

and equal members of society. Despite international intervention, Afghanistan is one such example. More than four years after the invasion of Afghanistan and the fall of the Taliban government, the women of Afghanistan still face significant hurdles as they seek to realize their full potential.

The maternal death rate for Afghan women remains tragically high—with an estimated 1,600 deaths for every 100,000 live births. The illiteracy rate for women continues to hover around 80 percent.

And perhaps most troubling, the security situation for women is getting worse—threatening to slow or even reverse the gains that Afghan women have made over the past four years.

Lieutenant General Michael D. Maples, director of the Defense Intelligence Agency, recently testified that violence by the Taliban and other insurgents in Afghanistan in 2005 increased by 20 percent 2004 levels, specifically noting that the insurgency in Afghanistan “appears emboldened.”

Women and girls have felt the impact particularly hard. In recent months, attacks against schools in Afghanistan that educate girls have increased substantially. According to media reports, teachers and principals are being threatened and killed—the headmaster at a coed school was even beheaded in January—and eight schools have been burned in the Kandahar province during the current school year alone.

Just today, the President of Afghanistan, Hamid Karzai admitted that Afghan women and girls have much to overcome. “We have achieved successes in various dimensions during the past four years,” Karzai said. “But this journey has not ended . . . women especially are being oppressed, there are still women and young girls who are being married to settle disputes in Afghanistan, young girls are married against their will.”

The legislation I am introducing today, the Afghan Women Empowerment Act of 2006, will provide resources where they are needed most in Afghanistan—to Afghan women-led nongovernmental organizations, empowering those who will continue to provide for the needs of the Afghan people long after the international community has left.

The legislation will provide \$30 million to these women-led NGOs to specifically focus on providing direct services to Afghan women such as adult literacy education, technical and vocational training, and health care services, including mental health treatment. It also provides assistance to especially vulnerable populations, including widows and orphans.

In addition, the Afghan Women Empowerment Act authorizes the President to appropriate \$5 million to the Afghan Ministry of Women's Affairs and \$10 million to the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission—two vitally important entities dedicated to advancing the cause of women and human rights within Afghanistan.

I urge my colleagues to support this important legislation.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 392—DESIGNATING MARCH 8, 2006, AS “INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY”

Mr. LUGAR submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary:

S. RES. 392

Whereas there continues to be discrimination against women and women are still denied full political and economic equality;

Whereas discrimination is often the basis for violating the basic human rights of women;

Whereas, worldwide, the lives and health of women and girls are endangered by violence that is directed at women and girls simply because they are female;

Whereas women bear a disproportionate burden of the poverty in the world and constitute an estimated 75 percent of the world's poor;

Whereas, of the estimated 600,000 to 800,000 people trafficked across international borders each year for forced labor, domestic servitude, and sexual exploitation, 80 percent of the victims are women and girls;

Whereas violence against women is one of the most widespread violations of human rights and it is estimated that 1 in 3 women will suffer some form of violence;

Whereas the majority of the estimated 121,000,000 children in the world who are denied a primary education are girls;

Whereas two-thirds of the estimated 875,000,000 illiterate adults in the world are women;

Whereas, worldwide, women now account for half of all HIV and AIDS cases, and in sub-Saharan Africa, young girls ages 15 to 24 are 3 times more likely to be infected with HIV than young men;

Whereas gender inequality and sexual violence are significant factors causing the rapid spread of HIV/AIDS among women and girls;

Whereas HIV/AIDS is having a devastating effect on women in the United States, and it is the leading cause of death among African American women ages 25 to 34;

Whereas two-thirds of the estimated 19,200,000 refugees in the world are women and children;

Whereas, in armed conflict, women are targets of rape when it is used as a tactic of war to humiliate the enemy and terrorize the population;

Whereas it is estimated that 515,000 women die every year as a result of pregnancy and childbirth, and more than 99 percent of these deaths occur in the developing world;

Whereas countries should take steps to ensure the full participation and representation of women in political processes, conflict prevention, and peacekeeping efforts;

Whereas, over the last century, March 8 has become known as “International Women's Day”, a day on which people come together to recognize the accomplishments of women and to reaffirm their commitment to continue the struggle for equality, justice, and peace; and

Whereas the people of the United States should be encouraged to participate in International Women's Day: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates March 8, 2006, as “International Women's Day”;

(2) reaffirms its commitment to—

(A) end discrimination and increase the participation of women in decision-making positions in government and in the private sector;

(B) end and prevent violence against women;

(C) pursue policies that guarantee the basic rights of women both in the United States and around the world;

(D) improve access to quality health care for women;

(E) protect the human rights of women and girls during and after conflict and to support the integration of gender perspectives in peacekeeping missions and post conflict processes; and

(F) end the trafficking of women and girls; and

(3) encourages the people of the United States to observe International Women's Day with appropriate programs and activities.

