

Global Women's Health

MAKING WOMEN'S HEALTH AND RIGHTS
CENTRAL TO GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT AND DIPLOMACY



A PROGRAM OF
The World Affairs Council of Connecticut's
Global Women's Issues Forum

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Making Women's Health and Rights Central to Global Development and Diplomacy

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**The World Affairs Council of Connecticut's
Global Women's Issues Forum**

SPONSORED BY



IN PARTNERSHIP WITH:

Saint Joseph College, West Hartford, Connecticut
Meredith College, Raleigh, North Carolina
The United Nations Foundation, Washington, D.C.
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The International Women's Health Coalition, New York, New York
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The Dayton Council on World Affairs, Dayton, Ohio
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The Chicago Council on Global Affairs, Chicago, Illinois

About the World Affairs Council of Connecticut

Founded in 1924, the World Affairs Council of Connecticut (WACCT) is part of the World Affairs Councils of America (WACA), the largest nonprofit, international affairs organization in the United States. WACA promotes public understanding of global affairs and world issues by sponsoring programs, discussion series and seminars on international politics, business and culture.

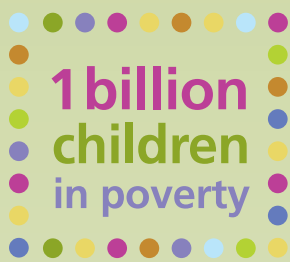
The World Affairs Council of Connecticut brings world-renowned speakers to Connecticut and plays an important leadership role in promoting international business, education and trade. For more information, visit www.ctwac.org.



Global Women's

These facts were brought out: (1) by the speakers in the Global Women's Health Lecture Series; (2) in readings related to the lectures; and/or (3) through acknowledgment by the series' audiences as noteworthy and "surprising" to them.

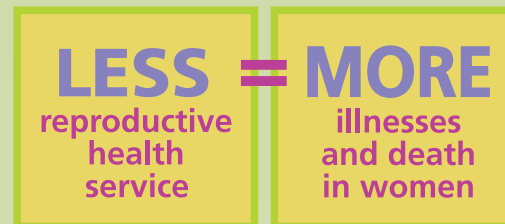
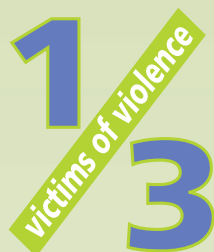
According to the World Health Organization's Definition of Health, "health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity."¹ The following statistics indicate that a significant portion of the world's population, including the vast majority of the world's women, do not enjoy a state of health:



- 1 billion children, or nearly one in two, live in poverty. Girls account for more than 50% of this population.²
- 25,000 children die every day; 80% of these cases from preventable causes.³

- 101 million children of primary age — 53 million girls and 48 million boys — were not attending school in 2007, up from 75 million in 2006.⁴
- Since education and income level are the best indicators of health⁵, attending to the education of the world's children is critical.

One third of women in the world are victims of physical or sexual violence. "More girls have been killed in the last 50 years precisely because they were girls, than men were killed in all of the wars of the Twentieth Century,"⁶ as a result of sex-selection abortion, abuse and unequal access to medical care, etc.



Significant disparities in women's health exist between developed and developing countries and between the rich and poor in most countries. In developing countries, those most in need are poor women and their very young children.⁷

One third of illnesses and deaths among women of reproductive age in these countries are caused by severe shortages in reproductive health services, including contraception, safe abortion, skilled assistance during childbirth and diagnosis and treatment of sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV.⁸

Health Statistics

**>500,000
MATERNAL
CHILDBIRTH
FATALITIES
EACH YEAR**

More than 500,000 women die every year (which equates to 1,600 women every day or 1 woman every minute) from complications relating to childbirth such as pre-eclampsia, hemorrhage,

malaria, abortion, obstructed labor and sepsis; some 99% of these deaths occur in the developing world. Of these deaths worldwide related to childbirth, 95% are considered preventable. But, despite the emphasis placed on improving maternal health and the UN Millennium Development Goal 5 related to maternal deaths worldwide, the figure of 500,000 maternal deaths each year has not changed significantly in the last decade.⁹



