voting and political participation. They train women candidates in running campaigns and instruct political parties in mobilizing female members. USAID is establishing Women’s Resource Centers to provide a safe environment where women can receive job skills, literacy training, and education in political participation.
- ALVA Consortium. The U.S. Department of State funds or provided the original funding for NGOs whose main goal is to help increase opportunities for women’s political and economic participation. One of these, the ALVA Consortium, has taught women politicians from Rwanda, Kenya, and Cote d’Ivoire the basics of running for office. A number of its graduates went on to gain appointment to high-level positions or to win election to public office in these countries. Rwanda now has the highest percentage of women in parliament of any country in the world.
- League of Women Voters. The U.S. Department of State also supports the League of Women Voters in building partnerships with women’s organizations in eight countries in Africa and training for grassroots leadership, and the U.S. Government has funded other NGOs like the National Democratic Institute and International Republican Institute that assists in political training programs around the world.
- Women in the Bush Administration. More women serve in senior posts in the Bush White House than in any past administration. These women leaders include the National Security Advisor, Deputy Chief of Staff for Policy, Domestic Policy Advisor, the Homeland Security

Advisor, and Director of Presidential Personnel. In addition, there are currently three female Cabinet Secretaries serving in the Administration. The Counselor to the President and the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency have been women as well.

PART THREE. INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Here are the main institutional mechanisms in place to promote gender equality and women's empowerment.

- Office of International Women's Issues (G/IWI), U.S. Department of State. Established in 1994 by a Sense of Congress, G/IWI coordinates the integration of women's issues into broader U.S. strategic, economic, and diplomatic goals. Currently much of its work is focused on women in post-conflict situations such as Afghanistan and Iraq.
- Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons (G/TIP), U.S. Department of State. G/TIP coordinates international anti-trafficking efforts across the U.S. Government.
- Office of the Under Secretary for Global Affairs (G), U.S. Department of State. G coordinates U.S. foreign relations on a variety of global issues, including democracy, human rights, and labor; environment, oceans, and science; narcotics control and law enforcement; population, refugees, and migration; women's issues; and trafficking in persons.
- Office of Social and Humanitarian Affairs (IO/SHA), Bureau of International Organization Affairs, U.S. Department of State. IO/SHA coordinates U.S. participation in UN bodies that deal with human rights, humanitarian relief and refugees, youth, aging, disability, women's issues, and trafficking in persons.
- Office of Multilateral Affairs (DRL/MLA), Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, U.S. Department of State. DRL/MLA works with IO/SHA on human rights issues in the UN system.
- Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM), U.S. Department of State. PRM coordinates U.S. international refugee and migration policies, and provides humanitarian assistance through the multilateral system.
- Office of the Legal Adviser (L), U.S. Department of State. The Office of Human Rights and Refugees (L/HRR) and Office of Law Enforcement and Intelligence (L/LEI) are among the L offices involved with issues affecting women.
- Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA), U.S. Department of State. ECA fosters mutual understanding between the United States and other countries through international educational and training programs. It promotes personal, professional, and institutional ties between private citizens and organizations in the United States and abroad. It also presents U.S. history, society, art, and culture to overseas audiences.
- Office of Women in Development (USAID/WID), U.S. Agency for International Development. USAID/WID is USAID's central point of technical leadership on gender-related issues in social, economic, and political development. The Office provides technical assistance to USAID missions, and develops approaches to new and emerging issues.

USAID/WID also sponsors projects on education, economic growth, trafficking, and violence against women that promote women's development.