Mr. LUGAR. Mr. President, I rise to submit a resolution declaring today International Women's Day 2006.

International Women's Day is a day on which we celebrate the progress of women and rededicate ourselves to overcoming the inequities that they face around the globe. Almost one hundred years ago, when the first International Women's Day was celebrated, women in this country and in Europe were fighting for the right to vote and to participate fully in the political process.

Today, nearly one hundred years later, we can celebrate the fact that, in the United States and Europe, many of these barriers have been broken down, and that women now not only vote, but participate in our government at its highest levels. In the past year, we have seen historic elections in Afghanistan and Iraq, where women were voters and candidates. In Kuwait, women are now able to vote and run for parliament. Voters in Liberia have elected the first female head of state in Africa, Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, and Chile is just days away from the inauguration of Michele Bachelet, the country's first female president.

Despite these accomplishments, in many places around the world, women are still fighting for their basic rights. Often, especially in developing countries, women and girls lack full political, academic, and economic equality. Two-thirds of the estimated 875 million illiterate adults in the world are women. Girls frequently continue to be denied access to primary education, and constitute the majority of the estimated 121 million children around the globe who do not attend school.

The lives and health of women and girls continue to be particularly vulnerable to violence. Women are trafficked across international borders for forced labor, domestic servitude, and sexual exploitation. In armed conflict situations and other humanitarian emergencies, women and children risk a range of abuses including sexual exploitation, trafficking and gender-based violence.

The HIV/AIDS crisis is particularly devastating to women and girls. Women now account for one-half of all

HIV and AIDS cases, and in sub-Saharan Africa, young girls aged 15 through 24 are three times more likely to be infected with HIV than young men. Not only are women and girls more vulnerable to infection, they are also shouldering much of the burden of caring for sick and dying relatives and friends. In addition, in the vast majority of cases, they are the caretakers of the estimated 14 million children who have been orphaned by this pandemic. Often, widows and orphans have difficulties asserting their inheritance rights, even when those rights are spelled out in law. This often leaves the most vulnerable women and children impoverished and homeless.

The inequality that is devastating the lives of women around the world requires our commitment to ending it. Last year, I co-sponsored with Senator BIDEN the Protection of Vulnerable Populations During Humanitarian Emergencies Act of 2005, which the Committee on Foreign Relations supported as an amendment to our Foreign Affairs Authorization Act for Fiscal Years 2006 and 2007. Our bill seeks to ensure that U.S. foreign assistance programs are a force for protecting women, children, and other vulnerable populations in the wake of military conflict and natural disasters.

In addition, last year the President signed into law the Orphans and Vulnerable Children Act, which I authored and introduced in 2004. This law requires the Administration to develop a comprehensive strategy to assist the millions of orphans left behind by the AIDS pandemic. The strategy must include programs to remove barriers to education, such as school fees, that keep orphans, and especially girls, out of the classroom. The law also requires the Administration to support programs that protect the inheritance rights of orphans and widows with children, and to support programs that assist village-based organizations, the main infrastructure for the care of orphans and the millions of women taking care of them.

International Women's Day is a day for each of us to reflect upon the remarkable progress that women around the world have made, and to remember that much remains to be done. I am hopeful that Senators will join me in recognizing this important day.

SENATE RESOLUTION 393—DESIGNATING MARCH 8, 2006, AS “INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY”

Mr. BIDEN submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary:

S. RES. 393

Whereas all over the world women are contributing to the growth of economies, participating in the fields of diplomacy and politics, and improving the quality of the lives of their families, communities, and nations;

Whereas discrimination continues to deny women full political and economic equality

and is often the basis for violations of basic human rights against women;

Whereas the health and life of women and girls worldwide continues to be endangered by violence that is directed at them simply because they are women;

Whereas worldwide violence against women includes rape, genital mutilation, sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, honor killings, human trafficking, dowry-related violence, female infanticide, sex selection abortion, forced pregnancy, forced sterilization, and forced abortion;

Whereas at least 1 in 3 females worldwide has been beaten or sexually abused in her lifetime;

Whereas 1 in 4 women in the United States has been raped or physically assaulted by an intimate partner at some point in her life;

Whereas 20 percent to 50 percent of women worldwide experience some degree of domestic violence during marriage;

Whereas, on average, 3 women are murdered by their husbands or boyfriends in the United States every day;

