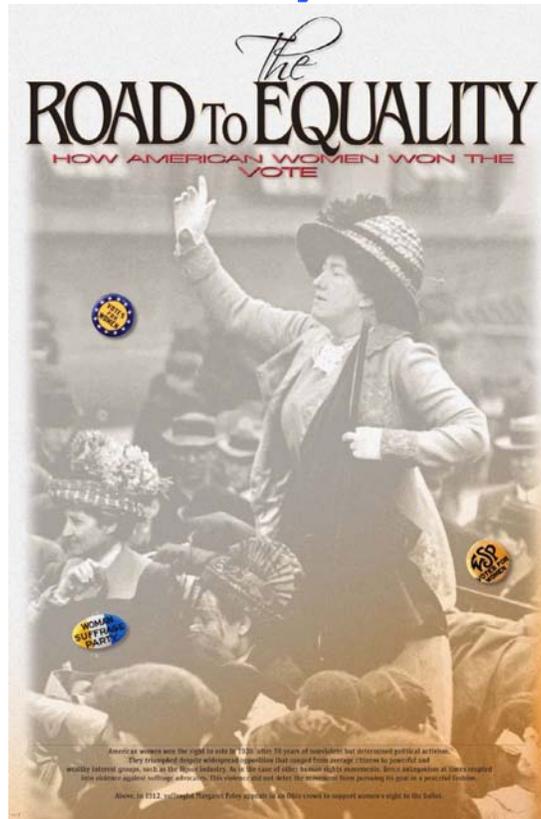




Information Resource Center
Public Affairs Section
U.S. Embassy – Buenos Aires

Women's History Month March, 2012



Women's History Month

During Women's History Month, we reflect on the extraordinary accomplishments of women and honor their role in shaping the course of our Nation's history. Today, women have reached heights their mothers and grandmothers might only have imagined. Women now comprise nearly half of our workforce and the majority of students in our colleges and universities. They scale the skies as astronauts, expand our economy as entrepreneurs and business leaders, and serve our country at the highest levels of government and our Armed Forces. In honor of the pioneering women who came before us, and in recognition of those who will come after us, this month, we recommit to erasing the remaining inequities facing women in our day.

Presidential Proclamation--Women's History Month, 2011

<http://iipdigital.usembassy.gov/st/english/texttrans/2011/03/20110301111737su0.9234692.html#axzz1np0oFL6n>

Empower rural women – end hunger and poverty.

“Invest in rural women. Eliminate discrimination against them in law and in practice. Ensure that policies respond to their needs. Give them equal access to resources. Provide rural women with a role in decision-making.”

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon

Recognizing the critical role and contribution of rural women, the theme of International Women’s Day 2012 is Empower Rural Women – End Hunger and Poverty.

Key contributors to global economies, rural women play a critical role in both developed and developing nations — they enhance agricultural and rural development, improve food security and can help reduce poverty levels in their communities. In some parts of the world, women represent 70 percent of the agricultural workforce, comprising 43 percent of agricultural workers worldwide.

Estimates reveal that if women had the same access to productive resources as men, they could increase yields on their farms by 20–30 percent, lifting 100-150 million out of hunger.

Healthcare, education, gender inequality and limited access to credit, however, have posed a number of challenges for rural women. Further, the global food and economic crisis and climate change have aggravated the situation. It is estimated that 60 percent of chronically hungry people are women and girls. Yet, the Food and Agriculture Organization estimates reveal that productivity gains from ensuring equal access to fertilizers, seeds and tools for women could reduce the number of hungry people by between 100 million and 150 million.

<http://www.un.org/en/events/womensday/>

Three Women Activists Awarded Nobel Peace Prize



Washington — The 2011 Nobel Peace Prize was jointly awarded to three women for their struggle for women's safety and women's full participation in peace-building work, the Norwegian Nobel Prize Committee said.

Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, women's activist Leymah Gbowee of Liberia and Tawakkul Karman of Yemen each share in the prize. The three women will be given an equal share of the \$1.5 million that accompanies the peace prize, the committee said.

The prize committee said in a prepared statement that it "decided that the Nobel Peace Prize for 2011 is to be divided in three equal parts between Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, Leymah Gbowee and Tawakkul Karman for their non-violent struggle for the safety of women and for women's rights to full participation in peace-building work."

"We cannot achieve democracy and lasting peace in the world unless women obtain the same opportunities as men to influence developments at all levels of society," the committee said.

Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton praised the Nobel Committee for recognizing "the powerful role women are playing in building peace and ending conflict."

