



March 2011 Women's History Month

**U.S. Society
and Values**

INFORMATION RESOURCE CENTER
Public Affairs Section
United States Embassy in Bolivia

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We provide accurate and trustworthy information on U.S. and global issues.

March is...**Women's History Month**

2011 Theme: **"Our History is Our Strength"**



Our shared history unites families, communities, and nations. Although women's history is intertwined with the history shared with men, several factors - social, religious, economic, and biological - have worked to create a unique sphere of women's history.

...and March 8, 2011 is the

100th Anniversary of International Women's Day

2011 theme:

**"Equal Access to Education, Training, Science and Technology:
Pathway to decent work for Women"**

Each year around the world, International Women's Day (IWD) is celebrated on March 8. Hundreds of events occur not just on this day but throughout March to mark the economic, political and social achievements of women.



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The White House Presidential Proclamation--Women's History Month, 2011

During Women's History Month, we reflect on the extraordinary accomplishments of women and honor their role in shaping the course of our Nation's history. Today, women have reached heights their mothers and grandmothers might only have imagined. Women now comprise nearly half of our workforce and the majority of students in our colleges and universities. They scale the skies as astronauts, expand our economy as entrepreneurs and business leaders, and serve our country at the highest levels of government and our Armed Forces. In honor of the pioneering women who came before us, and in recognition of those who will come after us, this month, we recommit to erasing the remaining inequities facing women in our day.

This year, we commemorate the 100th anniversary of International Women's Day, a global celebration of the economic, political, and social achievements of women past, present, and future. International Women's Day is a chance to pay tribute to ordinary women throughout the world and is rooted in women's centuries-old struggle to participate in society on an equal footing with men. This day reminds us that, while enormous progress has been made, there is still work to be done before women achieve true parity.

My Administration has elevated the rights of women and girls abroad as a critical aspect of our foreign and national security policy. Empowering women across the globe is not simply the right thing to do, it is also smart foreign policy. This knowledge is reflected in the National Security Strategy of the United States, which recognizes that countries are more peaceful and prosperous when their female citizens enjoy equal rights, equal voices, and equal opportunities. Today, we are integrating a focus on women and girls in all our diplomatic efforts, and incorporating gender considerations in every aspect of our development assistance. We are working to build the participation of women into all aspects of conflict prevention and resolution, and we are continuing to lead in combating the scourge of conflict related sexual violence, both bilaterally and at the United Nations.

In America, we must lead by example in protecting women's rights and supporting their empowerment. Despite our progress, too many women continue to be paid less than male workers, and women are significantly underrepresented in the science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields. By tapping into the potential and talents of all our citizens, we can utilize an enormous source of economic growth and prosperity. The White House Council on Women and Girls has continued to remove obstacles to achievement by addressing the rate of violence against women, supporting female entrepreneurs, and prioritizing the economic security of women. American families depend largely on the financial stability of women, and my Administration continues to prioritize policies that promote workplace flexibility, access to affordable, quality health care and child care, support for family caregivers, and the enforcement of equal pay laws. I have also called on every agency in the Federal Government to be part of the solution to ending violence against women, and they have responded with unprecedented cooperation to protect victims of domestic and sexual violence and enable survivors to break the cycle of abuse.

As we reflect on the triumphs of the past, we must also look to the limitless potential that lies ahead. To win the future, we must equip the young women of today with the knowledge, skills, and equal access to reach for the promise of tomorrow. My Administration is making unprecedented investments in education and is working to expand opportunities for women and girls in the STEM fields critical for growth in the 21st century economy.

As we prepare to write the next chapter of women's history, let us resolve to build on the progress won by the trailblazers of the past. We must carry forward the work of the women who came before us and ensure our daughters have no limits on their dreams, no obstacles to their achievements, and no remaining ceilings to shatter.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, BARACK OBAMA, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and the laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim March 2011 as Women's History Month. I call upon all Americans to observe this month and to celebrate International Women's Day on March 8, 2011 with appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities that honor the history, accomplishments, and contributions of American women. I also invite all Americans to visit www.WomensHistoryMonth.gov to learn more about the generations of women who have shaped our history.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-eighth day of February, in the year of our Lord two thousand eleven, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirty-fifth.

BARACK OBAMA

Source: [The White House](http://TheWhiteHouse.gov), Office of the Press Secretary



The National Women's History Project is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, educational organization committed to recognizing and celebrating the diverse and historic accomplishments of women by providing information and educational materials.