- Directorate for Democracy, Human Rights and International Operations, National Security Council (NSC/Democracy). The directorate advises the President and the National Security Advisor on global issues including democracy, human rights, and women's empowerment in U.S. bilateral and multilateral diplomacy.
- Office on Violence Against Women, DOJ. The office handles DOJ's legal and policy issues regarding violence against women.
- Administration for Children and Families, HHS. HHS/ACF is responsible for federal programs that promote the economic and social well-being of families, children, individuals, and communities. HHS/ACF programs empower families and individuals to increase their own economic independence and productivity; cultivate strong, healthy, supportive communities that have a positive impact on the quality of life and the development of children; develop partnerships with individuals, front-line service providers, communities, American Indian tribes, Native communities, U.S. states, and the U.S. Congress that enable solutions that transcend traditional agency boundaries; ensure services are planned, reformed, and integrated to improve needed access; and sustain a strong commitment to working with people with developmental disabilities, refugees, and migrants to address their needs, strengths, and abilities.
- Office of Women's Health (OWH), Food and Drug Administration (FDA), HHS. OWH ensures that HHS/FDA functions, both regulatory and oversight, remain gender-sensitive and responsive; works to correct any identified gender disparities in drug, device and biologics testing and regulation policy; monitors progress of priority women's health initiatives within HHS/FDA; promotes an integrative and interactive approach regarding women's health issues across all the organizational components of HHS/FDA; and forms partnerships with government and non-government entities, including consumer groups, health advocates, professional organizations, and industry, to promote the women's health objectives of HHS/FDA.
- Office of Research on Women's Health (ORWH), NIH, HHS. Serves as a focal point for women's health research at HHS/NIH. The ORWH promotes, stimulates, and supports efforts to improve the health of women through biomedical and behavioral research. Part of the ORWH mandate is to develop opportunities and support for recruitment, retention, reentry, and advancement of women in biomedical careers.
- Office of Women's Health (OWH), Office of Public Health and Science, HHS. Under the leadership of the Assistant Secretary of Health, HHS/OWH is the U.S. Government's champion and focal point for women's health issues, and works to redress inequities in research, health care services, and education that have historically placed the health of women at risk. HHS/OWH coordinates women's health efforts to eliminate disparities in health status and supports culturally sensitive educational programs that encourage women to take personal responsibility for their own health and wellness.

- Office of Global Health Affairs (OGHA), Office of the Secretary, HHS. HHS/OGHA coordinates HHS participation in policy and technical meetings on women's issues sponsored by the UN and other international organizations.
- Women's Bureau, DOL. The mission of the Women's Bureau is to promote the welfare of wage-earning women, improve their working conditions, increase their efficiency, and advance their opportunities for profitable employment.
- Office of Women's Business Ownership (OWBO), SBA. OWBO promotes the growth of women-owned businesses through programs that address business training and technical assistance, and provide access to credit and capital, federal contracts, and international trade opportunities.
- Office of Women Veterans, Veterans Affairs Administration (OVA). OWV works to ensure that women veterans have the same access to benefits as male veterans.
- Institutional Development and Undergraduate Education Service (IDUES), U.S. Department of Education (DOE). IDUES provides grants to improve science education at predominantly minority institutions and to attract more under-represented ethnic minorities, particularly women, into science and engineering careers.
- Women's Educational Equity Act (WEEA) Equity Resource Center, DOE. The WEEA was established more than 20 years ago to bring support and resources to the many exceptional efforts that are improving the education of girls and women in the United States.
- Advisory Committee on Women in the Services, U.S. Department of Defense (DACOWITS). The Committee provides the U.S. Department of Defense with advice and recommendations on matters and policies relating to the recruitment and retention, treatment, employment, integration, and well-being of highly qualified professional women in the Armed Forces, including advice and recommendations on family issues related to the recruitment and retention of a highly qualified professional military.

PART FOUR. MAIN CHALLENGES AND ACTIONS TO ADDRESS THEM

Combating trafficking in persons is a priority for the United States. The President made that clear in his fall 2003 speech to the UN General Assembly, and over the years the United States has devoted substantial monetary and human resources towards efforts to eradicate trafficking in persons.

Future initiatives the United States is considering are the following:

- At the fall 2004 UNGA, highlighting the problem of child sex tourism as a form of exploitation of girls through augmenting pertinent resolutions and hosting a panel discussion on the subject.
- Sponsoring a resolution on trafficking at the March 2005 meeting of the UN Commission on the Status of Women.
- Hosting a panel or event at the 2004 UNGA or 2005 UN Commission on the Status of Women to highlight successful programs to reduce maternal mortality.
- Spearheading efforts to develop a database on women's property and inheritance rights for the developing world.