"I am delighted to send heartfelt congratulations to Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, Yemeni activist Tawakkul Karman and Liberian peace activist Leymah Roberta Gbowee for the prestigious honor of sharing this year's Nobel Peace Prize," [Clinton said in a prepared statement](#). "They are shining examples of the difference that women can make and the progress they can help achieve when given the opportunity to make decisions about the future of their societies and countries."

"The unflinching courage, strength and leadership of these women to build peace, advance reconciliation, and defend the rights of fellow citizens in their own countries provide inspiration for women's rights and human progress everywhere. This recognition of their extraordinary accomplishments reflects the efforts of many other women who are promoting peace and security in their countries and communities," Clinton said.

In October 2000, the U.N. Security Council adopted Resolution 1325 that for the first time made violence against women in armed conflict an international security issue, according to the prize committee. It underlined the need for women to become participants on equal status with men in peace processes and in peace work in general.

"Ellen Johnson Sirleaf is Africa's first democratically elected female president. Since her inauguration in 2006, she has contributed to securing peace in Liberia, to promoting economic and social development, and to strengthening the position of women," the committee said.

The prize committee said that Leymah Gbowee, who is also from Liberia, mobilized and organized women across ethnic and religious dividing lines to bring an end to the long war in Liberia, and to ensure women's participation in elections. "She has since worked to enhance the influence of women in West Africa during and after war," the committee said.

"In the most trying circumstances, both before and during the 'Arab spring,'" Tawakkul Karman has played a leading part in the struggle for women's rights and for democracy and peace in Yemen, the Norwegian Committee said.

The peace prize is awarded by a five-person committee that is selected by the Norwegian Parliament; the other Nobel prizes are awarded in Sweden by a Swedish committee. The peace prize is one of the five Nobel prizes bequeathed by Alfred Nobel, a Swedish industrialist and inventor.

The Nobel Peace Prize has been awarded 91 times to 121 Nobel Laureates between 1901 and 2010 — 98 individuals and 23 organizations. President Obama was awarded the 2009 Nobel Peace Prize for his work in expanding global arms control and nuclear nonproliferation, and for forging an agenda aimed at achieving a nuclear-free world.

<http://iipdigital.usembassy.gov/st/english/article/2011/10/20111007144942elrem0.791836.html#ixzz1no9HjKJi>

Women of Courage Awardees Set Example for the World



Washington — Courage can be contagious, as this year’s winners of the International Women of Courage awards have proven.

Ten women have been honored by first lady Michelle Obama and Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton for their exceptional courage in advocating for women’s rights and empowerment, often at great personal risk.

Since the inception of this award in 2007, the Department of State has honored 38 women from 27 countries. This is the only Department of State award that pays tribute to women activists worldwide.

At an awards presentation at the State Department March 8, the first lady praised the Women of Courage winners for not standing silent in the face of violence, oppression, poverty or inequality.

“Time and again, these women have discovered a very simple truth: that courage can actually be contagious,” [Obama said to an audience](#) filled with diplomats, members of Congress and business people. The first lady used as an example Yoani Sanchez, a writer in Cuba whose blog “caught fire” on the Internet and was being downloaded onto computer flash drives and passed from person to person. When it was censored by the state, she distributed her blog through what she calls a “citizen network” — people outside of Cuba who helped publish her posts. Her writing is now translated into 15 languages.

In addition to the first lady and the secretary of state, those gathered to honor the awardees included Melanne Vermeer, U.S. ambassador at large for global women’s issues, and Julia Gillard, the first woman to become prime minister of Australia.

At the awards ceremony, [Clinton repeated U.S. support](#) for women striving for equal opportunity in their societies. She took note of the women of Egypt and Tunisia, who, the secretary said, have just as much right as the men in their countries to remake their governments and make them accountable and transparent to the people. Women should be part of the process for forming such new governments, she said.

This year's Women of Courage awardees are:

- Roza Otunbayeva, president of the Kyrgyz Republic.
- Maria Bashir, prosecutor general for Herat province in Afghanistan.
- Nasta Palazhanka, deputy chairwoman for Malady Front (Young Front), a nongovernmental organization in Belarus.
- Henriette Ekwe Ebongo, journalist and publisher of *Bebela*, a weekly independent newspaper in Cameroon.
- Guo Jianmei, lawyer and director of the Beijing Zhongze Women's Legal Counseling and Service Center in China.
- Yoani Sanchez, innovator, writer and founder of the *Generación Y* blog in Cuba.
- Agnes Osztolykan, member of parliament and the Politics Can Be Different Party in Hungary.
- Eva Abu Halaweh, executive director of Mizan Law Group for Human Rights in Jordan.
- Marisela Morales Ibañez, deputy attorney general for special investigations against organized crime in Mexico.
- Ghulam Sughra, founder and chief executive officer of the Marvi Rural Development Organization in Pakistan.