March is celebrated as **National Women's History Month** in thousands of schools, communities and workplaces across the nation as well as on military bases throughout the world.

This celebration, designated by Joint Resolutions of the House and Senate and Proclamations by six American Presidents, is an opportunity to honor and celebrate women's historic achievements.

Each year **National Women's History Month** employs a unifying theme and honors women around the country whose work and lives testify to that theme.

For 2011, the theme is **Our History is Our Strength**. To date, we have recognized National Honorees, but this year local communities, organizations and institutions are invited to honor women within their own communities or organizations.

Our History is Our Strength pays tribute to the millions of women who helped create a better world for the times in which they lived as well as for future generations. Knowing the challenges these women faced, grappled with, and over-came can be an enormous source of strength to all of us. During today's difficult times, **Our History is Our Strength** can serve as an important reminder to our nation that adversity can be overcome.

Women have played and continue to play a crucial role in several important movements throughout U.S. history:

- * **The Labor Movement** which began as early as 1765 when women formed the first society of working women.
- * **The Women's Suffrage Movement** which was launched in 1848 at the first women's right conference held at Seneca Falls, NY.
- * **The Civil Rights Movement** in which women held a variety of roles from leadership to organizers to participants.
- * **The Women's Rights Movement** which was re-energized in the 20th Century with what is called the Second Wave.
- * **The Environmental Movement** in which women played a key role from the early 19th century and which was officially launched on Earth Day, April 22, 1970.

Here are some women who participated in these movements:

Frances Perkins, U.S. Secretary of Labor, began her advocacy for the labor movement when she witnessed the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire in 1911. Appointed to the Cabinet in 1933, **Perkins** worked hard to secure legislation to enact unemployment relief, public works, Social Security, minimum wage, and the prohibition of child labor.

Alice Paul, represented the last generation of suffrage leaders, and brought fearlessness and tenacity to the fight for women's right to vote. She organized the first pickets at the White House in 1916 and 1917. Along with dozens of women, **Paul** was imprisoned, went on a hunger strike, and was force fed. After winning the vote, she worked to enact the Equal Rights Amendment.

Minnijean Brown Trickey was only 16 years old when she became one of the Little Rock Nine who integrated Central High School in 1957. Along with eight other African-American teenagers, she defied death threats, hostile white demonstrators, and even the Arkansas National Guard, to attend the all-white high school. **Brown-Trickey's** courage helped change the lives and education of all students throughout the country.

Bella Abzug, one of the most recognized and bold leaders of the 20th Century's Women's Movement, was elected to the U.S. Congress at the age of 50. She presided over the first government sponsored National Women's Conference at Houston in 1977. With great joy, **Abzug** took part in the last leg of the relay which had carried a torch from Seneca Falls, site of the first women's rights convention, into the stadium at Houston.

Rachel Carson is known as the founder of the contemporary environmental movement. In 1962, **Carson** published "Silent Spring," which documented the dangers of air pollutants and pesticides on animals, people, and land. Her writing boldly challenged the practices of agricultural scientists and even the government. **Carson** called for a change in the way humankind viewed the natural world. **Our HISTORY is Our Strength**.

Source: [National Women's History Project](#) (NWHF)

This web site provides information about women's history, Women's History Month in March, Women's Equality Day in August, and related women's history resources and materials.



International Women's Day Fact Sheet

International Women's Day (IWD) is a global day celebrating the economic, political and social achievements of women past, present and future. In some countries like China, Russia, Vietnam and Bulgaria, IWD is a national holiday. The first IWD event was run in 1911 so 2011 sees the Global Centenary.

International Women's Day has been observed since in the early 1900's, a time of great expansion and turbulence in the industrialized world that saw booming population growth and the rise of radical ideologies.

1908

Great unrest and critical debate was occurring amongst women. Women's oppression and inequality was spurring women to become more vocal and active in campaigning for change. Then in 1908, 15,000 women marched through New York City demanding shorter hours, better pay and voting rights.

1909

In accordance with a declaration by the Socialist Party of America, the first National Woman's Day (NWD) was observed across the United States on 28 February. Women continued to celebrate NWD on the last Sunday of February until 1913.

