

**Special Session B: Women and the Power of  
Economic Opportunity  
2006 Clinton Global Initiative Annual Meeting  
September 22, 2006**

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[START RECORDING]

[Music Playing]

**FEMALE SPEAKER:** Please welcome Senator Hillary  
Rodham Clinton.

[Music Playing]

**HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON:** Thank you.

[Applause]

Good morning. It's a great honor to be here with all  
of you. I have the privilege of announcing commitments before  
we start our session. These commitments bring together a  
variety of partners to address, among other items, the health  
and economic challenges facing women around the world today.

First I would like to recognize Miland Revere  
[misspelled?].

[Applause]

Miland is the board chair of Vital Voices Global  
Partnership and her partners are Maria Eitel, president of  
the Nike Foundation; Ray Ferguson, CEO of the American  
Standard Chartered Bank; Sandra Taylor, vice president  
Corporate Social Responsibility for Starbucks Coffee Company  
and Exxon Mobil. They have committed to holding a conference  
in January of 2007, making a commitment of \$1 million to  
convene a Pan African Women's Leadership Summit, the purpose  
of which is to connect more than 200 African women who are

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working in various roles throughout the continent as leaders for positive change. This will recognize the critical role that African women play today and must play in moving the continent forward in achieving greater health, welfare and more stable governments and economies. So thank you to Miland Revere and her partners.

[Applause]

Secondly, I would like to recognize Dr. Zeda Rosenberg, CEO of the International Partnership for Microbicides, known as IPM. IPM and its partner Harvard University and Partners in Health will commit \$3 million over the next three years to support access to microbicides for the prevention of HIV transmission, and to help develop a broader framework to bring innovative global public health goods to low resource settings.

[Applause]

I would like now to recognize Ajay Banga, chairman and CEO of Citigroup's Global Consumer Group International. Citigroup will be expanding its programs to support sustainable microfinance institutions by \$100 million over five years. They're already doing work around the world, but his is a significant increase in their commitment, and I appreciate very much Citigroup and Ajay Banga, who you'll meet in a minute because he's on the panel.

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Finally, I would like to recognize Dr. Allan Rosenfield. Those of us in public health work, or who have supported the soldiers on the frontlines of public health, know this name very well. Dr. Rosenfield is the dean of the Mailman School of Public Health at Columbia University. He is also one of the pioneers in working on behalf of maternal health around the world and was one of the people who understood early that we had to stop the transmission of HIV/AIDS from mothers to children if we would ever have any hope of getting the epidemic under control. The Mailman School will be making a five-year \$75 million commitment to help improve women's health, decrease maternal death and disability, provide prevention, care and treatment for women infected with HIV/AIDS and decrease the incidence of violence against women in conflict areas. Thank you, Dr. Rosenfield.

[Applause]

We should give another round of applause for all those commitments.

[Applause]

They are really significant efforts to deal with many of the issues affecting women and that's part of the reason we wanted to have a special plenary session on Women and the Power of Economic Opportunity. A little over a decade ago, I had the honor of leading the American Delegation to the

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Fourth United Nations Conference on Women in Beijing. The outcome of that conference was a platform for action where we proudly declared that women's rights were human rights and human rights were women's rights. We knew that that message had to be repeated over and over again. While in Beijing, I was inspired by the stories of women from so many parts of the world who, when given the opportunity, were able to take control of their lives and become economically self sufficient, benefitting not only themselves, but their families and their local communities.

Time and again, microfinance and microcredit organizations have been shown to be successful tools at lifting women and their families out of poverty. They give individuals the ability to move beyond subsistence living, to send their children to school where that still is a costly barrier. They also begin to build to a better future and lift up those around them. But one alarming development that has occurred since the Beijing Conference is the so-called feminization of poverty. Despite the fact that many women are gaining rights in their societies, are being educated for the first time, are having access to healthcare, are even being the beneficiaries of microfinance programs, far too many women are stuck in a cycle of poverty from which there is no escape.

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What makes the feminization of poverty so tragic is that it hurts far more than just the women themselves. When women succeed economically, the benefits do extend, particular to their children. That is one way to lift the sights and aspirations and realities of the lives of countless millions of children by focusing on their mothers. Yet, we know that the barriers are formidable. What we're going to talk about today is how to overcome those barriers.

What do we do about the fact that in too many place still today, in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, women are denied access to educational opportunities that would give them the skills and training they need to support themselves, to contribute to the family income? What do we do about the fact that women lack access to healthcare and the means to address debilitating and even lethal conditions like obstetric fistula, a fully treatable condition? Because of their unequal status in far too many places, women experience increased vulnerability to diseases like HIV and malaria? What do we do about the fact that women still lack equality under the law? In many places they are still prohibited from owning or inheriting property. They don't have many options if their father dies or their husband dies – they own nothing. How do we help overcome that condition of poverty and dependence?

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Finally, what do we do about the fact that women make up half of the world's population, but in too many places they can't vote, they can't run for office; the doors to both the political arena and the business arena are effectively closed to them? For example, we know that many microcredit programs work, but why can't we bring them to scale? Why can't we reproduce the best practices? Why can't we convince banks to support microcredit programs where the loan repayment rate is far higher than any other commercial loan transaction in the world?