Although supporting health care abroad is currently acknowledged as a critical foreign policy tool for the United States, and 16% of the U.S. Foreign Aid budget is spent on global health and development, "less than 1% of U.S. Foreign Aid is targeted to women and girls each year."¹²

50%
worldwide cases of
HIV
are women without
adequate health care

One third of deaths in the world are the result of infectious disease (tuberculosis, HIV/AIDS, malaria, measles, etc.); 50% of the HIV cases worldwide are women (61% in sub-Saharan Africa) who don't have the same access to health care as men. Women aged 15 – 24 are the most vulnerable to HIV infection.¹⁰

One hundred million women are 'missing' from the globe today as a result of gender selection before or after birth and gender inequities when women do not receive the same access to health care as their male counterparts. "Every year, at least another 2 million girls worldwide 'disappear' because of gender discrimination."¹¹

100,000,000
MISSING

1 Preamble to the Constitution of the World Health Organization as adopted by the International Health Conference, New York, 19 June – 22 July 1946; signed on 22 July 1946 by the representatives of 61 States (Official Records of the World Health Organization, no. 2, p. 100) and entered into force on 7 April 1948. The definition has not been amended since 1948.

2 *The State of the World's Children*, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) November 2009.

3 Shah, Anup. "Today, Over 25,000 Children Died Around the World," *Global Issues*. <http://www.globalissues.org/article/7115/today-over-25000-children-died-around-the-world>. Updated March 22, 2009.

4 *Action for Children*, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). Issue 5, March 2009. http://www.unicef.org/devpro/files/Actions_for_Children_No._5_EN_LoRes.pdf

5 Chvala, Carole A., and Roger J. Bulger, eds. *Leading Health Indicators for Healthy People 2010: Final Report*. Washington D.C.: National Academy of Sciences, 1999.

6 Kristof, Nicholas D., and Sheryl WuDunn. *Half the Sky: Turning Oppression Into Opportunity For Women Worldwide*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2009, p. xvii.

7 *Leading Health Indicators for Healthy People 2010: Final Report (1999) Institute of Medicine (IOM) and Maternal Mortality in 2000: Estimates Developed by WHO, UNICEF and UNFPA (2004)*. Geneva: WHO.

8 Dennis, Suzanna and Elaine Zuckerman. "Mapping multilateral development banks' spending on reproductive health and HIV and AIDS." *Gender and Development*. Vol. 16, No. 2, July 2008, p. 287.

9 *Maternal Mortality in 2005*. Estimates developed by WHO, UNICEF, UNFPA, and The World Bank.

10 *AIDS Epidemic Update*, 2009. UNAIDS/WHO.

11 Kristof and WuDunn, *Half the Sky*, p. xv. See Footnote on page 259 for references to original data by Amartya Sen, "More Than 100 Million Women Are Missing," *The New York Review of Books*, December 20, 1990.

12 *Ibid.* p. xiv.

Objectives of the project

PHOTO COURTESY OF S. KIGONDU, JHPIEGO



The World Affairs Council of Connecticut launched an innovative five-part lecture series in the fall of 2009 to inform and educate a large grassroots constituency, comprised of World Affairs Council members and students throughout the United States, on the critical health care problems facing women globally.

The project's ultimate objective is to move beyond public education alone, as important as it is in its own right, and present a summary of findings and recommendations to the national press and appropriate legislative bodies to ensure that women's rights and health are central to global development and diplomacy.

PHOTO COURTESY OF T. CHAIRANI, JHPIEGO



History of the project

The World Affairs Council of Connecticut approached Pfizer in 2008 with a proposal for developing an education and advocacy project on global women's health that would involve a national grassroots audience. Recognizing the impact such a program could have, Pfizer endorsed the concept and funded the program's planning and implementation.

