



Article Alert compliments of the Embassy of the United States of America to the Republic of Zambia

Dear Friend:

The Embassy of the United States of America is pleased to share with you this Article Alert, “Women’s Role in Inspiring Social Change.” Each year, March is observed as Women’s History Month in the United States celebrating the contributions of women to the nation’s history and culture. We trust that you will find this Alert useful and informative. If you desire additional information about topics involving U.S. government policy, education, culture and/or social issues, please do not hesitate to contact Information Resource Director Wilcliff Sakala at sakalaw@state.gov. We welcome your feedback.

A compilation of article abstracts from U.S. news media and other sources

Theme: Women’s Role in Inspiring Social Change

1. [Power to Women in the United States](#)

Susan Dabaja, a Lebanese-American lawyer and mother of three, had never run for public office. But she wanted to bring more jobs and quality public services to her Dearborn, Michigan, community, so she ran for city council, unsure if she would win one of the seven seats to become the council’s only female member. Not only did she win, she got more votes than all other candidates and became Dearborn’s first Arab-American city council president. Dabaja’s election is one of many firsts for women in American politics. In 2013, women held a record 20 seats in the 100-member U.S. Senate, 78 seats in the 435-member House of Representatives and more than 2,000 positions as governors, state legislators and mayors. Women had the right to vote in some states in the 19th century, but full suffrage was not extended to women until 1920 through an amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

2. [U.S. Laws Targeting Gender –Based Violence Empower Women](#)



One important aspect in the achievement of gender quality is the prevention of violence against women and the prosecution of those who commit abuses. The Obama administration is working to protect women inside and outside the United States and improve their ability to seek justice and empower themselves in their societies. “Women in the United States fought long and hard to achieve laws that protect women from discrimination based on gender, and we enjoy the benefits of a justice system that can enforce these laws,” said Paula Schriefer, Deputy Assistant

Secretary of State for International Organization Affairs.



3. Women as Agents of Change: Advancing the Role of Women in Politics and Civil Society

As women’s contributions toward a strong and vibrant society are increasingly well documented, there is also growing understanding of why women’s meaningful participation is essential to building and sustaining democracy. Women’s political participation results in tangible gains for democracy, including greater responsiveness to citizen needs, increased cooperation across party and ethnic lines, and more sustainable peace. Women’s meaningful participation in politics affects both the range of policy issues that are considered and the types of solutions that are proposed. Research indicates that a legislator’s gender has a distinct impact on policy priorities, making it critical that women are present in politics to represent the concerns of women and other marginalized citizens and help improve the responsiveness of policy-making and governance.

4. VOA: Arab Women Become “Agents of Change”

Women in the Middle East are flexing their political muscle in ways not seen before. They are using the internet and social media to change their world. In the short-term, the tactic is working. However, questions remain as to how to make long-term changes in a culture that does not allow women to be empowered in the same ways as women are in the Western world. Women’s rights activist Dalia Ziada turned to using her blog to challenge oppressive cultural and political norms in Egypt. Her blog has garnered international recognition for her work.

5. Enterprising Women, Thriving Societies

Study after study has shown that the economic empowerment of women leads to poverty alleviation. As countries’ economic output grows, the range of options for women to contribute to the economy expands. Around the world, women entrepreneurs are increasingly visible as they start and grow their ventures into successful small businesses or global enterprises. Yet women’s business potential is far from being fully realized. In both developed and developing countries, would-be women entrepreneurs need better access to training, capital and technical resources, as well as more exposure to business opportunities in the greater global supply chain.

6. Women’s Health is Vital for Social Progress

Women’s health can be a barometer of a nation’s progress. Countries afflicted by poverty, corruption, war or weak governance often neglect their most vulnerable citizens.



Frequently these are women. When women are unhealthy, their productivity is lowered and their children and families are less secure. This has an economic impact. So investing in women’s health makes sense from both an economic and a human rights perspective. Where countries have prioritized women’s health in national policy, great progress has been made.