

**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
Office of the Spokesperson**

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**July 20, 2011**

**REMARKS**

**Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton  
On The Working Women's Forum**

**July 20, 2011  
Chennai, India**

**SECRETARY CLINTON:** I want to thank my friend and your friend, a wonderful woman who is viewed as a leader around the world, Jaya. (Applause.)

I want you to know that I have admired the work of the Working Women's Forum for many years. (Applause.) In 1978, there were only 800 women members. Today, there are more than 1 million of you. (Applause.) I am honored to be here with you to celebrate your accomplishments in bringing micro-credit to women, in bringing healthcare and other services to women so they could have a better life for themselves and their children. (Applause.)

I believe in the self-help movement that all of you are a part of, because I have seen the results with my own eyes. From Bangladesh to India to South Africa to Chile and Nicaragua and Latin America, I have seen women's lives change, as we heard from the wonderful story earlier. Every one of you has a story, and I applaud you for what you have done to help yourselves. (Applause.)

So today, I wanted to bring you some more help, to help more women. (Applause.) I'm very pleased to announce that Goldman Sachs, a very important global financial company, has decided to support a training program through the Indian School of Business to help self-help groups bring even more knowledge and skills about how to take your businesses from the very local village level to the cities, to the countries, to the world. (Applause.)

I also know there are several panchayat members here, and I thank you for working so hard to promote government and democracy at the local level. (Applause.) So I am pleased to announce that the Government of the United States and the Government of India will establish a regional training program at the Asia University of Women to spotlight the success of the panchayat program, and train more women to be local leaders like you.

We also want to continue working with the Working Women's Forum on the very serious problem we just heard about, violence against women. (Applause.)

And we want to work with you on another problem, and that is the smoke that you breathe when you are cooking for your families. I looked at an exhibition of cooking stoves outside with Dr.

Kalpana Balakrishnan of Sri Ramachandra University. Is she here? Is that – yes. Doctor? She is one of the world’s experts on how to make cooking safer for women and children. (Applause.) Because of the health problems caused by breathing smoke, we have worked with many partners around the world to create the Global Alliance for Clean Cookstoves. (Applause.) And we’re very proud that the Indian Government launched its own National Biomass Cookstove Initiative two years ago, that is trying to save lives and improve the conditions for cooking for millions of Indian women.

And so we will work with people around the world to help develop clean cookstoves, help to manufacture them so they are affordable for you to buy them, and we are delighted that we have partners right here with the Working Women’s Forum, with the Confederation of Indian Industries, and the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry, who have joined the Global Alliance for Clean Cookstoves, to make your lives and the lives of your children better and healthier. (Applause.)

So it is for me a great honor to be here with all of you to celebrate the wonderful work that the Working Women’s Forum has done, to thank you all for the examples you are setting for both your daughters and your sons, and to pledge myself to continue working with you on the important issues that are necessary to empower women so that you have your right to be whoever you want to be and to do what you believe is right and to lay the pathway for your daughters and your sons for a better future. (Applause.)

So, Jaya – Jaya, come down here. Come down here. Come down here. This is a woman who has worked so hard. (Applause.) And all of you will have to decide how you can follow her model, so that you not only help yourselves and your families but you spread the word about microfinance, about bank accounts, about starting businesses, about getting health services, about empowering the women of this state, and giving everyone a chance to live up to your God-given potential. (Applause.)

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