

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

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REMARKS

**Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton
Remarks at Breakfast with Women Entrepreneurs Attending the Presidential Summit on
Entrepreneurship
Announces two new programs to spur empowerment of women, girls**

**April 28, 2010
Ben Franklin Room
Washington, D.C.**

AMBASSADOR VERVEER: Thank you all. It is now my distinct pleasure to welcome someone who truly understands the power of entrepreneurship, and particularly the potential of women-run small and medium-sized businesses to drive economic growth. She knows that when women progress, countries progress. In her travels around the world, she has gone out of her way to meet with women who are advancing their societies and growing their countries' economies. She recognizes both the potential of women's economic leadership and the obstacles that still stand in their paths.

And that is why she has been a champion of women's access to credit, to markets, to communications technology, to training and mentoring and so much more, and has brought her considerable leadership here to projects at the State Department, many of them public-private partnerships, like MEPI's programs to grow women's business leadership in the MENA region; like the State Department FORTUNE Vital Voices Mentoring Program; like Pathways to Prosperity and other initiatives to tap women's potential for trade, from the African Growth Opportunity Act to APEC. And yesterday, she launched the Partners for a New Beginning that taps into America's private sector expertise to support our outreach to Muslim communities around the world. I'm sure you felt the depth of her commitment yesterday in her closing speech at the Presidential Entrepreneurship Summit.

So please welcome the U.S. Secretary of State, a champion for social and economic entrepreneurs everywhere, Secretary Hillary Rodham Clinton. (Applause.)

SECRETARY CLINTON: Oh, thank you. Thank you all very much. Thank you. Well, it is such a pleasure to welcome you to the State Department, to have this opportunity to celebrate the contributions of women entrepreneurs around the world. The women in this room are proof that – if anyone still needed proof – that women are doers and achievers and thinkers and innovators, leaders, and problem-solvers. And we need each and every one of you to lend your entrepreneurial skill and energy to meeting the global challenges of this new century.

As I said yesterday, President Obama is committed to promoting entrepreneurship to help seed conditions for broader and deeper economic progress. And this week's summit has focused on our efforts in Muslim majority countries. I know and you know that women are essential to this effort. There isn't any way we can increase peace, prosperity, stability, and security throughout the world unless women are full partners – full partners in the home and the family, full partners in the community and the country and the world. I believe so strongly that talent is universal, but opportunity is not. And what we're doing is trying to pry open those doors of opportunity for more people to walk through – more people in Muslim majority

countries and more women, specifically. Because the fact is that women still have a harder time accessing loans and equity capital investments. Women are still saddled with unfair and untrue assumptions that they are less capable of starting and running businesses. And these obstacles exist in the United States and they exist in every country in the world.

But we are determined to change that. Making women a focus of our foreign policy agenda here at the State Department comes naturally to me, but it's not only the right thing to do; it is also the smart thing as well. Because as Melanne said, we believe that the evidence is overwhelming. We cannot expect countries to increase their economic standing in a sustainable way. We cannot expect there to be greater foundations built for security, democracy, opportunity, unless women are at the table.

Many of you are aware of and have participated in our partnerships, supporting the Middle East and North Africa Businesswomen's Network. That has already helped 2,500 entrepreneurs and business and professional women in 12 countries develop their skills and talents not only in the business world, but beyond. Some women have even gone from business into politics and government, and we see that as all part of the same continuum. And it's been a model of how public-private partnerships can tap into a reservoir of untapped potential, and that by creating networks of support, we can build locally driven and locally supported organizations that do bring about change. Now, MENA BWN has been so successful that it will launch in June as an independent, regional NGO. And just last week, Exxon Mobil agreed to make a \$1.5 million, two-year investment supporting that effort. (Applause.)

And so this morning, I'm pleased to outline several new avenues we are pursuing to expand opportunities so more women can turn their entrepreneurial dreams and innovations into successful businesses that generate income for themselves and their families, create jobs, expand markets, and fuel progress in their communities.

I will never forget being in Nepal – and I was there with Melanne, who has been my partner throughout this last 18 years in all that we have done – and we were at a market display of women's crafts. And there was a woman whose artistry in her fabric and tapestry was just so remarkable. And we began a conversation through an interpreter, as so many of these are, and I complimented her and she told me that she had been in purdah until relatively recently – had never left her home, had never been permitted when she had married, to go outside.