Realizing the importance of involving a local women's college with undergraduate and graduate health care and international studies degree programs, WACCT sought out a partnership with Saint Joseph College (SJC) in West Hartford, Connecticut, one of the Northeast Region's foremost higher educational institutions for women. SJC enthusiastically endorsed the program and agreed to host four of the five lectures on its campus. In addition, Dr. Shyamala Raman, Professor of Economics and International Studies and Director of International Studies agreed to serve on the project planning committee and act as the college's project liaison. SJC provided the webinar technology and staffing required to broadcast the program lectures to the participating World Affairs Councils across the country. The Raleigh International Affairs Council, North Carolina, also developed a strong partnership with Meredith College in Raleigh,

one of the largest independent private women's colleges in the U.S. Meredith College provided the webinar technology for receiving the lecture series in that area.

WACCT invited numerous Councils in the World Affairs Councils of America network to participate as project partners, with the requirement that they agree to host at least one focused event on women's health or to broadcast the program's lectures through webinar technology. In addition, all of the partners were asked to undertake program outreach efforts in their own states and attend press conferences in Washington, D.C., during the spring of 2010. Seven Councils outside Connecticut committed to the project, including New York City, Oregon, Dallas/Fort Worth, Western Michigan, Dayton, Ohio, Chicago and Raleigh, North Carolina.

WACCT convened a focus group consisting of experts in the field of global health, the Directors of three participating World Affairs Councils, the program's education consultant and staff members to design the format for the project and select lecture topics. Members

of the focus group reviewed preliminary research conducted by the education consultant and outlined a series of four lectures, including:

- (1) Health Care: It's a Global Issue;**
- (2) Leveling the Playing Field: Gender Inequities in the Health Care System;**
- (3) Global Women's Health; and**
- (4) Model Projects Addressing Women's Global Health Issues.**



PHOTO COURTESY OF S. SUHOWATSKY, JHPiEGO



The Foreign Policy Association of New York agreed to include a panel discussion on Women's Health and the Development Agenda as part of its 2009 World Leadership Forum, held on September 23, 2009, coinciding with the opening of the 64th session of the United Nations General Assembly. Co-sponsored by the United Nations Foundation and the International Women's Health Coalition, the panel discussion, attended by an audience of over 200, served as a high profile kickoff event to the Global Women's Health Program. **Emma Andrews**, PharmD, External Medical Affairs, Pfizer Inc., introduced the following distinguished moderator and panelists:

MODERATOR: Ann Curry, Co-Anchor of "Dateline NBC" and News Anchor of NBC's "Today" show.

PANELISTS: Rachel N. Mayanja, Assistant Secretary-General and Special Advisor on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, United Nations.

Susan J. Blumenthal, M.D., M.P.H., Founding U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary for Women's Health and former U.S. Assistant Surgeon General.

Hon. Saudatu A. Sani, Member, House of Representatives, Nigeria, Chairperson of the House Committee on Millennium Development Goals.

Gro Harlem Brundtland, UN Special Envoy for Climate Change and Former Prime Minister, Norway.

WAACT conducted the additional four lectures, attended by a national audience of over 1,000, on October 1, October 13, October 28 and November 10 of 2009. Distinguished national experts included:

LECTURE 1: Thomas Novotny, M.D., M.P.H., Professor and Associate Director for Global and Border Health, San Diego State University.

LECTURE 2: Padmini Murthy, M.D., M.P.H., MS, CHES, Medical Women's International NGO Representative to the United Nations, Assistant Professor, Department of Health Policy and Management and Director of the Global Health Program, New York Medical School of Public Health.

LECTURE 3: Adrienne Germain, President, International Women's Health Coalition, N.Y.C.

LECTURE 4: Harshad Sanghvi, M.D., Vice President and Medical Director of JHPIEGO, an affiliate of Johns Hopkins University, Senior Professor, Johns Hopkins University Bloomberg School of Public Health, and **Gannon Gillespie**, Director of U.S. Operations for Tostan.