1910

In 1910 a second International Conference of Working Women was held in Copenhagen. A woman named a Clara Zetkin (Leader of the 'Women's Office' for the Social Democratic Party in Germany) tabled the idea of an International Women's Day. She proposed that every year in every country there should be a celebration on the same day - a Women's Day – to press for their demands. The conference of over 100 women from 17 countries, representing unions, socialist parties, working women's clubs, and including the first three women elected to the Finnish parliament, greeted Zetkin's suggestion with unanimous approval and thus International Women's Day was the result.

1911

Following the decision agreed at Copenhagen in 1911, International Women's Day (IWD) was honoured the first time in Austria, Denmark, Germany and Switzerland on 19 March. More than one million women and men attended IWD rallies campaigning for women's rights to work, vote, be trained, to hold public office and end discrimination. However less than a week later on 25 March, the tragic 'Triangle Fire' in New York City took the lives of more than 140 working women, most of them Italian and Jewish immigrants. This disastrous event drew significant attention to working conditions and labour legislation in the United States that became a focus of subsequent International Women's Day events. 1911 also saw women's 'Bread & Roses' campaign.

1913-1914

On the eve of World War I campaigning for peace, Russian women observed their first International Women's Day on the last Sunday in February 1913. In 1913 following discussions, International Women's Day was transferred to 8 March and this day has remained the global date for International Women's Day ever since. In 1914 further women across Europe held rallies to campaign against the war and to express women's solidarity.

1917

On the last Sunday of February, Russian women began a strike for "bread and peace" in response to the death over 2 million Russian soldiers in war. Opposed by political leaders the women continued to strike until four days later the Czar was forced to abdicate and the provisional Government granted women the right to vote. The date the women's strike commenced was Sunday 23 February on the Julian calendar then in use in Russia. This day on the Gregorian calendar in use elsewhere was 8 March.

1918 - 1999

Since its birth in the socialist movement, International Women's Day has grown to become a global day of recognition and celebration across developed and developing countries alike. For decades, IWD has grown from strength to strength annually. For many years the United Nations has held an annual IWD conference to coordinate international efforts for women's rights and participation in social, political and economic processes. 1975 was designated as International Women's Year by the United Nations. Women's organisations and governments around the world have also observed IWD annually on 8 March by holding large-scale events that honour women's advancement and while diligently reminding of the continued vigilance and action required to ensure that women's equality is gained and maintained in all aspects of life.

2000 and beyond

IWD is now an official holiday in China, Armenia, Russia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bulgaria, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Macedonia, Moldova, Mongolia, Tajikistan, Ukraine, Uzbekistan and Vietnam. The tradition sees men honouring their mothers, wives, girlfriends, colleagues, etc with flowers and small gifts. In some countries IWD has the equivalent status of Mother's Day where children give small presents to their mothers and grandmothers.

The new millennium has witnessed a significant change and attitudinal shift in both women's and society's thoughts about women's equality and emancipation. Many from a younger generation feel that 'all the battles have been won for women' while many feminists from the 1970's know only too well the longevity and ingrained complexity of patriarchy. With more women in the boardroom, greater equality in legislative rights, and an increased critical mass of women's visibility as impressive role models in every aspect of life, one could think that women have gained true equality. The unfortunate fact is that women are still not paid equally to that of their male counterparts, women still are not present in equal numbers in business or politics, and globally women's education, health and the violence against them is worse than that of men.

However, great improvements have been made. We do have female astronauts and prime ministers, school girls are welcomed into university, women can work and have a family, women have real choices. And so the tone and nature of IWD has, for the past few years, moved from being a reminder about the negatives to a celebration of the positives. Annually on 8 March, thousands of events are held throughout the world to inspire women and celebrate achievements. A global web of rich and diverse local activity connects women from all around the world ranging from political rallies, business conferences, government activities and networking events through to local women's craft markets, theatre performances, fashion parades and more.

Many global corporations have also started to more actively support IWD by running their own internal events and through supporting external ones. For example, on 8 March search engine and media giant Google some years even changes its logo on its global search pages. Year on year IWD is certainly increasing in status. The United States even designates the whole month of March as 'Women's History Month'. Globally there are many very large scale highly organized IWD events.

So make a difference, think globally and act locally! Make everyday International Women's Day. Do your bit to ensure that the future for girls is bright, equal, safe and rewarding.