Yoani Sanchez of Cuba and Nasta Palazhanka of Belarus, Clinton noted, were not present because they were prevented by their governments from attending the awards ceremony in the United States.

Clinton also announced an initiative in partnership with Goldman Sachs Group Inc., a New York-based investment bank, to educate women in the business skills needed to be successful entrepreneurs. Lloyd Blankfein, chairman of Goldman Sachs, explained that the program will be an extension of Goldman Sachs' "10,000 Women" program launched in 2008.

That \$100 million, five-year campaign has trained dozens of women from more than 20 countries. The first women to participate from the State Department extension of the program will be from Haiti and Indonesia.

The Women of Courage awards ceremony fell on March 8, the 100th anniversary of the first International Women's Day. In [a commentary released by Bloomberg News Wire](#) for the occasion, Clinton states there are now more than 200 million women

entrepreneurs worldwide and that women earn more than \$10 trillion every year, most of which they invest in their families and communities. Even so, women worldwide perform two-thirds of the work but earn just one-third of the income, she said.

The United States is working to close the educational and income gap between women and men, the secretary said. Programs like the mWomen Initiative, which gives women access to mobile technology, the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), which helps women gain access to markets, and the Pathways to Prosperity Initiative, which helps women develop their business skills and economic opportunities, all fall into that effort.

"This is a central focus of my diplomatic outreach," Clinton said. "Wherever I go around the world, I meet with governments, international organizations and civic groups to talk about economic policies that will help their countries grow by expanding women's access to jobs and finance. "If we decide as societies, governments and businesses to invest in women and girls, we will strengthen our efforts to fight poverty, drive development and spread stability."

"When women thrive, families, communities and countries thrive," she said, "and the world becomes more peaceful and prosperous."

<http://iipdigital.usembassy.gov/st/english/article/2011/03/20110308170038enaj0.5750086.html#axzz1noA2Hqfa>

Sheila Johnson: Philanthropist, Entrepreneur, Musician



born in 1949, is a businesswoman, a musician, a philanthropist and reportedly the first African-American woman to become a billionaire.

A young concert violinist and later a music teacher in Washington, she and her then-husband Robert Johnson founded Black Entertainment Television (BET) in 1980; the Johnsons sold the company for about \$3 billion in 2000. Now she

is one of the few women to own a professional sports team, the Washington Mystics women's basketball team.

Johnson has broad interests in philanthropy, especially international work on the safety of children and arts training for youth.

<http://iipdigital.usembassy.gov/st/english/inbrief/2012/01/201201270759.html#ixzz1noEAuYXJ>

Online resources

eJournal USA: Educating Women and Girls

Education is crucial to a country's economic and social development.

<http://iipdigital.usembassy.gov/st/english/publication/2011/06/20110630120617aidan6.084406e-02.html#ixzz1nolmQZ6S>

eJournal USA: Women of Influence

This publication offers a glimpse at how women in one country – the United States – have helped shape their society.

<http://iipdigital.usembassy.gov/st/english/publication/2011/07/20110727111314su0.993385.html#ixzz1noLsUGX4>

eJournal USA: Making Their Mark: Black Women Leaders

This issue of *eJournal USA* profiles African-American women of the 20th and 21st centuries who have made significant contributions to many spheres of American life. It also offers insights into how earlier generations of African-American women serve as touchstones for the present generation.

<http://iipdigital.usembassy.gov/st/english/publication/2012/01/20120104122545ael0.6990865.html#axzz1noDRpEpb>

Rachel Carson: Pen Against Poison

Rachel Carson was a quiet woman who stirred extraordinary controversy that persists decades after her death. Her 1962 book *Silent Spring* brought worldwide attention to the harm to human health and the environment wrought by mishandling of a powerful pesticide, fomenting the environmental movement. In the 100th anniversary year of Carson's birth, this publication examines how occasionally in history a book with a powerful idea can bring about peaceful but dramatic change in a democratic society.

<http://www.america.gov/publications/books/rachel-carson-pen-against-poison.html>

International Women's Day Shows How Women Can Help Women Succeed

<http://iipdigital.usembassy.gov/st/english/article/2011/03/20110301105035enaj1.208133e-02.html#ixzz1noOO4ANq>

Great Women of the Twentieth Century

http://www.america.gov/multimedia/photogallery.html#/30145/women_photos/

Library of Congress

The Library of Congress, National Archives and Records Administration, National Endowment for the Humanities, National Gallery of Art, National Park Service, Smithsonian Institution and United States Holocaust Memorial Museum join in paying tribute to the generations of women whose commitment to nature and the planet have proved invaluable to society.

<http://womenshistorymonth.gov/>