PHOTO COURTESY OF S. KIGONDU, JHPIEGO



Community Feedback

As an integral part of the Global Women's Health program, the World Affairs Council of Connecticut and its partner councils distributed an audience feedback form at each lecture to elicit responses from participants. The form asked respondents how important the topics were to the future of the United States and what information was new to them or provoked questions they had not considered before. Although not every one of the over 1,000 participants completed feedback forms, and this was in no way a scientific survey, those who did take the time to respond provided important insight into how the topics were received by a diverse audience across the country.

LECTURE 1

"Health Care: It's a Global Issue"

TOPIC SUMMARY: As the world becomes increasingly global in nature, it faces potential epidemics of both infectious and noninfectious diseases that can easily cross national boundaries. This reality requires a global approach rather than only national actions to address health-related challenges to human security. Nations in the developed world must rely less on traditional forms of power such as military might to influence foreign policy and more on the 'soft' power that comes from cooperation and multi-nationalism. Global health diplomacy addresses the political, social and economic determinants of public health problems and diseases affecting the world's populations. A focus on global health care involves sharing human resources, scientific innovation and a concern for social justice that can build positive international relations and sustain peace in the world.

SPEAKER QUOTATIONS: "Health is a pillar of Foreign Policy... A political commitment to global health is a bridge to global peace and economic development."

RATINGS: **67%** of respondents considered the topic '**critical**' to the future of the U.S.; **18%** considered the topic '**very important**;' and **15%** rated the topic '**important**.' **No** respondents identified the topic as '**somewhat important**' or '**not important**.'

SAMPLE COMMENTS: "Global health is not just a matter of justice and morality — it is a matter of national security for the United States, an opportunity to lead not GREED."

"[health diplomacy is] the only way forward in a world of increasingly irrelevant political borders."

"It is dangerous to be naive or ignorant about this topic."

"Until all persons in the world see health care as a fundamental human right, there will be no global peace."

"The U.S. has an opportunity to be in the forefront of global health issues."

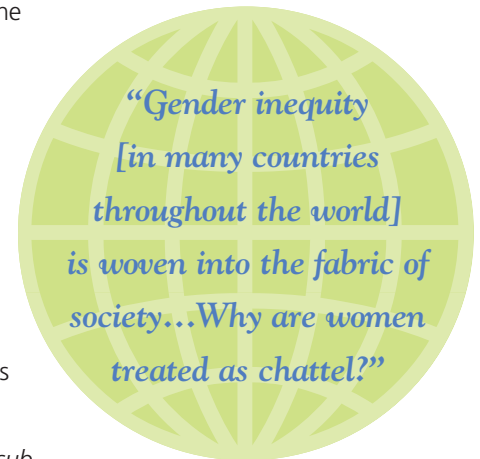
"I'm surprised how much limited cooperation exists between private and governmental agencies."



“Leveling the Playing Field: Gender Inequities in the Health Care System”

TOPIC SUMMARY: Being a woman or girl in many regions of the world severely impacts health and access to health care. Some of the socioeconomic factors facing women and girls in every region of the world include unequal power relationships between men and women; social norms that decrease educational and employment opportunities; and physical, sexual and emotional violence. As a result of these factors, gender inequities result in numerous consequences, including the following:

At least 61% of adults living with HIV in sub-Saharan Africa are women; depending on the country, between 15% and 71% of women around the world have suffered physical or sexual violence resulting in unwanted pregnancies, sexually transmitted infections, depression and chronic diseases, and more than 500,000 women a year die unnecessarily from complications of childbirth.



SPEAKER QUOTATIONS: “Gender inequity [in many countries throughout the world] is woven into the fabric of society...Why are women treated as chattel? Men reason, ‘why invest money, time and effort bringing up these girls if they will just go and live with the husband’s family when they marry and be lost to them?’”

RATINGS: **43%** of respondents considered the topic **‘critical’** to the future of the U.S; **50%** considered the topic **‘very important;’** and **7%** rated the topic **‘important.’** **No** respondents identified the topic as **‘somewhat important’** or **‘not important.’**

SAMPLE COMMENTS: “I support the argument that harm done to women affects the whole community’s well being.”

