

## WELCOME ADDRESS

**Dr. Jaya Arunachalam, President Working Women's Forum (India)**

*Your Excellency Madam Hillary Clinton,*

Friends, Sisters

We are honoured and it's a dream come true for Working Women's Forum (India). May I introduce to Your Excellency my audience who are mostly women entrepreneurs from the class of urban/rural poor. They are equally anxious to hear you. Therefore, I would like to take this opportunity to introduce to them that Your Excellency is the US Secretary of State involved in decision making in everything in US along with President Obama and a global woman leader, empowering women worldwide.

I have no words to say that it is a great privilege that WWF has this opportunity to host you. At the same time I would like to tell my women that despite living across the seas your heart lives with women and the vulnerable and it's no exaggeration to say that your entire life is devoted to empowerment of women in whatever position you have been. Your clarion call towards women's empowerment at Beijing in 1995 echoed around the world that was reflected in many initiatives everywhere facilitated them to fight for equal opportunities in every field of activities. In India too we had at that time a very supportive Prime Minister Shri. Rajivji Gandhi who created an atmosphere right from an advisory committee under his personal guidance and created many machineries for the implementation of Beijing's 13 points Platform of Action.

We at WWF apart from microfinance have all our programme specifically in healthcare not only to fight atrocities on women and children but also prevent female infanticide/foeticide, education of adolescent girls, strengthened productive role of women, advocating two child norms and programmes also taking care of old women through insurance/social security.

Further on behalf of Working Women's Forum (India) Your Excellency has honoured me in Washington with Global Leadership title award for Economic Development in 2005. Now here in India it's further a honour by visiting us at headquarters in Chennai. More or less as one third of world's poor are found in India it is actually reflected in Working Women's Forum (India). Out of Forum's 1.2 million women in three southern states of India we here welcome you with open arms and folded hands to say that we are all honoured, delighted and privileged.

Thank you,

***Jaya Arunachalam,***  
President – WWF(I)