The International Women's Day website at www.internationalwomensday.com is a global hub for sharing International Women's Day news, events and resources. It provides a free service to women and organizations around the world wanting to share and promote their IWD activity, videos, opinions and ideas. Please feel free to submit gender-related items for the site that you consider relevant and useful.

2011 IWD Global Centennial Year

2011 is the global centennial year for International Women's Day – 100 years since the first International Women's Day event was run. More than one million women and men attended rallies in 1911.

Source: [International Women's Day Official Site](http://www.internationalwomensday.com)



International Women's Day Shows How Women Can Help Women Succeed

By Jane Morse, Staff Writer

Washington — "If I have seen further, it is by standing on the shoulders of giants," the world's great scientific intellectual Isaac Newton wrote in 1676. The accomplishments of women, too, owe much to the "giants" who preceded them — women who bravely endured painful ridicule and overcame huge obstacles to obtain the same opportunities afforded to men.

This year marks the 100th anniversary of the first International Women's Day, celebrated on March 8, which recognizes women's past struggles and accomplishments and focuses on what needs to be done to provide greater opportunities for women today.

International Women's Day is an official holiday in 15 countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bulgaria, China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Macedonia, Moldova, Mongolia, Russia, Tajikistan, Ukraine, Uzbekistan and Vietnam). But most countries celebrate the day with thousands of events. According to the official website for International Women's Day, the countries sponsoring the most events for International Women's Day are the United Kingdom, Canada, the United States, Australia and Ireland.

Each country picks a different theme every year to reflect global and local gender issues. In the United States, the 2011 theme is "Our History Is Our Strength."



Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton hugs girls at a shelter for girls in Cambodia.

Shirley Chisholm was the first African-American woman to be elected to the U.S. Congress.



Among the thousands of Americans who blazed trails for women are Elizabeth Blackwell, the first woman to achieve a medical degree in the United States (1849); Susanna Madora Salter, the first woman elected to any political office in the United States when she was voted mayor of Argonia, Kansas, in 1887; Jane Addams, political activist and women's advocate, the first American woman to win the Nobel Peace Prize (1931); and Shirley Chisholm, who became in 1968 the first African-American woman elected to the U.S. Congress.

Women today continue to make history and are providing the "broad shoulders" upon which other women can see further into a future of wider possibilities. Condoleezza Rice, the first African-American woman to hold the position of U.S. secretary of state, established the Women of Courage award in 2007 to honor women around the globe who have shown exceptional courage in promoting women's rights. So far, 36 women representing 27 countries have been recognized for their efforts to further women's rights, end violence against women and promote women's health.

Hillary Rodham Clinton, the current secretary of state and the first woman to become a leading candidate for the U.S. presidential nomination when she ran against Barack Obama, has been a longtime women's advocate. She has joined President Obama in aggressively promoting women's issues both in the United States and abroad.

Early in his presidency, President Obama created a position at the White House, now held by Lynn Rosenthal, to advise the president and vice president on domestic violence and sexual assault issues in the United States. The president also created a new position at the U.S. State Department: ambassador-at-large for global women's issues. Melanne Verwee, who has a long career working for the advancement of women, was appointed to that position to mobilize support worldwide for women's rights and to combat violence against women and girls in all its forms.

For 2011, Clinton is launching the "100 Women Initiative: Empowering Women and Girls through International Exchanges" and a new maternal- and child-health initiative. Clinton has said that the United States "is making women a cornerstone of foreign policy because we think it's the right thing to do, but we also believe it's the smart thing to do as well."

"Investing in the potential of the world's women and girls," according to Clinton, "is one of the surest ways to achieve global economic progress, political stability, and greater prosperity for women — and men — the world over."

Source: [Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State](#)

Q&A with Ambassador-at-Large Melanne Verveer: “Solutions to Global Challenges Require Women’s Participation”



In April 2009 Melanne Verveer was appointed Ambassador-at-Large for Global Women's Issues, an office created by U.S. President Barack Obama to promote women's empowerment in U.S. foreign policy. She shares her passion for achieving the political, economic, and social empowerment of women in this interview.

Q: You are the first Ambassador-at-Large for Global Women's Issues. Why are these issues so important to address now?

MV: There is recognition today that we cannot possibly solve our global challenges, whether they concern the environment, governance, economic policy, or security, unless women are full participants. We have to move “women's issues” from the margins to the mainstream and recognize that the issues are not only about women's roles, but are about the kind of world we want to create. To the extent that women participate, succeed, and help make a difference, everyone benefits — men and women, boys and girls.