But then, her husband was injured and could no longer go out to work, and the family was in desperate straits. They lived, as was the tradition, with the husband's family and the mother-in-law played the major role in the house. And they saw their income disappearing, they saw the food on their table becoming scarcer to feed the children in this extended family. And finally, this young woman I was speaking with got up the courage to say to her husband and to her mother-in-law, "Maybe I could sell what I make." And finally, she was given permission to go out and do so. As a result of her talent and her skill, she now employed two other weavers and she now is sending her children to school and they had added onto their home. And so I said, "So what does your husband and your mother-in-law think now?" She said, "They think it's good." (Laughter.) (Applause.)

So here's what we want to do that we hope will be good. First, through a program called Tech Women, we will enhance the technological capacity of women in seven Muslim majority countries, promising entrepreneurs in the tech field will be paired with American mentors and given four to six weeks of training in American tech centers such as Silicon Valley. (Applause.)

Second, we are working with Japan, the chair of APEC this year, to organize an APEC women's entrepreneurship summit this fall in Japan, focusing on policy, human resources and financing issues. The aim is to galvanize the Asia-Pacific region to unleash the potential of women entrepreneurs and business

leaders, and we're very pleased that the 1,000 – the 10,000 Women's Initiative, sponsored by Goldman Sachs, has agreed to be a sponsor of the summit. And we thank you so much for that. (Applause.)

Third, today we are launching the Secretary's – that's me – the Secretary's – (laughter) –International Fund for Women and Girls. This public-private partnership will provide high-impact grants to NGOs working to advance the economic, social, and political progress of women. The women's fund will bring together the resources and expertise of both the public and the private sectors to invest in effective and innovative solutions for issues like economic empowerment, climate change, combating violence against women, and improved access to education and healthcare. We know that everywhere in the world, on the ground, are groups of people who are taking these issues on. We want to be your partners and we want to help you learn what worked somewhere else.

I will never forget being in Managua, Nicaragua and there was a little television set in the corner of this market, and I was talking to women who were part of a microcredit organization. All they wanted to talk to me about was my visit to India, to the Self-Employed Women's Association, which they had seen on their TV in Nicaragua, and they wanted to know what that was like.

A few months later, I was in Cape Town, South Africa with a group of women who were originally squatters and then became builders of their own communities, scraping together the money to buy the land, then to get the construction material, and they, too, wanted to know about the women that I had met elsewhere and what they could learn from them. We want not to reinvent the wheel every single time. If you're facing obstacles, we want to help you overcome them. (Applause.)

And finally, I'm delighted to announce the creation of the Secretary's Innovation Award for the Empowerment of Women and Girls. Through this effort, we hope to build on pioneering approaches to empowering women politically, economically, and socially around the world. This award will be funded by the Rockefeller Foundation – we're going to hear about it in a minute – and it reflects the State Department's increased emphasis on public-private partnerships as a way to address cross-cutting global challenges, particularly those affecting women and girls.

Now, we hope to receive entries that describe how specific innovations have improved the lives of women and girls and proposals for how they can be scaled up and applied more broadly. These entries will be reviewed by an eminent panel of jurors, chaired by Ambassador-at-Large for Global Women Issues Melanne Verveer, and Rockefeller Foundation President Judith Rodin. The panel will recommend the first two recipients of the award in 2010, both of whom will receive up to a \$500,000 grant to fund their programs. (Applause.)

And there are so many ideas that can fit into this, ideas – I remember being in Senegal and going out into the country to see a new kind of well that made it possible for women to get water in their own village instead of having to walk for hours. We're working on a cook stove project so that we can provide safe and effective cook stoves for women so they don't have to travel for miles to get trees and branches and look for scrub to light their stoves to feed their families. We're looking for ways to end domestic violence by making it clear that it is a crime, ways to partner to end FGM, which is a health hazard to women, especially young girls, but then later in their reproductive years.

We have so many ideas that are not just, well, have a woman run for office or have a woman run a business, but change the conditions in which women live, change the attitude about sending girls to school, provide a fund so that girls have access to clean restrooms, so that they continue to go to school at the end of primary school when it becomes more difficult for them to do so if there is no safe, clean restroom. There's so many ways that we can empower women. So we want to unleash the entrepreneurial creative imagination of all of you to help us.

Now, it is a privilege to have Dr. Judith Rodin here with me to launch this project. Judith is a friend, an inspiration, and a leader in many fields. For many years, she was the president of the University of Pennsylvania. Currently, she is leading the Rockefeller Foundation into new ways of finding innovative solutions to global problems. The foundation has always been at the forefront of efforts to combat disease, reduce poverty, improve housing, promote agricultural reform – they even spawned the so-called Green Revolution. Well, today, under Judith’s leadership, the foundation continues to pioneer new innovations for the challenges of our time.

And Judith, thank you so much for being our partner in this really important project. (Applause.)