“I’m surprised at the large number of countries that still prefer male children over female.”

“The approach to educating men [in order] for women to obtain positions of power makes sense.”

“Not enough attention and education is given in order to bring to the forefront the issues of gender inequities.”

“We tend to forget that we have the privilege to live in a modernized country and that millions of people don’t even have a glass of clean water. It’s tough and horrifying to realize, especially when we could all share resources and help millions of lives.”

“Money is being spent irresponsibly (i.e., the launch of the rocket to be blown up on the moon) when there is a massive amount needed elsewhere.”

“It is ironic that people (in patriarchal countries) respect their mothers yet don’t respect women in general.”

“Global Women’s Health”

TOPIC SUMMARY: A gender-based approach to health care acknowledges the specific needs of women and girls and emphasizes solutions that: (1) invest in local organizations for women and young people which advocate effectively and hold their governments accountable; (2) empower women and young people to secure their rights and access the health care services they need to stay healthy; (3) call for the prevention of violence and discrimination against women and girls; and (4) invest in comprehensive sexual and reproductive health services including maternity care, access to contraception and sex education programs that prevent unintended pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections, including HIV/AIDS.

SPEAKER QUOTATIONS: “Our policy makers must ensure that women are part of policy making... Securing human rights for women must ultimately be done at the country level through empowerment programs for women.”

RATINGS: **58%** of respondents considered the topic **‘critical’** to the future of the U.S; **27%** considered the topic **‘very important;’** **14%** rated the topic **‘important;’** **1%** of respondents identified the topic as **‘somewhat important;’** **No** respondents rated the topic as **‘not important.’**

SAMPLE COMMENTS: (I was surprised to learn) “that 1/3 of the global population is under 19 and that there is not much engagement with that group in international programs.”

(Because of the number of people under age 19 in the world) “women’s and children’s rights will impact global society in the next 20 years.”

“I am always amazed by the number of women who die in childbirth. Not only in the developing world but in the U.S.”

“How do you get someone worried about paying the rent to care about someone’s reproductive health thousands of miles away?”

“It continues to amaze me when I hear and experience the discrepancies in basic human rights and health care between men and women. I can only hope that organizations like IWHC continue their work and that these issues gain traction in places such as the U.S.”

“I guess I sometimes question whether our government should be responsible for global issues like this one...I think that we (as individuals) should be actively caring for those in need around the world. But I don’t think that the national government should be responsible for funding that.”

(I was surprised) “that the collective efforts of the United Nations could be so slow to progress.”

“What are we doing in our own country? I know these issues are pertinent but I think the government needs to focus more on the problems of our own country before dishing out \$ to other countries.”

“I really like the way the entire series has been presented. Very informative.”



“Model Projects Addressing Women’s Global Health Issues”

TOPIC SUMMARY: Many organizations address the specific health care needs of women in the developing world. Two such programs include: (1) JHPIEGO. JHPIEGO (pronounced ‘jha-pie-go’) is an international health organization affiliated with Johns Hopkins University. For 35 years, JHPIEGO has designed and implemented effective, low-cost, hands-on solutions to strengthen the delivery of health care services for women and their families; and (2) Tostan. Tostan means ‘breakthrough’ in the West African language of Wolof. Tostan’s Community Empowerment Program is considered a ‘best practice’ by the World Health Organization, UNICEF, Population Control and others. Successes in nine African countries include: abandoning female genital cutting, ending forced child marriage, promoting grassroots democracy and protecting maternal and child health.



“The U.S.’s role in global health for women should be funding long-term development and long-term social change driven by communities themselves.”