Q: Why is women's participation so vital to the well-being of all societies?

MV: There is a mountain of data that correlates investments in women to poverty reduction — even to decreases in corruption — which I think we need to take very seriously. Similarly, there are studies on the consequences of gender inequality. For example, the World Economic Forum puts out an annual report called the Gender Gap Report. It measures the progress of men and women in terms of economic participation and opportunity, educational attainment, political participation, health and survival. Where men and women are closer to equal achievement in all of those areas, those countries are far better off. Where that gap is wider, it's a different story. This has been repeated in study after study. We have to pay attention to the hard data and what the data tell us is this is the smart thing to do, to invest in women and provide them with opportunities to fully participate in their societies.

Q: In 1995 the landmark U.N. Fourth World Conference on Women was held in Beijing. What did it accomplish, and is it still relevant?

MV: It brought together 189 countries to really look at the progress of women and specifically to adopt a Platform for Action. That Platform for Action focused on a number of critical areas, including women's access to education, health care, economic and political participation; women's ability to be free from violence; to have legal rights; the girl child; the role of women in conflict societies; and the role of women in peace and security. It was a major, ambitious blueprint that the United States and 188 other countries signed on to, making commitments to go back to our own countries to chart progress for women and girls. That was significant then, and it continues to be extremely significant today. Fifteen years later, the Platform for Action is still the blueprint against which many of our countries, NGOs, and others measure the advancement of women. There has been a lot of progress, but there still are challenges. Laws have been passed. They haven't always been implemented, but much has changed for the better.

Q: Where has the most progress been made, and where does the world still have work to do?

MV: Girls' education is in a much better place than it was when the Beijing Platform was adopted, but we are not where we need to be. While more and more girls are in primary school, we don't have anywhere near the numbers with access to secondary education. Investing in a girl determines what her future will be like — and her potential family's future — her economic possibilities, her health, and her children's education. More women are being elected to parliaments, but the numbers are still below what they should be, given that women make up half the population of the world and it is important to have their experiences and talents involved in policymaking. Economically women are participating in more significant ways. Microcredit, for example, has had a transformative impact, lifting up the poorest of the poor and creating livelihoods so people can sustain themselves and their families. Laws have been passed dealing with violence against women, family law reform, and other intractable issues. Now such laws must be better implemented and enforced. There is a definite record of progress. Governments, civil society and those who have charted this path toward a better future can take justifiable pride in that. but we have to keep at it to reach our goals.

Q: What are the most important emerging global women's issues?

MV: We still have an agenda to complete. We have to be more creative. One of the challenges is to bring new tools to the table, tools that do a better job enhancing economic progress. Microcredit is one of the great financial tools, but we need broader financial inclusion: savings and other ways that poor people can be insured against cataclysms of one kind or another. Financial tools can bring creative solutions; as can technology. I personally think that mobile technology has the potential to be as transformative as microcredit has been. Cell phones are more accessible to the poor. Cell phone applications are being developed to help improve health care. The cell phone is being used for banking, teaching literacy, safeguarding women from violence, and creating economic opportunities. There was and is an environmental component of the Beijing Agenda, but climate change itself was not specified. It is something that we have come to understand better in the time that's elapsed since 1995. Here again we see the role that women have to play, particularly in regions most severely affected by climate change and vulnerable to natural disasters such as drought or floods. We need to engage women as agents for adaptation and mitigation. One important example concerns cookstoves. The black carbon emitted from dirty cookstoves — on which millions of poor people cook — is detrimental to the health of millions of people. The Global Alliance for Clean Cookstoves is creating a market for low-emissions cookstoves, to help reduce the damaging health and environmental impacts of black carbon. It's an economic empowerment issue because selling and maintaining cook stoves is a new green industry, especially for women. Cooking is not the major contributor to climate change, but low-emissions cookstoves can address one aspect of it.

Q: What role must men play in ensuring women's empowerment and advancement around the world?

MV: Men have a central, critical, important role to play. Women's progress has never come through women's efforts alone. We cannot possibly solve some of the most serious challenges that women confront — the inequality of women around the globe, the scourge of violence against them — unless men are involved in solutions. The way boys are raised, the image of what a man should be and how that's presented are opportunities to develop good habits in the next generation. We know the critical role that religious leaders — who are mostly men — can play. We need political will and enlightened male leaders at the highest levels of government, multilateral institutions, and companies to become full participants in the advancement of women's empowerment.

