

## Statement on the 20th Anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women September 27, 2015

I am proud to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women. Today we recommit ourselves to the basic principle affirmed there, namely that “[w]omen’s empowerment and their full participation on the basis of equality in all spheres of society, including participation in the decision-making process and access to power, are fundamental for the achievement of equality, development and peace.”

The United States understands that women’s rights are human rights and that empowered women and educated girls are critical to achieving lasting peace, security, and prosperity. Over the last 20 years, we have made tremendous strides toward gender equality:

- We have worked with Congress to reauthorize the groundbreaking Violence Against Women Act, enacting new protections and strengthening existing protections, including for LGBT individuals and Native American survivors of domestic violence.
- Through the Affordable Care Act, we have dramatically increased access to quality, affordable health care for women and girls across the United States and put an end to women being charged more for health care than men.
- With our National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security and by chairing the Equal Futures Partnership, we are encouraging and supporting women’s economic and political empowerment both at home and abroad.
- Within the United States, we are taking steps to support working families, encourage women and girls to pursue careers in the STEM fields, and provide additional opportunities for women entrepreneurs.

But we know that much work remains. Women and girls continue to face violence and

discrimination at home, at work, in school, and in their communities. Women continue to be paid less than men for equal work. In too many places around the world, girls do not have the same educational opportunities as boys. Too often, women’s contributions are undervalued, underutilized, and suppressed. And in too many places—from China to Egypt, from Russia to Venezuela—women have been swept up in repressive crackdowns on civil society and deprived of their universal rights and fundamental freedoms.

That’s why my administration continues to work to advance the empowerment and education of women and girls here and abroad. It’s why we are dedicating additional resources to address violence against women and girls. It’s why we are investing in job training and apprenticeships to help women earn better-paying jobs. It is why we launched “Let Girls Learn,” to address the challenges adolescent girls around the world face in enrolling, completing and succeeding in school. And it is why my administration’s “Stand With Civil Society” initiative is supporting the right of women and all people around the world to work peacefully for the betterment of their societies without fear that their rights and freedoms will be unjustly abridged.

Today we renew our resolve to work tirelessly toward a world where every woman and girl can enjoy the rights and freedoms that are her birthright. We pledge to continue this work in partnership with the independent civil society advocates and experts who have led the fight for women’s empowerment, as envisioned when the international community convened 20 years ago. And we remind ourselves of all of the noble promises of that conference and rededicate ourselves to making them a reality.

NOTE: The Office of the Press Secretary released a report, “United States Report on the Implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action,” with this statement.