MS. RODIN: Thank you so much, Secretary Clinton. Let me start by just saying how delighted the Rockefeller Foundation is to provide funding for this wonderful new award, the Secretary’s Innovation Award for Women and Girls’ Empowerment. And thank you, Secretary Clinton, Ambassador Verveer, for your long-term, longstanding leadership and, I must say, perseverance in keeping this issue at the forefront of public awareness.

I’d like to emphasize from our perspective why this and why now. Why is this particular approach so important, and why is now the right time to pursue it? The short answer is that in the experience of our colleagues at the Rockefeller Foundation, identifying innovation, scaling that innovation, and applying it to seemingly intractable problems, has been shown time and time again now to be hugely effective. And this approach is urgently needed with the focus on women’s empowerment because the gains we have made in this context – and you are all representatives of those gains – are not enough.

We all know the facts. Women still do two-thirds of the work in the world but only earn five percent of the income. They harvest 90 percent of the world’s food, yet they own only one percent of the world’s land. And women are three times as likely as men to work in informal economies. And therefore abuse and sex trafficking, and the absence of legal rights and protections for women are still unacceptably commonplace in so many places around the world. We must do more and we must do more with greater urgency to empower women. And we believe that a focus on scalable innovation can and will make a difference.

The Rockefeller Foundation is intently focused on leveraging and scaling local innovation to ensure that globalization’s benefits are more widely shared and that its burdens are more easily weathered to encourage more equitable growth and to strengthen resilience to risk. Now, leveraging innovation doesn’t only mean devising a great idea from the top down and pushing it down. In our experience, and I know in the experience of so many of you, scalable solutions are often found when we seek innovations where they occur, on the ground in local contexts.

Let me share one of my favorite examples of this approach to problem solving. Positive Deviance, one of our grantees, seeks out and identifies behaviors that enable outliers, or what they call positive deviants, to succeed where others have failed. Then they encourage the widespread adoption of these same behaviors. In Southeast Asia, for example, researchers at Positive Deviance visited a very impoverished Vietnamese village and they noticed that just a few children in this scattering of very poor families were in exceptionally good health. Upon closer examination, they discovered that in those households, the mothers didn’t wash away the shrimp and crabs found in the rice paddies before they cooked the rice. So they were adding, maybe unintentionally, protein to an otherwise carbohydrate diet. This technique, once unearthed, was promoted in one village and then spread to thousands. This is a small, user-driven innovation that really made an enormous difference on regional public health.

So we are looking for, encouraging, and scaling many types of innovations in a number of different contexts around the globe, and with great success in changing conditions that were previously thought to be intractable. That’s why we are so thrilled to be partnering with Secretary Clinton and the State Department to create this new mechanism to seek out and scale local innovations that are working. We’re going to identify and spread what’s working, bringing more attention and, as you heard, we hope a lot more money

than we have been before. So these half a million dollar awards, which will go to two people, organizations, ideas that can be taken to scale a year, we think will call increasing attention and give increasing resources.

Many of these will, obviously, come from women. Women the world over, because of the challenges they confront, are instinctual innovators and they are energetic entrepreneurs. You know that; you are here in this room. Their drive and their ideas must be recognized and realized, but we must give you the resources to do this and take it to scale. I am confident that by the end of this year, when we announce our first two, and then in subsequent years we will be developing a cohort of ideas that go to scale and we will start to see a ripple across the world of innovation that promotes resilience, that advances opportunities for women and that empower women to shape their own future and the future of humanity.

We are very fortunate. We will add a few members to the jury, but we are already fortunate to be able to have helping us to make these awards Anne Mulcahy, Paul Farmer, Muhammad Yunus, Sheryl Sandberg, Cherie Blair, Beth Brooke, and Noeleen Heyzer. So we have a wonderful beginning panel and we intend to find all of the great ideas. We are so excited about this award and our partnership and about the hopeful future we can empower women around the world to build with our commitment and support, but most of all, most importantly, with their own ideas and their own innovation.

So thank you, Secretary Clinton, for being our partner. We really look forward to this exciting launch. Thank you. (Applause.)

SECRETARY CLINTON: Well, this project which we are so excited about is just one example of the ideas and the programs that we've announced over the last two days of the Entrepreneurship Summit. It's what happens when we create networks and partnerships, when we share best practices and lessons learned, where we match the talents of people, particularly women, around the world with the opportunities that they can then seize for themselves.

So when you leave here today, I hope you will carry with you a renewed sense of possibility and a commitment to use your skill and energy to contribute to the growth and progress of your families, your communities, and your countries. Because I think – this is a biased statement, but (laughter) – I really believe that, together as women, we can and will help create a stronger, more stable, more secure, more prosperous, more peaceful world for ourselves and our children. Thank you all very much. (Applause.)