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**USAID**  
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*1,448 words, ~ 12 minutes*

**On the Millennium Development Goals: Gender, Health and Hunger**

Mr. President. Excellencies. Distinguished Delegates to the United Nations General Assembly. Ladies and Gentlemen:

I am delighted to join Ambassador Verveer in this National Voluntary Presentation, on behalf of the people of the United States – to discuss U.S. commitments to the Millennium Development Goals – and how integral they are with the empowerment of women around the world.

Ambassador Verveer, your service testifies to our President's commitment – unprecedented in American history – in creating a position to lead the political, economic and social advancement of women.

The two of us represent a country whose voice on the Millennium Development Goals has only started to be heard recently – but whose responsibility to lead is great.

The United States fully supports the Millennium Development Goals. We've seen the catalytic role they play, in guiding and uniting donor and partner countries' efforts. And the 2015 milestone offers reason to celebrate our enormous progress to date.

Great credit goes to the citizens and governments of countries that have prioritized development, and invested in their people.

Since our baseline year of 1990, consider this: The number of people living on less than \$1.25 a day has fallen by 400 million. This is a *massive* improvement -- from 42 down to 25 percent of world population.

In Ethiopia, in Ghana, in Mozambique, in Rwanda, in Tanzania: since 1990, per capita income has more than *doubled*.

Nearly *two-thirds* of developing countries have met the goal of eliminating gender disparity in primary education. The goal of doing so in secondary education by 2015 is within our reach.

Development gains of this magnitude are extraordinary. We are generating momentum and progress rarely if *ever* seen in human history.

But despite this progress, we know there is more to do. We know that infant mortality, especially in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, is still unconscionably high. Reductions in maternal mortality and child under-nutrition rates have been much too slow. We are still far from overcoming gender inequality, which slows achievement on the MDGs.

Women and girls are the majority of the world's poor -- unschooled, unhealthy, and underfed. Trapped in insecure, relatively low-paid positions. Continuing to do much of the work on the farm, but lacking access to adequate resources, support, training, and rights.

When thinking about the MDGs and gender, most people think of MDG 3, which aims **to eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education by 2005 and in all levels of education no later than 2015.** But investing in women and girls is about more than just MDG 3. It is also about achieving all the other Goals, too—reducing poverty, hunger, and malnutrition, as well as improving education and creating opportunity.

Putting gender at the heart of our development efforts is part of a larger U.S. strategy to achieve the MDGs by 2015. We believe we can accelerate progress towards the Millennium Development Goals by focusing on four key imperatives:

First: We must **drive innovation**, applying new technologies and methods to address human development needs -- and developing new ways to deliver existing solutions to more people, more cheaply, more quickly.

For example, we need an operating model that encourages all of us to be “development entrepreneurs.” An entrepreneur is someone who develops a clear vision and strategy, builds a world-class team, and innovates and takes risks and makes course corrections along way, learning as much from failures as from successes.

I’ll describe two critical initiatives shortly, in health and hunger, where we’re really putting innovation to work in support of women’s well-being.

Our second imperative: **Invest in sustainability**, by focusing on broad-based economic growth, nurturing well-governed institutions, developing sustainable delivery systems, mitigating shocks, and supporting trade. We’ve extended the African Growth and Opportunity Act for exports from Sub-Saharan Africa through 2015, for example. Key to sustainability is investing in women and girls – more on that, too, in a minute.

Third: We will **track and evaluate development outcomes**, not just dollars spent, by improving the quality of data to assess progress, building indigenous evaluation capacity, and fostering a relentless commitment to measuring results. We've learned much from the Millennium Challenge Corporation, for instance, in its rigorous monitoring and evaluation approach.

And Fourth: **We must reinforce mutual accountability**, in principle and in practice, by recognizing that both partner and donor countries have shared responsibilities. That's why we're launching a major Aid Transparency Initiative, in collaboration with U.S. agencies, other donors, and partner governments. And we're creating common reporting frameworks to develop an Aid Dashboard – to allow stakeholders to visualize foreign assistance investments by geographic area or sector, and track trends over time.

Now: With those four imperatives in mind – innovation, sustainability, outcomes, and accountability – I'll focus on two specific initiatives we have launched that take a holistic approach to the MDGs, through gender-inclusive development.

First, our **Global Health Initiative** focuses on the MDGs 4, 5, and 6 related to reducing child mortality, improving maternal health, and combating HIV/AIDS, Malaria, and Other Diseases. It will strengthen programs that serve women and girls – including maternal health, family planning, and nutrition programs.

At \$63 billion over six years, the GHI represents a significant investment by the US government – especially now – to help partner countries improve the health of their people. It is being implemented in more than 80 countries where our global health dollars are already at work. And we are keenly focused on strategies to address health system bottlenecks affecting health for women and children.

GHI takes an evidence-based approach, with clear outcomes in mind. Such as: Saving some three million children’s lives. Reducing under-five mortality rates by more than a third. Doubling the number of babies born HIV-free. Reducing the burden of malaria by half, for 450 million people. And reducing maternal mortality by 30 percent. Ambitious, quantifiable outcomes.

With GHI we are taking a women- and girl-centered approach, both for their own sake, and because of the centrality of women to the health of their families and communities. We're focused on ante-natal care. Immunization. Nutrition. Water and sanitation. Infectious disease control. And family planning.

A second example of a major initiative we are launching to meet the MDGs is known as **Feed the Future** – and was previewed by Secretary of State Hillary Clinton last September, here at the United Nations. It's a \$3.5-billion, three-year commitment to strengthen the world's food supply – that is expected to reach at least 25-30 million people, and raise their incomes by 10 percent per year over two decades.

We are working with partners and stakeholders, from the World Bank to the Gates Foundation, from the private sector to partner governments, to address the needs of small scale farmers, many of whom are women, and agri-businesses, and harness the power of women to drive economic growth.



We focus on crops that disproportionately enhance women's standing, production, and incomes. Where women will receive targeted access to financial services and extension services, delivered by female extension workers.

FTF also reflects the US comparative advantage in research, innovation and entrepreneurship. We will increase our investment in nutrition and agriculture development while maintaining our support for humanitarian food assistance.

As Ambassador Verveer has emphasized, this initiative acknowledges that reducing gender inequality is an important contributor to eradicating global hunger and recognizes the fundamental role that women play in achieving food security.

In most developing countries, women produce between 60 and 80 percent of the food. Analysis by IFPRI shows that equalizing women's access to agricultural inputs can increase output by more than 10 percent.

Studies show that when gains in income are controlled by women, they are more likely to be spent on food and children's needs. By investing more in women, we amplify benefits across families and generations.

Based on the examples that Ambassador Verveer and I have shared with you today, I hope you'll agree that the U.S. has learned the importance of integrating a gender-based perspective into all aspects of our development work.

We understand that gender-inclusive development is the right way to do business – for donor agencies, for developing countries, for non-governmental organizations, and for the private sector.

The MDGs are a symbol of our common humanity, and we remain committed to helping countries achieve them by 2015 in partnership with others.

Putting gender at the center of our development efforts is an important part of the larger U.S. strategy to meet the Goals. We will do this by promoting innovation, investing in sustainability, focusing on results, and enhancing mutual accountability.

Investing in and empowering women and girls is a key force multiplier that will help us build a healthier, more food-secure, more just, and more prosperous world.

We are deeply honored to join you in this vitally important work.

Thank you.