Here today, to discuss some of these issues and to hopefully suggest solutions and maybe inspire some of you to think of ways you can take action on behalf of women around the world, are the following guests.

Reema Nanavaty is the director of the Economic and Rural Development of Self-Employed Women's Association in India. She is currently coordinating SEWA's Rural Development Program in 14 districts of Gujarat. Now, there is a lot to say about Reema and about SEWA, but let me just briefly point out that she manages more than \$6 million in economic activities, including a federation of 100 cooperatives and a direct marketing outlet for over 12,000 artisans. She was instrumental in launching – and now is busily expanding – SEWA's trade facilitating center, which is

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a partnership to try to make sure that these women have broader markets for all of the products that they produce. I visited SEWA several years ago, and I will never forget how impressed I was with what they were doing and how much they had grown. It is a great example of how to bring self-sufficiency, dignity, pride and human rights to poor women in India. Please join me in welcoming Reema Nanavaty.

[Applause]

Ann Veneman assumed the leadership of UNICEF on May 1, 2005, becoming the fifth executive director to lead UNICEF in its 60-year history. Since assuming the position, she has traveled to more than 30 countries, witnessing firsthand the good work that UNICEF is doing. She is coming up with strategies and advocating for UNICEF to advance the Millenium Development Goals by supporting child health and nutrition, quality basic education for boy and girls, access to clean water and sanitation, and to protect children from violence, exploitation and AIDS. Prior to joining UNICEF, Ann served as the 27<sup>th</sup> secretary of United States Department of Agriculture from 2001 to 2005. That is a special expertise she brings to this job because so much of the world's agriculture is done by women. Please welcome Ann Veneman.

[Applause]

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Ajay Banga is chairman and chief executive officer of Citigroup's Global Consumer Group International Businesses. His responsibilities include all credit card, retail banking and consumer finance operations across the world. Through his work at Citigroup, he has been involved with a variety of non-profit organizations dedicated to financial education, microfinance, education, affordable housing and community development. In 2005, he served on the Advisor's Group to the United Nations' International Year of Microcredit. Please welcome Ajay Banga and thank him for the commitment that Citigroup has made.

[Applause]

Our final panelist is Dr. Helene Gayle, president and CEO of CARE. She is the first woman and first person of color to lead this premier humanitarian organization in its 60-year history. She joined CARE from the Gates Foundation where she was director of that organization's HIV, TB and Reproductive Health Program. Dr. Gayle oversaw a program of approximately \$1.5 billion in grants. Under her leadership, the Gates Foundation – as we all know – expanded support for HIV and TB prevention, treatment and research. Dr. Gayle was also at the National Centers for Disease Control and Prevention for nearly 20 years and served as director of important programs within our government for HIV, sexually

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transmitted diseases and TB prevention. She is an expert on malnutrition in children and she has been instrumental in evaluating child survival programs in Africa, as well as working on the diseases that take the lives, much too early, of so many around the world. Please welcome Dr. Gayle.

[Applause]

We have this fabulous panel of experts and people who are on the frontlines of so many of these issues. What I hope we can do today is not only hear from each of them, but also figure out what we can do. I'm going to start with Reema because for decades SEWA has been carrying out programs that help women pull themselves out of absolute poverty. I'd like you to describe for us, Reema, what you have learned from these women about what they want out of life, what their hopes and aspirations are and what are the challenges, the real-life challenges they face, in trying to improve their opportunities?

**REEMA NANAVATY:** Thank you so much for giving me this opportunity to share our work and the lessons that we have been continuously learning from our members. I say this based on my working with 800,000 members of the Self-Employed Women's Association, SEWA. The first and the foremost is that women do not want charity. What women really want, based on our three decades of experience and of working with

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women in Africa, in Latin America through our Grassroots Training Network, is women want work. They want work which is meaningful and gainful for them, meaningful in terms of skills, in terms of bringing them access to two square meals and security so that they are able to better feed their families and educate their children. This work they are able to access only when we have the women who are organized so that they have their collective strength and bargaining power. Women are able to then have access to assets and capital, have access to institutions that help them access markets and also to basic support services, which are healthcare, childcare and nutrition. When all this comes together, this becomes a tremendous economic opportunity for the women themselves. Even if it is spread of time and duration, women do take control and charge in their fight against poverty. This is the biggest lesson that we have learned in working with our 800,000 women in these last three decades.

I would also like to share some of the challenges here. When women work on a smaller scale on small programs, it is fine. Women who benefit also feel good, and people who [inaudible] also feel good, but eventually it also has to go to scale. Going to scale is a big challenge because without going to scale, we are not able to change the conditions that

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make women care and which also make them more vulnerable. Once women start gaining economic strength, it does change the power structure. Once the power structure starts changing, I think the existing socioeconomic structures feel threatened. I think that no matter how much women then continue working, they do not move far ahead out of poverty. It is these power structures, the socioeconomic existing structures and the political forces that do not allow the poor and their organizations to really go to scale. They really feel threatened about it.

**HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON:** I can remember very well when I was at SEWA and women were gathered – some had walked for nearly a day to get to our meeting – and there was this sea of these beautiful faces and these brightly colored saris and many of the women stood up to share their story with me. It was put into very personal terms when women would say, “I was widowed and no one would help me. My mother-in-law was a nightmare. The police were always harassing me.” They could never have made the progress without being brought into association. I think that is one of the real lessons, that working individually, woman by woman by woman is important and we want everyone to focus on that, but helping to organize women to stand up for their rights. When all the women who were part of SEWA were being harassed at the same

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time by the police in their market stalls, they could stand up and fight back. I think that is a critical issue that Reema has raised for us.

Ann, as someone who is now in charge of really the premier children's group in the world and has worked so hard to understand the strategies that we should follow, how can international and national development strategies be better focused on women and children? Why is it so hard to make the case – which every economist who has looked at this has made consistently – if you want to improve the standard of living for a society, focus on the women? Why can't we get that across?

**ANN VENEMAN:** Well, I think it is a very difficult thing to do. We know that women do about 66-percent of the work in the world. They produce about 50-percent of the food. Yet they earn 5-percent of the income and own 1-percent of the property. So I think there are many strategies that have to be targeted to women. One is, of course, education. Girls' education, in particular, is absolutely critical if women are going to get ahead. We know there are many things that keep girls out of school. Sometimes it's the cost. If a family has girls and boys, they will send the boys to school first. The girls are kept at home to do the chores and fetch water and do a variety of

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things. There are strategies that do help get girls in school and students in school, whether it is elimination of school fees or helping to for uniforms and books and so forth.

The second thing I think that is very important is really looking at integrated healthcare approaches that begin with the pregnant mother. Make sure that you're going to have a healthy baby and then you will help to address the issue of child mortality. This is part of the whole issue of women and poverty.

I think the other thing is that we need to address the issue of laws and how much they protect women. How do we get strong laws on allowing women to inherit wealth, for example, or own property? One of the countries that has really been changing their laws and making a difference is Rwanda. Rwanda right now has the largest percentage of women parliamentarians of anywhere in the world at about 48 or 49-percent. This has made a huge difference. They are creating laws against sexual violence, creating laws on inheritance of wealth, and it is really creating a difference. So I think we need laws against violence against women, we need laws that allow women to have economic opportunity, and I think if we take a multi-pronged strategy toward women, we can get results.

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**HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON:** Well, I think that you have just very articulately and concisely summed up the agenda because that is exactly what we need to be doing. In order to get that accomplished, however, we need to convince not only governments – Ajay, I don't mean to put you on the spot – but major multinational corporations who do business in so many of these countries around the world, to help be partners in changing the condition and perhaps even leading by example, giving women economic opportunities, which then can demonstrate the role that women can play. I guess my question then would be what is the role of corporations in providing economic opportunities, particularly financial services companies that are everywhere in the world?

**AJAY BANGA:** First of all, it's great to be a man in an all-women panel; I think there's a message there. [Laughter] There is a message there in the fact that this is not just a women's issue. It is an issue for all of us. Thank you for that opportunity. I just think it is a big deal.

[Applause]

For corporations of all types, whether it's consumer product companies, technology companies or financial services companies, at the end of the day, it is in their enlightened self-interest to help educate and get women out of poverty

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because that is where their future business will come from. The moment they get that right and they add to it the power of the pleasure and the pride that their employees get from being associated with a company that understands this, you have a very important combination for multi-nationalists and financial services companies. I think it is in our interest to do this.

I think how you can go about doing it is in three real ways. The usual way is philanthropy. You have foundations that help either build capacity with the institutions of different types. As an example, in Chile or in Venezuela, we have our foundation at Citigroup that helps to get women – along with another foundation locally – get educated on beekeeping, cheese making or organic farming. Along with that, we bring the financial and literacy side of it so that they know what to do with the money that they generally get from these activities. That is the traditional methodology.

Another methodology is to employee volunteerism. In a company like ours, which has 350,000 employees worldwide, if you can get even 15,000 of them to devote a day every year to going to help, what they bring in knowledge and expertise on is bringing 15,000 man days of educated manpower to the table to help people. That's the second piece.

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I think the third most important piece is making it sustainable and scalable, to Reema's point, and that's the business side of this. I think there you can bring resources, you can bring innovation and the like, but I think in financial services companies, there are four clear things that you can do. You can help other institutions get liquidity on their balance sheets. That is a bit like the \$100 million fund you referred to earlier. We did something like that for Brach [misspelled?] in Bangladesh where we helped securitize their launch. It's a \$100 loan. There wasn't a real market for securitizations. We got that done and they get \$15 million of liquidity every six months. We've committed \$180 million in six years. That allows them to lend further with that liquidity. That is one kind of help.

Another kind of help is insurance. You talked about women being left without dependence. Well, in Mexico, our Mexican business has recently, with [inaudible], launched an insurance effort where in this year-and-a-half we have insured 600,000 women for a \$1,300 life insurance benefit. That is 12-percent of the entire insured population in the country of Mexico through an effort with collaboration with a very strong NGO. What happens then is they are not dependent on their families or on somebody else when bad things happen

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in the family. By the way, mother-in-laws are a problem for men and women.