SPEAKER QUOTATIONS: “The second biggest killer of women in childbirth is eclampsia. Pre-eclampsia can be detected and prevented by administering a simple protein test in urine, which is not available or too expensive [in many countries]. JHPIEGO repackaged the agent required in the test so that it could be produced on-site cheaply by loading it in a felt-tip pen. It now costs \$.60 for a pen that can be used to do 3,000 such tests.”
~Harshad Sanghvi

“The U.S.’s role in global health for women should be funding long-term development and long-term social change driven by communities themselves.”
~Gannon Gillespie

RATINGS: **50%** of respondents considered the topic **‘critical’** to the future of the U.S; **43%** considered the topic **‘very important’**; and **7%** rated the topic **‘important.’** **No** respondents identified the topic as **‘important,’ ‘somewhat important’** or **‘not important.’**

SAMPLE COMMENTS: “The use of native/local staff by Tostan is surprisingly (and encouragingly) high. This is really good and important.”

“Amazingly educational program. We need to find the way to entice more members [of the World Affairs network] and students in this area.”

(I am surprised) “how much can be done if we envision it.”

(I would like) “ongoing updates on ‘how to get the message out.’”

(I am surprised) “how many community based programs there are.”

Recommendations

1

If you are concerned with the issues described in this report, you may wish to advocate supporting or reintroducing the relevant bills listed below in the United States Congress. The bills address the health and welfare of women and children globally and in the United States.

The International Women's Freedom Act of 2009

SPONSORS:

Representative Carolyn Maloney (D-NY14)
House of Representatives Bill 606

Senator Barbara Boxer (D-CA)
Senate Bill 230

SUMMARY:

- > Establishes within the Department of State an Office of International Women's Rights to be headed by an Ambassador at Large for International Women's Rights.
- > Establishes the United States Commission on International Women's Rights.
- > Expresses the sense of Congress that there should be within the National Security Council (NSC) staff a Special Adviser to the President on International Women's Rights.
- > Directs the President to take specified actions in response to women's rights violations, including actions in response to particularly severe rights violations.
- > Provides for prohibition of economic, multilateral, military, and export assistance in instances of particularly severe women's rights violations.
- > Provides for the promotion of women's rights.
- > Expresses the sense of Congress that transnational corporations operating overseas should adopt codes of conduct upholding the rights of their female employees.

STATUS:

Referred to Committees:
House Foreign Affairs
House Financial Services
House Judiciary
House Judiciary, Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism and Homeland Security

The International Violence Against Women Act of 2008

SPONSORS:

Representative Howard Berman (D_CA28)
House of Representatives Bill 5927

Senator Joe Biden (D-DE)
Senate Bill 2279

SUMMARY:

- > Establishes in the Department of State the Office of Women's Global Initiatives to coordinate U.S. government efforts respecting international women's issues.
- > Establishes within the Department an Advisory Commission on International Violence Against Women.
- > Directs the President to develop a comprehensive strategy to prevent violence against women and girls.
- > Directs the Coordinator of the Office of Women's Global Initiatives to ensure that foreign assistance programs incorporate measures to prevent and respond to violence against women and girls.
- > Directs the Department and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) to assist programs that prevent and respond to violence against women and girls in all humanitarian relief, conflict, and post-conflict operations.
- > Directs the Secretary of State to: (1) encourage UN member states to expand the number of female members of UN peacekeeping missions; and (2) take emergency measures to respond to violence against women and girls during conflict or postconflict operations.
- > Authorizes appropriations to support the United Nations Development Fund for Women Trust Fund in Support of Actions to Eliminate Violence Against Women.

STATUS:

Dead

The Newborn, Child and Mother Survival Act of 2009

SPONSOR:

Representative Betty McCollum (D-MN4)
House of Representatives Bill 1410

SUMMARY:

3/10/2009 Introduced.

- > Amends the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 to authorize the President to furnish assistance to improve the health of newborns, children, and mothers in developing countries.
- > Directs the President to develop a comprehensive U.S. government strategy to reduce mortality and improve the health of newborns, children, and mothers in developing countries.
- > Establishes the Interagency Task Force on Child Survival and Maternal Health in Developing Countries.