Q: The United States does not have a perfect record on women's issues. Our Congress has a lower percentage of female elected officials than some foreign parliaments and has not ratified the U.N. Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). Domestic violence and human trafficking are issues in the United States. Is the United States in a position to lead the world on women's empowerment?

MV: We have a lot of work to do at home, as every other country does. In no country in the world are men and women equal. But I think the fact that we address many of our problems or are working at addressing them does certainly resonate internationally. We've created legislation to combat violence against women, which was first adopted in the 1990s. Our trafficking law wasn't passed until 2000, but we worked at it and it is a model for the world. It may help other countries to see the path we took to address the challenges, how we created coalitions, and why we set prevention, prosecution and protection as lynchpins in the violence against women law and in the trafficking law (Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000). I often talk about the women who, in 1848, traveled to that first equal rights convention in Seneca Falls, New York. And I often think of the diary of a young girl who looked back on the course that she chose to take, which was to get in a stagecoach, leave her home and to make that trip. She did it because in the United States at the time, women could not vote. She could not keep her meager earnings — if she had meager earnings. She could not access formal education; she could not get a divorce if she found herself in a terrible marriage. She knew life needed to be better and she went off on that journey to the equal rights convention not knowing, as she said, if anybody else would be on that road. Well, we know what progress our country has made. We are still on that road. Women everywhere are on that journey and we need each other. And — just as importantly — we need good men to join us as they, too, traveled to the Equal Rights Convention. We may be in different places on the journey. The United States has come a long way from 1848, when that young woman decided to make the trip to Seneca Falls, but we still have a ways to go. All over the world women who face difficult situations need to chart progress. So we're not perfect, but we work at these issues and in many ways we have succeeded and can help others address similar challenges.

Source: [Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State](#)

Other Recommended Web Sites

[International Women's Day March 2011](#), United Nations

8 March 2011 is being celebrated in many parts of the world as the 100th anniversary of International Women's Day. It is also the first International Women's Day for UN Women, created by the UN General Assembly on 2 July 2010. The official theme of International Women's Day 2011 is "Equal access to education, training and science and technology: Pathway to decent work for women".

[Women, Peace and Security](#), United Nations

[Advancement of Women](#), United Nations

[Women Watch](#), United Nations

In July 2010, the United Nations General Assembly created [UN Women](#), the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women.

In doing so, UN Member States took an historic step in accelerating the Organization's goals on gender equality and the empowerment of women.

The creation of UN Women came about as part of the UN reform agenda, bringing together resources and mandates for greater impact.

[Organization of Women of the Americas](#)

The OWA, a non-profit, charitable organization was founded in 1997. The principal objectives of the OWA are: to sensitize the needs and problems of women and children from the different countries of Latin America and the Caribbean; to strengthen the close ties between member countries of the OAS; and to unite the diplomatic community and citizens of the Americas who live in the metropolitan area of Washington D.C., in an aim to organize and promote cultural and social fund-raising activities and help address the needs of charities and programs that provide support to women and children in this region of the world.

[Council on Women and Girls](#), The White House

On March 11, 2009, President Obama signed an Executive Order creating the White House Council on Women and Girls. In his remarks at the signing, the President underscored that the purpose of the Council is "to ensure that each of the agencies in which they're charged takes into account the needs of women and girls in the policies they draft, the programs they create, the legislation they support" and that the true purpose of our government is "to ensure that in America, all things are still possible for all people."

[Office of Global Women's Issues](#), U.S. Department of State

The Office of Global Women's Issues, led by Ambassador-at-Large Melanne Verveer, works for the political, economic, and social empowerment of women.

[U.S. Agency for International Development \(USAID\)](#)

USAID is committed to providing development assistance that improves the lives of women, men and children around the world. USAID has a special interest in the advancement of women worldwide and is working to improve women's equality and empowerment. Not only because it is just, but because it is necessary for successful development.



INFORMATION RESOURCE CENTER
Public Affairs Section
United States Embassy
Avenida Arce 2780
Phones. 2168958—2168252
Fax 2168622
lpzirc@state.gov

Url: <http://spanish.bolivia.usembassy.gov/irc.html>
Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/usdos.bolivia>
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