

USAID/General Notice
ADMINISTRATOR A/AID
03/07/2007

Subject: International Women's Day

On March 8, 2007, we commemorate International Women's Day. It is a day when we celebrate women's achievements and rededicate ourselves to working towards their full participation in their societies and the global economy.

The U.S. Government has made a long-term commitment to help women find their voices, achieve their potential, and share in the benefits as well as the duties of development. As Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice stated, "We are resolved to remove the barriers to political, economic, and social empowerment so that women everywhere may freely chart their own way."

Keeping the resolve expressed by Secretary Rice is a high priority for me. Progress toward transformational development is not possible without the full and equal participation of women. No country can reach its full potential unless women have equal rights and equal opportunities.

USAID's support for programs in democracy and legal reform, girls' education, maternal and child health, and economic growth improves the status of women and enhances their opportunities. In each of these areas, the Agency has made significant progress.

- USAID has a specific focus on girls' education in 67 percent of its basic education programs.
- Nearly one-third of the clients receiving USAID-supported enterprise development services are women.
- USAID provided \$27 million to support anti-trafficking activities in 30 countries in 2006.
- USAID supported development of legislation against domestic violence in Albania; landmark legislation to address sexual harassment in Benin; draft legislation on trafficking in persons in Mozambique; and proposed amendments to the existing family code in Madagascar.

In every area where progress has been made, however, much more remains to be done:

- Two-thirds of the 876 million illiterate adults worldwide are women;
- Two-thirds of the 125 million school-aged children who do not attend school worldwide are girls, and girls are less likely to complete school than boys;
- Seventy percent of the 1.3 billion people living in poverty around the world are women and children;
- Each year over 500,000 women die during childbirth and pregnancy; and
- More than three-quarters of the world's 27 million refugees are women and children.

Let us renew our energies to confront these challenges. Let us honor the courageous women who are working to make the world a better place for all of us, and let us move forward together to improve the lives of both men and women worldwide.

In recognition of our commitment to empowering women throughout the world, a USAID photo exhibit "Women Transforming Development" is in the Russell Senate Office Building Rotunda from March 8 through March 16, 2007.

Ambassador Randall L. Tobias

Point of Contact: Any questions concerning this Notice may be directed to Katherine M. Blakeslee, EGAT/WID, (202) 712-0570.