STATUS:

Referred to the House Committee on Foreign Affairs

“You know the proverb, ‘Give a man a fish and he’ll eat for a day, but teach a man to fish and he’ll eat for a lifetime’? If you teach a woman to fish, the impact is even greater. It takes a woman to teach a village.”

HILLARY CLINTON
U.S. SECRETARY OF STATE

Global Resources and Opportunities for Women to Thrive Act of 2009

SPONSOR:

Senator Richard Durbin (D-IL)
Senate Bill 1425

SUMMARY:

7/9/09 *Introduced*

- > Targets assistance for women in developing countries with respect to: (1) microenterprises; (2) small and medium enterprises; (3) private property rights and land tenure security; (4) employment access; (5) trade benefits; (6) exchanges with U.S. entrepreneurs; and (7) Millennium Challenge Account assistance.
- > Directs the Secretary of State to establish the Global Resources and Opportunities for Women to Thrive (GROWTH) Fund to enhance economic opportunities for very poor, poor, and low-income women in developing countries with a focus on: (1) increasing women-owned enterprise development; (2) increasing property rights for women; (3) increasing women's access to financial services; (4) increasing women in leadership in implementing organizations as well as financial service providers; (5) improving women's employment benefits and conditions; and (6) increasing women's ability to benefit from global trade.
- > Directs the Secretary, through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), to: (1) provide support for tracking indicators on women's employment, property rights, access to financial services, and enterprise development; and (2) ensure foreign assistance project proposals include capacity building and technical assistance for local, indigenous, nongovernmental, organizations and community-based organizations dedicated to addressing the needs of women and women's organizations.

STATUS:

Referred to Senate Committee on Foreign Relations

Global Service (Fellows) Act of 2009

SPONSOR:

Senator Russell Feingold (D-WI)
Senate Bill 589

SUMMARY:

Directs the Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) to:

- > (1) establish and administer a Global Service Fellowship Program to fund fellowships to promote international volunteering opportunities as a means of building bridges across cultures, addressing critical human needs, and promoting mutual understanding; and
- > (2) establish the Office of Volunteers for Prosperity to implement the Global Service Fellowship Program. Sets forth Program provisions. Authorizes appropriations.

STATUS:

Referred to the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations



Global Child Survival Act 2009

SPONSOR:

Christopher Dodd, (D-CT)
Senate Bill 1966

SUMMARY:

- > The Global Child Survival Act would require the Obama Administration to develop and implement a strategy to improve the health of, and reduce the mortality rates among, newborns and children in developing countries.
- > This strategy emphasizes the need to utilize cheap and effective treatments such as micronutrients and oral rehydration salts, as well as newly developed treatments like ready-to-use foods and postnatal antihemorrhagic medicines. It also supports programs to combat female genital mutilation and promote safe and effective obstetric care.

STATUS:

Referred to the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations

International Protecting Girls by Preventing Child Marriage Act of 2009

SPONSORS:

Senator Dick Durbin (D-IL); Senator Olympia Snow (R-ME)
Senate Bill 987

Representative Betty McCollum (D-MN4)
House of Representative Bill 2103

SUMMARY:

- > The International Protecting Girls Act seeks to eliminate child marriage — which is often unlawful and in violation of human rights — by expanding investments at the community level to empower girls, promoting community understanding about the harmful impact of child marriage and requiring the U.S. government to develop a strategy to prevent child marriage.
- > The State Department will be required to report on the issue of child marriage in its annual Human Rights Report. Child marriage undermines existing U.S. investments in foreign assistance for women and girls' education, health, economic and legal status. The bill provides such sums that are necessary to support child marriage prevention programs for five years in high incident countries.

STATUS:

In the House of Representatives, provisions of the bill were included in the State Department Reauthorization Bill, which passed on June 10, 2009. In the Senate, the legislation was introduced and referred to the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations.

Recommendations

- 2** Consider finding out more about or supporting nongovernment organizations (NGOs) providing ‘aid on the ground’ around the world that addresses: (a) education of girls and women; (b) empowerment of women including microfinancing loans and leadership development; and (c) low-cost, effective, gender-based medical care for women.