[Laughter] [Applause]

I think really the last piece is what we can do directly and that is by lending. You talked about getting us to lend. In fact, with the effort and the help of organizations like SEWA – with whom we've been partners for several years – or now with the Working Women's Forum in India, we're actually learning how to lend to these individuals through them. It is small, ticket-sized loans, but we made 27,000 loans in a year and our re-payments are terrific at 99.2-percent. So you learn from that.

I think those are the kinds of things you can. You can do things with volunteerism and you can do things with the foundations, but, even more importantly, what we have to do is get the business of microfinance to become sustainable in itself – whether through lending, whether through direct participation, through savings schemes or, as Allan keeps reminding us, through equity, which I think is an issue we should talk about when we talk about challenges.

**HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON:** It is music to my ears listening to you speak. I've worked in microcredit since 1983 when Bill and I first met our dear friend Mohammed Yunis and learned about what he was doing with the Grameen Bank and

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brought an American version of that to Arkansas. It has been an area of great interest to me and I appreciate so much what you just said, because there is a role for commercial lenders to get into this arena and to work hand-in-hand with organizations like SEWA and others who actually do the work, but it has taken a long time to persuade people of that. I really appreciate your strong endorsement of that, Ajay.

Helene, you have probably the broadest view of any of us because of the work you've done at CDC and the work you are now doing at CARE. How would you describe the opportunities and particularly the challenges facing women as they try to obtain the tools they need for their own self-sufficiency and to secure a better future?

**HELENE GAYLE:** First of all, let me – along with the other panelists who've already thanked you and your husband for having this panel – thank you. I think this is incredibly important that we have a panel that is really focused on these issues. My only suggestion is that it's the first panel next time [laughter] and leads the conference.

[Applause] [Break in Audio]

We continue to talk about the fact that the most efficient way to break the cycle of poverty is investing in women. I think that if we really believe that, we have to get women on the agenda front and center and really think

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about including girls and adolescents as well. We talk about the issues of women and when we're doing that, we're looking at fixing things that are, in some ways, already broken. I'm a public health and prevention person, so I think about prevention and when we think about how we can have an impact long term, it is really by impacting young girls and their male counterparts - young boys - and making sure that they see the world differently. So that's one in looking at how we grow up the next generation of our future leaders who see the world very differently. Around the world, there are incredible programs, not only in education specifically, but education that includes gender aspects in it. When we say gender we often think women. No, it must be that we also think about our boys and how they're thinking about young girls and the roles in society. I think that that is a critical piece.

Then I think that we need to look at all of the issues that have been raised and recognize that they're all interconnected. We talk a lot about microfinance - wonderful, it's great - but microfinance on its own is not the answer. In fact, the work that SEWA is doing shows that it is microfinance plus that includes gender equity issues, empowerment, teaching women about their civic responsibility and integrating health into that, integrating information

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about livelihood and markets and all of that. So we have to make sure that whatever we do, the metric is not just how well people repay loans, but how well are we empowering women. If we're only measuring the loan repayment, which I think is obviously wonderful and we're all thrilled that 90-plus-percent of loans that women take out are repaid, but we've also got to start developing metrics that look at what does that do for women's decision-making within the home and are we putting the kind of components into that that do shift that equation?

I think that we need to look at this in a more integrated fashion in the things that we're talking about like education, health, microfinance and agriculture. As Ann mention, 80-percent of the farmers in Africa are women. We don't think about our agriculture programs as women's programs. We need to think about what does it mean to really make sure that the small farmers in Africa who are women are actually getting access to markets? Again, all of things, I think, have to be integrated when we think about these. Obviously, for me as a health person, I think that health plays a role in development broadly, but particularly for women. Women bear a disproportionate burden of illness in many developing societies. It is both because of their biology and their interaction of society and culture. Young

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girls are more vulnerable to HIV because of their biology, but they're also more vulnerable to HIV because of the social pressures and the economic dependencies. So we have to think about how to make sure that we don't just provide public health services, but we also look at the underlying causes of these issues and really do a better job of integrating. I think our scale-up will be enhanced by having integrated programs as well, as opposed to attacking these things one-by-one. But wherever we enter, we end up having a cascade effect. If we help women have smaller families, they're able to educate their children, they have less disease and all of these things become multiplier factors. I think that is where our real potential is.

**HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON:** But let me ask you, Helene, to follow up on that. It is clear that there are so many cultural barriers to what we're talking about. Once you start intervening in a way that empowers a woman, that gives women the confidence to say no to a range of difficult situations, once you begin to try to work on lifting up women in some societies, you immediately get a backlash from a number of the governmental and economic power structures. I would like each of you to respond to how we can best deal with that. It's not that we haven't done interventions over the last 30 or 40 years, but a lot of them have failed or at

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least they have not resulted in the progress that one would have expected. So how can we do a better job of taking that integrated approach and creating real change?

