# Advancing The Rights Of Women And Girls: A Cornerstone Of U.S. Foreign Policy

***"…Women's rights is not just a moral issue or a fairness issue; it is a security issue, a prosperity issue, a peace issue … it is in the vital interest of the United States of America."***

– Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton

Advancing the status of women and girls is essential to achieving global peace and prosperity. The Obama Administration and Secretary of State Clinton have ensured that promoting the rights of women is fully-integrated into the formulation and conduct of U.S. foreign policy.

## Accelerating Women's Economic Participation

Women are drivers of economic growth. Secretary Clinton has launched efforts to spur economic growth by strengthening women's entrepreneurship and creating opportunities for women to participate fully in the global economy. Initiatives include:

- APEC Women and the Economy Summit: The U.S. is working with all Asian/Pacific economies to remove barriers to women's economic participation.
- Training and Networking for Women Entrepreneurs: Regional initiatives such as Pathways to Prosperity, Invest in the Future and the African Women's Entrepreneurship Program have reached women business owners around the world.
- mWomen: Launched in 2011, this public-private partnership helps close the gender gap in access to mobile technology in developing countries.

## Integrating Women in Peace and Security-Building

Deadly conflicts can be more effectively avoided, and peace can be best sustained, when women are equal partners in all aspects of peace-building. In 2011, the United States developed its first-ever National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security, which ensures that women participate fully in peace negotiations and reconstruction; protects women and children from harm and abuse in conflict areas; and addresses the needs of women and girls in disaster and crisis response.

## Promoting Women's Political Participation and Leadership

Women account for more than 50 percent of the global population, but hold less than 20 percent of all parliamentary seats. Through efforts such as the Community of Democracies, the Iraqi Women's Democracy Initiative and bilateral and multilateral outreach, the U.S. is working to ensure women's voices are heard in emerging democracies and governments everywhere, especially in Afghanistan and Iraq. Women's issues are integrated in Strategic Dialogues with China, India and Pakistan. In 2011, Secretary Clinton launched the Women in Public Service Project, a partnership with U.S. women's colleges to identify, mentor and train emerging women leaders.

## Placing Women at the Center of U.S. Foreign Assistance

Initiatives focusing on women benefit not just women themselves, but their families and communities. It is the smartest investment the U.S. can make to improve lives around the world.

- **The Global Health Initiative** established a focus on Women, Girls, and Gender Equality as a key principle in order to improve health outcomes for women, children, and their communities.
- **The Feed the Future food security initiative** promotes women's leadership in agriculture, women's land ownership and agricultural productivity, and access to financial services and new technology.
- **Ending Sexual and Gender Based Violence:** The U.S. is committed to stopping violence against women in all forms, including rape as a tactic of war, domestic violence and female genital mutilation/cutting.
- **The Global Alliance for Clean Cookstoves** is working to enable 100 million homes to adopt clean and efficient stoves and fuels by 2020.
- **Small Grants and the Secretary's International Fund or Women and Girls:** The Office of Global Women's Issues provides small grants to grassroots NGOs in 41 countries and partners with foundations and corporations to support innovative efforts to advance the status of women and girls around the world.