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On the Millennium Development Goals: Gender, Health and Hunger

In Ethiopia, in Ghana, in Mozambique, in Rwanda, in Tanzania: since 1990, per capita income has more than *doubled*.

Nearly *two-thirds* of developing countries have met the goal of eliminating gender disparity in primary education. The goal of doing so in secondary education by 2015 is within our reach.

Development gains of this magnitude are extraordinary. We are generating momentum and progress rarely if *ever* seen in human history.

But despite this progress, we know there is more to do. We know that infant mortality, especially in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, is still unconscionably high. Reductions in maternal mortality and child under-nutrition rates have been much too slow. We are still far from overcoming gender inequality, which slows achievement on the MDGs.

Women and girls are the majority of the world's poor -- unschooled, unhealthy, and underfed. Trapped in insecure, relatively low-paid positions. Continuing to do much of the work on the farm, but lacking access to adequate resources, support, training, and rights.

When thinking about the MDGs and gender, most people think of MDG 3, which aims to eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education by 2005 and in all levels of education no later than 2015. But investing in women and girls is about more than just MDG 3. It is also about achieving all the other Goals, too—

First: We must **drive innovation**, applying new technologies and methods to address human development needs -- and developing new ways to deliver existing solutions to more people, more cheaply, more quickly.

Third:

First, our **Global Health Initiative** focuses on the MDGs 4, 5, and 6 related to reducing child mortality, improving maternal health, and combating HIV/AIDS, Malaria, and Other Diseases. It will strengthen programs that serve women and girls – including maternal health, family planning, and nutrition programs.

At \$63 billion over six years, the GHI represents a significant investment by the US government – especially now – to help

With GHI we are taking a women- and girl-centered approach, both for their own sake, and because of the centrality of women to the health of their families and communities. We're focused on ante-natal care. Immunization. Nutrition. Water and sanitation. Infectious disease control. And family planning.

A second example of a major initiative we are launching to meet the MDGs is known as **Feed the Future** – and was previewed by Secretary of State Hillary Clinton last September, here at the United Nations. It's a \$3.5-billion, three-year commitment to strengthen the world's food supply – that is expected to reach at least 25-30 million people, and raise their incomes by 10 percent per year over two decades.

We are working with partners and stakeholders, from the World Bank to the Gates Foundation, from the private sector to partner governments, to address the needs of small scale farmers, many of whom are women, and agri-businesses, and harness the power of women to drive economic growth.

We focus on crops that disproportionately enhance women's standing, production, and incomes. Where women will receive targeted access to financial services and extension services, delivered by female extension workers.

FTF also reflects the US comparative advantage in research, innovation and entrepreneurship. We will increase our investment in nutrition and agriculture development while maintaining our support for humanitarian food assistance.

As Ambassador Verveer has emphasized, this initiative acknowledges that reducing gender inequality is an important contributor to eradicating global hunger and recognizes the fundamental role that women play in achieving food security.

In most developing countries, women produce between 60 and 80 percent of the food. Analysis by IFPRI shows that equalizing women's access to agricultural inputs can increase output by more than 10 percent.

Studies show that when gains in income are controlled by women, they are more likely to be spent on food and children's needs. By investing more in women, we amplify benefits across families and generations.

Based on the examples that Ambassador Verveer and I have shared with you today, I hope you'll agree that the U.S. has learned the importance of integrating a gender-based perspective into all

aspects of our work. g/MCID 0>BDC BT/F1 1a 0 1 316.49 448.75 Tmp)3(sed)eETBTaobD

Putting gender at the center of our development efforts is an important part of the larger U.S. strategy to meet the Goals. We will do this by promoting innovation, investing in sustainability, focusing on results, and enhancing mutual accountability.

Investing in and empowering women and girls is a key force multiplier that will help us build a healthier, more food-secure, more just, and more prosperous world.

We are deeply honored to join you in this vitally important work.

Thank you.