**HELENE GAYLE:** I think that first it has to be multi-level. We're just starting to bring the community into this dialogue and we've looked at it only from the policy level. We've got to keep looking at it from the policy makers and the leaders' level, but once we bring community in and make them realize that they can make their governments accountable and they can make their policy makers accountable, I think you start a very different dialogue. Again, I go around the world and look at some of the projects that we're involved in that may be microfinance projects or it may be health projects, but a component of that is civic education. As both of you mentioned, bringing women into association is so empowering. Women come into association to start microfinance, but they start talking about their problems and they start talking about the issues that face them. Just like any of us if we're put together and start discussing our problems, they start coming up with solutions. If you help them recognize how they can make their society more accountable to them, than I think that starts a chain reaction. But I also think in this equation we have to include men. Again using the example of the microfinance

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where so many of the programs are targeted to women, it does sometimes engender conflict within the home. We have to bring men into these programs, as well, so that women and their male partners see this as a partnership and not see this as something that they have to feel threatened by and that they see that it is contributing to the family overall. It is possible and with the right kind of dialogue, it does happen. We need to bring the community into it while we're also looking at the policy level.

**HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON:** Ann, I would love for you share with us some ideas about how to help on agriculture, since you have a double expertise here. Given the fact that so much of agriculture is not only run by women, but it is subsistence agriculture, which makes it even more challenging, what could we do? How best could we target resources and opportunities to help in that area?

**ANN VENEMAN:** Well, I think there are a number of things that can assist with agriculture to help not only subsistence farmers, but farmers throughout the developing world. One, of course, is to make sure that they have access to seed varieties, research and so forth. We saw recently – when I was in Kenya – huge increases in production just by using modern seed varieties that gave greater productivity to

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farmers. One thing would be giving farmers access to seeds and fertilizers to increase productivity.

The second thing, of course, is looking at new technologies – how do you find the drought-resistant casava or the disease-resistant maize that is the African variety, for example? I think that we need to continually target research. I've seen, in my travels, a breakdown of extension systems in Africa. I think we need to do some of that basic education.

Of course, then there are markets. One of the most disturbing things is the breakdown of the Doha Development Agenda. These trade talks constantly break down over the issue of agriculture and agriculture subsidies and agriculture access. I think we have to – as a global community – address the issue of international trade to provide markets for more farmers.

[Applause]

**HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON:** Ajay, as you were finishing up your opening comments, which I really appreciated because it covered so much, you said there were a few more things you'd like to bring up in order to zero in on what are the obstacles, how do we overcome them and, frankly, how do we persuade more people to see the world as you see it right now with a new market out there to be developed?

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**AJAY BANGA:** I think the part about persuading more people, first of all, is things like this that gets people to understand, make publicity and make the aspect of knowing about this a weapon in itself. I think that is just a big event. But I think the piece about getting public/private partnerships, getting regulators, governments, multilateral institutions as well as companies together around this whole aspect of economic opportunity is a big deal. I maintain that the best way to remove poverty is to give somebody a job. Everything else comes afterward. If you can give them a job whether because they are working for somebody or whether because they are working for themselves selling vegetables or selling fish or doing something that allows them to go home and not be economically dependent on the other individuals in the family, I think that makes a big difference.

In my view, the public/private kinds of partnerships have certain challenges. In the United States, if you want to know about a certain segment of population, you can get information about what people do, what time they go to sleep, what time they wake up, what they watch and what they don't do instantaneously. Your ability to create programs that completely understand those people is much better. In most of these countries that we're talking about, there is no

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information and there is no knowledge, so it is a bit of a hit-and-run kind of testing methodology. While testing is good, if multilateral agencies were to spend money and effort into getting that depth of knowledge into some of these countries about what women in that strata of society could benefit from, I think it would help commercial enterprises enormously. That would be one piece.

I think the second big piece is that regulatory agencies and governments have got to provide a framework by which microfinance gets developed, or microcredit or microinsurance and all these things get developed within a positive way of being perceived. There will be people who will do wrong things. If one bad thing happens, this entire industry and effort will get set back 20 years. It is important to create an framework by which people do these things in a responsible, self-controlled way. I think that is the responsibility of governments and regulators in these countries, in addition to providing a level playing field, which I think they can really do a lot on.

I think the third part is the aspect of scale. We've all talked about scale and you raised it right at the beginning. Why don't we have scale in this business? It's because the cost of reaching people in highly distributed places with a frequent visit is very expensive with a very

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small ticket-size loan. You add to that the fact that probably they would not want to come to Citibank to take a loan because they don't know who the heck I am and they think I'm some big, bad bank from the United States. To change that, I need to have a partner who has credibility with these people. Therefore, we need to invest in building the capability of those partners because those partners never have the adequate, let's say, depth of talent, capability and resources that allow them to be partners with commercial enterprises.

I think those are the kind of three or four scale issues that I can feel around here. I think I would be mistaken if I didn't say two other things.

One is I think the aspect that Allan [inaudible] – and I'm going to keep raising this – raised with me two nights ago about getting into equity for these people as against only lending. It is a huge challenge, but I think we need to apply our minds to it.

I think the second aspect of this is that we've got to get to the stage where the publicity – as I said in the beginning – is the champion of this cause about people who can make a difference. It's just enormously important.

**HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON:** I appreciate you raising again the issue of equity. Allan is in the front row and he

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has been deeply enmeshed in trying to figure out the best ways of doing that. That requires that people own something. That requires that a lot of governments and a lot of social structures that have been around for a very long time begin to realize that everybody could do better if you gave title to property, if you didn't treat people in the 21<sup>st</sup> century like they were feudal serfs in the 8<sup>th</sup> century. So I think that anything we can do to convince governments and, frankly, the elite of a lot of these countries that it is in their long-term interests to break up some of these culturally embedded obstacles, it is one way that we can actually do what you're saying. If people don't own anything, it is very hard for them to figure out how they have any equity and is equally difficult for someone to come in and identify that.

Reema, you have had decades of experience on these issues. I wish that you would, perhaps, challenge all of us as to what you see as your needs. Reema was in my office with Ela Bhatt – who is the extraordinarily creative founder of SEWA – a few months ago talking about how to take SEWA global. It was so exciting because when I was there in the mid-90s, you were still keeping track of everything on pads of paper. Now you've got computers and you're thinking about how to really bring this to a new level. What did you need us to do to help you make that happen?

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**REEMA NANAVATY:** I think it's a very critical and also a very relevant point to really deliberate on. How do you take local to global and global to local? That's what the globalization really has to mean if you all really want to address this whole issue of poverty.

There are two major, specific areas. One is for the global businesses. I just couldn't believe what Ajay was just saying. It felt as if everything is happening and there is nothing much to be done now. I think there are very few people who really understand that investing in the grassroots organization does not mean that they need charity or they need safety nets, but what it means by investing is they need investments in building systems and processes, they need investing in technology, which would also build their capacities to manage and to acquire newer skills. There is also investing in advocating policy changes. Still, in countries like ours, we don't see maternity benefit coming to the women or equal wage for women as active contributors to the economy. This is what the global businesses can do to build partnerships and make them market-ready to take leaps and bounds at the national and regional level and in global markets.

Sometimes we feel scared and, instead of building partnerships and leveraging the strengths of the grassroots

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as well as the businesses, sometimes we take up initiatives that are very parallel and also often perpendicular. That sort of inhibits the growth of the grassroots organizations. I think this is a major caution for the global businesses, in that one needs to recognize the grassroots organizations as valuable investment partners.

I think there are several initiatives in different countries, in Africa and India. I think India is taking leaps and bounds, but we all are doing it in isolation. We need to have the businesses, the governments and the grassroots organizations all come together. It is, I think, as our founder always keeps reminding up, that we have to equip the women in their own fight against poverty. It is *their* march out of poverty at their own pace and as *they* wish, not the way that we really wish it.

I think the second specific issue is about the policies. I think the first and the foremost is that the policy makers really need to recognize that women and the poor are workers. Their organizations need to be recognized as partners for change. It is not that somebody is a recipient and somebody is a given, but these are partners for change. How do we build partnerships?

Second is to also review what existing policies have done, in terms of impact on the poor and their lives,

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especially when we talk of women. Amongst the poor, in countries like ours, women still are the poorest of the poor.

Thirdly and importantly is to give them voice and representation. Where are the representatives of poor in the policy making fora? They still are struggling.

I think these are the major challenges that we all have to deal with together.

**HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON:** Yes, Helene?

**HELENE GAYLE:** I want to just add, in listening to her, that we talked about policy makers generally, but I think it really raises the fact that when we start talking about what the sectors are that need to be involved, obviously the NGO sector and grassroots community groups and the business sector, but the government sector is such an important part, especially when we talk about scalability. There is one institution within a country that has that responsibility for services and for well-being and for changing policies and making laws. I think that we need to get governments on board, both governments like ours – rich nation governments – as well as looking at the policies within governments. I would love to see our government have a comprehensive bill on women that really looks at how we can really provide the kinds of programs and resources that would help SEWA and others be able to scale up their activities, as

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well as what governments in those countries can be pushed to do that would really give the kind of policy environment that's necessary. Without that, it just is unrealistic to think that small, grassroots organizations can do it by themselves. There really has to be a shift in the policy environment, which means government and public sector, to allow some of that to take hold. Help work with businesses to develop incentives so businesses see that it is in their interest to get more involved in this as well. So these are the other missing pieces of that partnership, the NGO, community and private sector and, I think, the role of governments – both rich, as well as developing country governments – in looking at policies that would really enhance this.

**HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON:** How do we, though, provide the incentives? You've been in politics, Ann; how do we provide the incentives to convince governments to change? We have now, for 30 years, talked about the need to change laws so that women can own and inherit property, to participate in the political process, to have representation, to send girls to school and to take care of the healthcare of women. What do we have to do to persuade governments that this is really in their interests to do this?

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**HELENE GAYLE, M.D.:** Get more women in government to start with.

[Laughter] [Applause]

**HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON:** That's part of it, but while we're waiting for that [laughter] – Ann, what do you think?

**ANN VENEMAN:** Well, I actually agree with that. That's one of the reasons I brought up the Rwanda experience early on. When you put more women in government, you do see policy change. But I also think, in the meantime, it is incumbent upon all of us who are working in the international arena to bring attention to these issues. Bring attention to the fact that there is a tremendous amount of violence against women. If countries have rape laws on the books, are they strong enough? Do they protect children enough? Are they enforced? Some countries have the laws, but they aren't enforced. How do you get the laws that give women equal economic opportunity, the right to own and inherit property, again, as I talked about before?