Whereas it is estimated that 1 in 5 adolescent girls in the United States becomes a victim of physical or sexual abuse, or both, in a dating relationship;

Whereas an estimated 135,000,000 women and girls of the world have undergone genital mutilation, and 2,000,000 girls are at risk of mutilation each year;

Whereas worldwide, women account for ½ of all cases of the human immunodeficiency virus and acquired immune deficiency syndrome (referred to in this preamble as “HIV/AIDS”);

Whereas young women in Africa are 3 times more likely to contract HIV/AIDS than men;

Whereas worldwide sexual violence, including marital rape, has been cited as a major cause of the rapid spread of HIV/AIDS among women;

Whereas between 75 percent and 80 percent of the 27,000,000 refugees and internally displaced persons of the world are women and children;

Whereas illegal trafficking for forced labor, domestic servitude, or sexual exploitation victimizes 2,000,000 to 4,000,000 women and girls throughout the world each year;

Whereas ¾ of the nearly 1,000,000,000 illiterate individuals of the world are women;

Whereas ¾ of children worldwide who are denied primary education are girls;

Whereas throughout the world, girls are less likely to complete school than boys;

Whereas that educational failure has real consequences for the global economy and the security of the United States, and especially for the millions of girls with limitless potential who continue to lose the chance to discover their worth and importance as global citizens;

Whereas girls who are educated are more likely to enjoy healthy and stable families, lower mortality rates, higher nutrition levels, delayed sexual activity, less chance of contracting HIV/AIDS, and less chance of having unwanted pregnancies;

Whereas it is estimated that women and girls make up more than 70 percent of the poorest people in the world;

Whereas in most nations, women work approximately twice the amount of unpaid time that men do;

Whereas women work ¾ of the working hours of the world, and produce ½ of the food in the world, yet earn only 10 percent of the income in the world, and own less than 1 percent of the property in the world;

Whereas rural women produce more than 55 percent of all food grown in developing countries;

Whereas women worldwide still earn less, own less property, and have less access to

education, employment, and health care than do men;

Whereas there are 82,500,000 mothers of all ages in the United States;

Whereas approximately 3 in 10 United States households are maintained by women with no husband present;

Whereas women comprise almost 15 percent of the active duty, reserve, and guard units of the Armed Forces;

Whereas it is not enough to say women deserve a voice in politics;

Whereas nations should take steps to ensure the full participation and representation of women in their conferences and committees, plenaries, and parliaments;

Whereas social investment, particularly investments in women and girls, should be an integral part of foreign policy;

Whereas the dedication and success of those working all over the world to end violence against women and girls and fighting for equality should be recognized;

Whereas special recognition is owed to 10 women fighting to make a difference in their communities and around the globe, including the following: Brigadier General Sheila R. Baxter, Commander, Madigan Army Medical Center, Western Regional Medical Command; Sheryl Cates, Executive Director of the National Domestic Violence Hotline and the Texas Council on Family Violence; Lora Jo Foo, Civil rights, labor activist, and Managing Attorney at the Asian Law Caucus; Salma Hayek, Actress and Domestic Violence Advocate; Asma Jahangir, Pakistani human rights activist, author, and lawyer; Liz Lerman, Founder and leader of the Liz Lerman Dance Exchange; Wangari Maathai, Nobel Peace Prize-winning environmentalist and founder of the Green Belt Movement; Kavita N. Ramdas, President and Chief Executive Officer of Global Women's Fund; Bernice Johnson Reagon, singer, scholar, activist, and founder of Sweet Honey in the Rock; and Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, newly-elected President of Liberia;

Whereas March 8 became known as “International Women's Day” during the last century, and is a day on which people, often divided by ethnicity, language, culture, and income, come together to celebrate a common struggle for equality, justice, and peace for women; and

Whereas the people of the United States should be encouraged to participate in “International Women's Day”: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates March 8, 2006, as “International Women's Day”;

(2) reaffirms the commitment of the Senate to—

(A) improve access to quality health care;

(B) end and prevent violence against women, including the trafficking of women and girls worldwide, and ensure that the criminals who engage in those activities are brought to justice;

(C) end discrimination and increase participation of women in decision-making positions in the government and private sectors;

(D) extend full economic opportunities to women, including access to microfinance and microenterprise; and

(E) strengthen the role of women as agents of peace, because women are among the best emissaries when it comes to easing religious, racial, and ethnic tensions, crossing cultural divides, and reducing violence in areas of war and conflict; and

(3) encourages the people of the United States to observe “International Women's Day” with appropriate programs and activities.

Mr. BIDEN. Mr. President, today I am submitting a resolution honoring 10