

Today, American women are leaders in business, government, law, science, medicine, the arts, education, and many other fields. Women-owned businesses account for nearly half of all privately held firms and are opening at twice the rate of male-owned businesses. Through vision, determination, and a strong work ethic, remarkable American women have broadened opportunities for themselves and women around the world.

The full participation of women and the protection of their rights as citizens are essential for freedom and democracy to flourish. In Afghanistan, women helped draft their country's new constitution in January 2004, which guarantees free elections and full participation by women. These women are eager to exercise their rights and are registering to vote in great numbers; about 40 percent of those registered to vote in the October Afghan Presidential elections are women. In Iraq, women are members of the new interim Iraqi government and the recently established National Council. They also participated in drafting the Transitional Administrative Law, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of gender, ethnicity, or religion and requires that 25 percent of the new legislature be women. In the face of great challenges, Iraqi women are building a better nation for themselves and their families.

As we look to the future, we celebrate the extraordinary accomplishments of women in America and throughout the world and renew our commitment to equality for all women, both at home and abroad.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, GEORGE W. BUSH, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim August 26, 2004, as Women's Equality Day. I call upon the people of the United States to observe this day with appropriate programs and activities.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-sixth day of August, in the year of our Lord two thousand four, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-ninth.

GEORGE W. BUSH

Proclamation 7807 of September 4, 2004

Minority Enterprise Development Week, 2004

*By the President of the United States of America
A Proclamation*

Minority businesses are a key component of the American economy and reflect the values that make our country strong. They create opportunities for workers, provide goods and services to consumers, and strengthen our communities. During Minority Enterprise Development Week, we celebrate the achievements of minority businesses and emphasize our commitment to creating an environment in which these entrepreneurs can succeed.

All of America benefits from the strong and vibrant entrepreneurial spirit of our small business owners. By reducing taxes, encouraging in-

vestment, and removing obstacles to growth, my Administration has helped American businesses thrive and create nearly 1.7 million new jobs since August 2003. In addition, the number of Small Business Administration loans to minorities increased by 40 percent last year to a 50-year record level. And my fiscal year 2005 budget request includes a 21 percent increase in funding for the Department of Commerce's Minority Business Development Agency, the largest increase in more than a decade.

To help provide sustainable outreach to minority enterprises, my Administration is working with the National Urban League to create an entrepreneurship network to further expand minority business ownership. With the help of government agencies, the private sector, and faith-based and community organizations, this network will include one-stop centers for business training, counseling, financing, and contracting and will focus resources toward facilitating economic growth and enterprise in historically neglected areas.

More minorities own small businesses than ever before. That is good for our citizens and good for our country. Together, we can create an environment where entrepreneurs can flourish and everyone can realize the American Dream.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, GEORGE W. BUSH, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim September 5 through September 11, 2004, as Minority Enterprise Development Week. I call upon all Americans to celebrate this week with appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities and to recognize the countless contributions of our Nation's minority enterprises.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this fourth day of September, in the year of our Lord two thousand four, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-ninth.

GEORGE W. BUSH

Proclamation 7808 of September 7, 2004

**To Modify the Generalized System of Preferences, and
For Other Purposes**

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

1. Pursuant to sections 501 and 502(a)(1) of Title V of the Trade Act of 1974, as amended (the "1974 Act"); (19 U.S.C. 2461, 2462(a)(1)), the President is authorized to designate countries as beneficiary developing countries for purposes of the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP).

2. Pursuant to section 503(d) of the 1974 Act (19 U.S.C. 2463(d)), the President may waive the application of the competitive need limitations in section 503(c)(2)(A) (19 U.S.C. 2463(c)(2)(A)) with respect to any eligible article from any beneficiary developing country if certain conditions are met.