When I visit these countries, sometimes I feel like people think there's nothing that can be done, so we just won't talk about it. If we don't raise these issues and get the press in these countries to raise them and put pressure on policy makers, I don't think we'll see the change. If we continue to raise the issues, I think we'll have more

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likelihood of seeing change in these countries where we really need to single-entity a change in law and policy.

**HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON:** I'm glad you raised the question about violence against women. Also here with us today is Madeleine Albright. As secretary of state, she took an incredible, strong position, the first ever against violence against women. She famously said that, "Violence against women is not cultural, it's criminal." I really want to commend her for being such a strong spokesperson for this.

[Applause]

There are good examples around the world about what does work. We don't want to paint too gloomy a picture, although the increase of violence, having women now be – with their children – the principle victims of war, the sex trafficking that goes on – there are lots of very dire actions happening that are quite troubling. But there are good examples, but what we've got to do is create more of a connection between what works and people who are willing to support what works, whether they be in government, in the private sector, or in the NGO community.

I was thinking, after I had been at SEWA, I was in Nicaragua and I was meeting with a group of women in a small, microcredit organization. They had seen me on television with the women in India, and they wanted to know all about

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the women in India. There was this wonderful moment where – through the pictures that were beamed from India to Nicaragua – there was a sense of solidarity, that we can do this. But what has not yet happened and to go back to the points that Helene and Ann were making, how do we create a structure that really channels government aid, channels charitable assistance and channels business efforts so that we have a better chance of success? Individually, a lot of these programs are very worthy, but how do we create more of an impetus behind combined efforts to make this happen?

Although we are close to running out of time – which I regret because I could literally talk about this for hours – I wanted to ask each of our panelists something. You have an audience of people from all over the world who are obviously interested enough to come to the Clinton Global Initiative to learn about areas of the world and problems or to wrestle with difficult challenges that they want to do something about. Starting with you, Reema, what would be the one thing you would want to challenge this audience to do to deal with the situation women find themselves in around the world, particularly the economic dependence?

**REEMA NANAVATY:** I think the one most important and very relevant thing now to what you specifically said is what kind of a framework, how do we channel all the different

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forces to come together? I think one important step ahead would be to set up a leadership council that promotes inclusion of women in trade. Be it for small farmers, for small producers, for small artisans, for small weavers, for small fishing communities, we need a leadership council that promotes inclusion of women in trade. Very often we still see a disconnect where we think of women as small recipients, trade should only be discussed in the corridors of the government buildings with large corporations. But, yes, women and trade are much interconnected. If women have access to trade, they directly feed their children, they run their families, they have better education, better healthcare and all the more important, they work on peace building and that is what everybody needs. So I think having such a leadership council would be a very major step forward. Thank you.

**HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON:** Excellent idea.

[Applause]

Reema and I and SEWA are working to try to help get some of the SEWA members on Ebay because, what I've found in working on economic development – even in places in New York – is that it is difficult for artisans, small businesses and crafts people to get their market bigger than just the immediate area in which they live. So I helped to start some

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groups where we've been facilitating, with technical assistance, getting these kinds of products on eBay. I think the idea of a leadership council in looking for ways to get women into trade is really one we'll follow up on.

Ajay, how would you try to make the case to your fellow business leaders that this is an area where they can both do well and do good? You've been very specific in outlining some of the ways that you've gone about it and what more needs to be done, but what one message do you want to leave with people on this?

**AJAY BANGA:** Nothing succeeds like success. I think that if we can get business leaders to see the value that you get from being seen as associated, like we are, with doing these things, if you can see the value of the change in your business in that country, if you can see that your employees feel better for being there for you, I think you can make a very strong business case. I don't know that the case for business has not been made; I just think it hasn't been propagated strongly enough. I keep coming back to that issue of making this a publicly known and celebrated cause. There are so many little successes around the world. If all the people in this audience went back and looked for those successes in their individual areas and celebrated them and made people aware of them, I tell you this would be like a

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snowball rolling downhill. That is where the excitement would come from. Bite-size chunks – that's what we can do. The big issues will sometimes be insurmountable, but bite-size chunks can make a difference. That is my feeling.

**HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON:** I think that's a very good way of going at it.

[Applause]

I really appreciate the ideas you've shared with us today. This whole concept of insurance among the poor is really important. I would argue that we could also come up with some health insurance models. I don't know whether they would work as for-profit models, but with help from maybe some of the for-profit sector, you could use the payments into those health insurance funds to build up health systems in local areas. So it would become sort of a more self-perpetuating cycle of the system in there, people have access to it and go from there. I think this needs to be continued and I don't want to put you on the spot Ajay, but I would love for you to be willing to sponsor such a meeting of other business leaders – maybe a Citigroup – talking about what you've done, bringing others to the table, and seeing whether we could take this to the next level. Thank you very much.

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Ann, what can we do to help the important work of UNICEF? I remember as child going around collecting money at Halloween for UNICEF. Do kids still do that now?

