



# U.S. SUPPORT FOR WOMEN WORLDWIDE: *Freedom, Empowerment, and Opportunity*

*“No society can prosper when half of its population is not allowed to contribute to its progress. Educated and empowered women are vital to democracy – and important for the development of all countries.” —First Lady Laura Bush*

*“We...send a clear message to the women of the world who are not yet free. As you stand for your rights and for your liberty, America stands with you.” —Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice*

The Bush Administration has made the economic, political and social advancement of women an integral part of U.S. foreign policy. The Department of State and the U.S. Agency for International Development are helping women become full participants in their societies through programs that increase women’s access to education and health care and strengthen their leadership, political and business skills.

**Women in Conflict Situations** – The United States has funded a major International Committee of the Red Cross project providing protection, health care and other assistance to women in conflict situations. It has strongly supported UN Security Council Resolution 1325 that highlights the central role of women in helping their societies recover and rebuild after devastating civil conflict.

**Economic and Microenterprise Development** – The United States has given more than \$150 million annually for the past five years for microenterprise loans and development. The loans, 70 percent of which have gone to women, are used for the creation of grassroots businesses.

**Refugees** – The U.S. State Department provided \$933 million in 2004 for programs that protect and provide life-sustaining assistance to refugees and conflict victims, the majority of whom are women and children.

## Afghanistan and Iraq: New Roles for Women

### AFGHANISTAN

- 200 U.S.-funded projects support Afghan women.
- 18 Women’s Resource Centers nationwide provide vocational training and health care.
- 40 % of Afghan school children are girls.
- 27% of seats in lower house of Parliament and 17 % in upper house are reserved for women.

### IRAQ

- \$27 million was earmarked by the U.S. Congress for Iraqi women’s programs.
- 6 woman ministers and 7 deputy ministers serve in the Iraqi interim cabinet.
- 31% of newly elected Iraqi National Assembly representatives are women.

**Trafficking in Persons** – In 2004, the U.S. devoted \$136 million to combat trafficking of women and children worldwide. The State Department issues an annual report ranking foreign government efforts to combat trafficking. Sanctions are required for countries in the lowest tier.

**HIV/AIDS** – President Bush’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief is providing \$15 billion over 5 years to combat HIV/AIDS — an increasing threat to women. Early successes include activities to support lifesaving drug treatment (56% of recipients

are women) and to help prevent transmission from mothers to infants.

**Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI)** – MEPI, a Presidential initiative, strengthens the network of Arab women professionals in the Middle East region. It teaches skills for female leadership in community and political life through Regional Campaign Schools and helps men and women to advocate for women’s rights through education and legislative reform.

### International Cooperation

In the 10 years since the Beijing Conference on Women, the U.S. has made significant progress in implementing the Beijing Platform for Action, through domestic and international programs in the areas of violence against women, poverty reduction, access to health care, and economic and political opportunity.