Below is a list of the project’s partner organizations that provide assistance to women around the world who are experiencing the lack of access to health care, education and/or empowerment described in this report. In addition, numerous other organizations do fine work that you might wish to support.

Empowerment of Women

Tostan

1301 Clifton Street NW, Suite 300, Washington, DC 20009
202.408.9280
www.tostan.org

Since 1991, Tostan has operated Community Empowerment Programs in over 2,449 communities in nine countries in Africa with the goal of improving the lives of community members. Successes have included abandoning female genital cutting practices, ending forced child marriage, promoting grassroots democracy and protecting maternal and child health.

United Nations Foundation

1800 Massachusetts Ave, NW, Washington, DC 20036
202-887-9040
www.unfoundation.org

The UN Foundation, a public charity, was created in 1998 with entrepreneur and philanthropist Ted Turner’s historic \$1 billion gift to support UN causes and activities. The UNF is an advocate for the UN and a platform for connecting people, ideas and resources to help the United Nations solve global problems. Empowering women and girls is essential in the global drive to eliminate poverty, achieve social justice and stabilize the world’s population. The UNF Women & Population Team works together with the UN and other partners to promote gender equality and empower women and girls, with particular focus on reproductive and sexual health and rights.



Education and Medical Care For Women

International Women's Health Coalition (IWHC)

333 7th Avenue, 6th Floor, New York, NY 10001
212.979.8500
www.iwhc.org

The International Women's Health Coalition (IWHC) works to make every woman's right to a just and healthy life a global reality. IWHC shapes international policy and budgets and builds local capacity for women's health and human rights. Its strategy is to empower local organizations, mobilize women and young people to act, inform powerbrokers and advocate for women in nations' capitals and with the United Nations in order to motivate people and institutions to secure rights and health for women and girls. For 26 years, IWHC has worked with hundreds of partners worldwide, primarily in Africa, Asia and Latin America to end discrimination, sexual coercion and violence against women and girls, and to ensure access to health services and information.



PHOTO COURTESY OF MAGNUS HEDBURG, TOSTAN

JHPIEGO

1615 Thames Street, Baltimore, MD 21231-3492
410.537.1800
www.jhpiego.jhu.edu/

Affiliated with Johns Hopkins University, JHPIEGO's goal is to enhance the health and save the lives of women and families around the world by (1) empowering community health workers on site; and (2) designing and implementing effective, low-cost solutions that strengthen health care delivery. Founded in 1973, JHPIEGO is currently providing services in more than 50 countries in reproductive, maternal and child health, HIV/AIDS, malaria and cervical cancer prevention.

Partners In Health

888 Commonwealth Avenue, 3rd Floor, Boston, MA 02215
617.432.5256
<http://www.pih.org>

Partners In Health (PIH), founded by Paul Farmer in 1987, partners with poor communities around the world to combat diseases and poverty and avert preventable deaths. Working in Haiti, Peru, Russia, the United States, Rwanda, Lesotho and Malawi, PIH, with its community partnerships, provides access to primary health care, free health care and education for the poor and attention to people's social and economic needs, including access to food, shelter, clean water, sanitation, and economic opportunities.



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“When women have the power to make their own choices, the chains of poverty can be broken, families are strengthened and socially constructive values are more likely to be handed down to the young. They can finance their own businesses and contribute to their country’s economy or teach their daughters and sons to promote innovation and creativity that will lift the world’s poorest nations out of poverty.”

U. S. FORMER SECRETARIES OF STATE MADELEINE K. ALBRIGHT
AND CONDOLEEZZA RICE
OCTOBER 27, 2009

“Why [does] development in other countries matter to the American people and to our nation’s security and prosperity?...The United States seeks a safer, more prosperous, more democratic, and more equitable world. We cannot be assured of that progress when one third of humankind live in conditions that offer them little chance of building better lives for themselves or their children.”

HILLARY CLINTON
U.S. SECRETARY OF STATE

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affairs council

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