**ANN VENEMAN:** Absolutely, the boxes are ready. You may pick them up. [Laughter] We can probably have them here this afternoon.

**HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON:** That was always important because it made a connection between children in our country and children elsewhere. I think we need to re-ignite that awareness so that people understand what it is UNICEF is doing and how best we can support that work. What do you want to leave this group thinking about, in terms of what you see as your challenges and how best to meet them?

**ANN VENEMAN:** Well, thank you very much for raising the importance of making this connection, particularly with young people, but with the public generally in developed countries, with what the rest of the world lives like.

It is so difficult in our culture, especially in the United States – even more than in Europe, I think – to get the word out about how many people are living in such desperate conditions, especially women and children around the world. So it is incumbent on all of us to get that message out.

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UNICEF works in the areas of education, of healthcare, of protection of children and I think the things that are critical to this work are, first of all, that we figure out what works, that we know how to measure those results and that we know how to scale up interventions we know can and will work.

The second thing is that I really believe – and we've had a lot of discussion today about this – that we have to work in broad, inclusive partnerships so that we're not competing with each other in the developing countries that we're doing work in, and so that we're building on each other's strengths and so that we're producing collective, measurable results for the people we're trying to benefit and that those will have sustainability over the long term, which makes it very important to create sustainable models. How do they become self-supporting so that they don't depend on outside help forever? They won't be sustainable that way.

I think these are all things that, collectively as a community that wants to help the developing world, we have to focus on.

**HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON:** I am so proud that you're leading UNICEF in this new effort and doing such a great job. We'll look for more ways to support you in that.

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Finally, Helene, we've been very polite in our panel and we've been very specific on policy, but you have to feel some level of frustration and just concern that after all these years with all of this attention, we're still sitting here having a panel and trying to figure out how best to help women and children.

Based on all of your experience, what challenge do you want to give us; what message do you want to leave with us? How can we better mobilize people to do what works and to support good models around the world?

**HELENE GAYLE:** I guess that, first of all, we have to believe our own rhetoric. We have to believe that investing in women is really the best way to have an impact on poverty. All the data shows it and we say it all the time, but I'm not sure that people honestly believe it. I think that for people in this room, all of whom are in very influential positions and working across different sectors, take what you're doing and make sure that you look at the gender dimension and look at what the issues are for women. Whether it's agriculture, whether it's media, whether it's business, everything that we do in this room has some impact on the lives of women. So if we think about it that way and if we start putting measures that ask the question, in all of our work about what we are doing that impacts women, we will have

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a greater impact. There are individual things that people can do, obviously. They can all go to CARE web site – [www.CARE.org](http://www.CARE.org) – [laughter] and read about our work on empowering women, but beyond the specific things that people can do, I think really looking at every sector that you're involved in, ask yourself the questions every day, "What am I doing that will impact the lives of women? What can I do that will change women's lives?" Have that be the lens through which you do your work. I think if we do that, we'll all come back here next year having really made a substantial impact in spreading the word to those who work around us. I think it is us talking to our colleagues and making sure that our colleagues are thinking about these things. I just think we have tremendous power. It is in our hands to make that difference.

**HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON:** I want to just emphasize that we're talking about contributions and actions that individuals can take, all the way to giant corporations, large NGOs and governments. I just want to end with a few brief stories to give you an idea about what does work.

There is a wonderful group called the HEIFER Project – which some of you may know of – which for many years has provided livestock and poultry to poor families around the world. They end up mostly being women because it's women

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doing the agricultural work, as Ann reminded us, and then these women use these cows and these goats and these chickens to take milk or cheese or eggs to the market and slowly build up their own economic position.

I recently had as an intern in my Senate office a young woman names Beatrice. Beatrice was from Uganda. Her family was the recipient of a goat. That goat enabled the family to send Beatrice to school. Beatrice caught the attention of some Americans who were doing mission work in the area. Beatrice was a smart, active young woman. Beatrice came to the United States to go to prep school, and Beatrice is now in college here in our country. She wants to back, taking what she has been given, and work on behalf of the people of her family, tribe, community and nation. It was just one goat, but it led to changing a young woman's life.

In Senegal, there is an American woman named Molly Melching who went to Senegal 30-plus years ago as a Peace Corps volunteer, fell in love with the country and stayed. She decided to start an NGO, just on her own, called Tostan. What she tried to do is take civic education and democracy building to villages in Senegal. It took decades, but slowly and surely people began to get the idea that everyone should have a voice in making decisions for the village.

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Through a lot of education work about what was good for the health of girls and women, Tostan was able to persuade one village to cease the practice of genital circumcision for girls by persuading the elders in the village that it was bad for the health of their daughter. Once that village was convinced, some of the male elders of the village began to walk many miles to other villages to spread the word. Out of that came a grassroots movement to persuade the government of Senegal to change the laws. Now it is moving across Africa, reaching into many different villages, in many different countries.

One person really can make a difference. There are many opportunities. One of my hopes is that CGI will have a special place on its web site, an ongoing commitment to these issues. Maybe, Helene, next year we'll start off with women's lives and women's futures because it does make a huge difference. Thank you all very, very much.

[Applause]

[END RECORDING]

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