

Administration of Donald J. Trump, 2019

Memorandum on Addressing Legal and Societal Barriers to Women's Global Development and Prosperity

December 23, 2019

Memorandum for the Secretary of State, the Secretary of the Treasury, the Secretary of Commerce, the Secretary of Labor, the Director of the Office of Management and Budget, the United States Trade Representative, the Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, the Assistant to the President for Economic Policy, the Advisor to the President, the Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development, the Chief Executive Officer, Millennium Challenge Corporation, the Director of the Peace Corps, the President of the Overseas Private Investment Corporation, or its Successor Agency, the United States International Development Finance Corporation, the President of the Inter-American Foundation, and the President of the United States African Development Foundation

Subject: Addressing Legal and Societal Barriers to Women's Global Development and Prosperity

Section 1. Policy. Consistent with National Security Presidential Memorandum–16 of February 7, 2019 (Promoting Women's Global Development and Prosperity) (NSPM–16), it shall be the policy of the United States to enhance the opportunity for women to participate in, contribute to, and benefit meaningfully and equitably from, economic opportunities as individuals, parents, workers, consumers, innovators, entrepreneurs, and investors.

The United States will pursue this economic and national security objective across the developing world through the Women's Global Development and Prosperity (W–GDP) Initiative, and its three pillars, as described in NSPM–16. The W–GDP Initiative's third pillar, Women Enabled in the Economy, specifically addresses the factors that affect women's ability to reach their economic potential, including applicable laws, regulations, policies, practices, and social and cultural norms.

Women are frequently discouraged, and often effectively barred, from economic engagement by disproportionate burdens of unpaid care, gender-based violence and abuse, underinvestment in their education, the need for spousal approval for employment, and legal barriers to participation in certain professions. Some of the economic barriers women face arise from laws that limit women's rights to inherit or own property, or enter contracts in their own names, or arise from a failure to enforce laws that establish women's rights in these areas. Reducing those barriers while ensuring women have the needed legal and policy protections requires deliberate efforts by the government, the private sector, and civil society.

Sec. 2. Addressing Legal and Societal Barriers. The heads of executive departments and agencies (agencies) represented on the W–GDP Working Group established by NSPM–16 shall focus their programmatic and diplomatic efforts, as appropriate, on the following five areas of emphasis in support of pillar three of the W–GDP Initiative:

(a) Lifting restrictions on women's authority to sign legal documents, such as contracts and court documents, and addressing unequal access to courts and administrative bodies for women, whether officially or through lack of proper enforcement.

(b) Ensuring women's equal access to credit and capital to start and grow their businesses, and prohibiting discrimination in access to credit on the basis of sex or marital status.

(c) Lifting restrictions on women's possessing and managing property, including limitations on inheritance and the ability to transfer, purchase, or lease property.

(d) Addressing constraints on women's freedom of movement, including restrictions on obtaining passports on the basis of sex.

(e) Eliminating barriers that limit working hours, occupations, or tasks on the basis of sex.

Sec. 3. Action Plans. The agencies represented on the W GDP Working Group established by NSPM–16 shall develop action plans for addressing the five areas of emphasis identified in section 2 of this memorandum in developing countries, to be submitted to the President through the Co-Chairs of the W–GDP Working Group established by NSPM–16. Agencies shall provide plan frameworks to the Co-Chairs by February 7, 2020, and final action plans by March 7, 2020.

The action plans should identify each agency's unique capabilities for addressing these areas of emphasis through cooperation with country governments, civil society, the private sector, or non-governmental organizations, and specific goals they will work toward to achieve progress on these objectives. Beginning in 2021, as part of the annual reports required by section 5 of NSPM–16, agencies shall report publicly on the progress made toward the goals identified in the action plans required by this section.

Sec. 4. General Provisions. (a) Nothing in this memorandum shall be construed to impair or otherwise affect:

(i) the authority granted by law to an executive department or agency, or the head thereof; or

(ii) the functions of the Director of the Office of Management and Budget relating to budgetary, administrative, or legislative proposals.

(b) This memorandum shall be implemented consistent with applicable law and subject to the availability of appropriations.

(c) This memorandum is not intended to, and does not, create any right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law or in equity by any party against the United States, its departments, agencies, or entities, its officers, employees, or agents, or any other person.

DONALD J. TRUMP

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this memorandum.

Categories: Communications to Federal Agencies : Women's global development and prosperity, memorandum addressing legal and societal barriers.

Subjects: Civil rights : Women's rights and gender equality; Foreign policy, U.S : Women's Global Development and Prosperity (W-GDP) initiative.

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