

RELEASE IN  
PART B6

**From:** Mills, Cheryl D <MillsCD@state.gov>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, July 13, 2011 11:04 AM  
**To:** H; williamsbarrett [redacted]  
**Subject:** FW: Advancing Women's Rights Is Progressive Foreign Policy (GHI, FTF, QDDR, 1325, etc ref)

B6

**From:** Huang, Cindy Y  
**Sent:** Wednesday, July 13, 2011 10:20 AM  
**To:** Mills, Cheryl D  
**Subject:** FW: Advancing Women's Rights Is Progressive Foreign Policy (GHI, FTF, QDDR, 1325, etc ref)

Just FYI ... Great photo from Tanzania!

**From:** Flowers, Kimberly (BFS) [mailto:kiflowers@usaid.gov]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, June 29, 2011 11:47 AM  
**To:** Huang, Cindy Y; Franko, Kathryn L; Cabus, Sylvia; Coursen, Wendy (BFS); Burns, Christopher (EGAT/WID); Williams, Anne (BFS)  
**Cc:** Frederickson, Karen (BFS)  
**Subject:** FW: Advancing Women's Rights Is Progressive Foreign Policy (GHI, FTF, QDDR, 1325, etc ref)

Thought this would interest you. – Kimberly

## Center for American Progress



# Advancing Women's Rights Is Progressive Foreign Policy

## Empowering Women Must Continue Past Secretary Clinton's Term



SOURCE: AP/Susan Walsh

U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton meets with the farmers in the Upendo Women's Cooperative group in Mlandizi, Tanzania.

By Peter Juul | June 29, 2011

Secretary of State Hillary Clinton is spearheading a quiet revolution in progressive foreign policy by making the empowerment of women and advancement of their rights a cornerstone of U.S. foreign policy. While

overshadowed by other foreign policy issues—the global financial crisis; wars in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Libya; nuclear programs in Iran and North Korea; terrorism; and the Arab Spring to name a few—the Obama administration has embarked on the most concerted effort to advance women’s rights in the history of U.S. foreign policy.

Secretary Clinton has been the main mover behind this agenda, and her well-known personal interest in empowering women internationally has propelled it forward. For instance, Saudi women activists called on Secretary Clinton to support their right-to-drive campaign due to her intense personal interest in women’s rights.

But the fate of the Obama administration’s new focus on international women’s rights and empowerment is uncertain without a high-level champion like Secretary Clinton, who has said she will leave the administration at the end of President Obama’s current term in office. Progressives should ensure that Secretary Clinton’s focus on women’s rights and empowerment survives beyond her tenure at Foggy Bottom and becomes a central, definitional component of what it means to have a progressive foreign policy.

Over the last two and a half years, the Obama administration and the State Department in particular have racked up an impressive record on women’s rights and empowerment. In her confirmation hearing, Clinton signaled her prioritization of women’s rights, saying, “The United States must be an unequivocal and unwavering voice in support of women’s rights in every country on every continent.”

Action was swift: On his third day in office, President Obama rescinded the “Global Gag Rule” and restored U.S. funding to international family planning organizations that fund abortion. Less than two months later, the Obama administration restored U.S. funding to the U.N. Population Fund after a seven-year hiatus. What’s more, the administration created the Office of Global Women’s Issues in the State Department, reporting directly to Secretary Clinton, and appointed Melanne Verveer as the first ambassador-at-large for global women’s issues.

The administration has incorporated women into its two major development initiatives: the Feed the Future Initiative and the Global Health Initiative. The \$3.5 billion Food Security Initiative acknowledges that women produce between 60 percent and 80 percent of the food in developing countries and estimates that providing women with agricultural “inputs” such as land, fertilizer, and seed varieties equal to those of men increases economic output by 10 percent in developing countries. Accordingly, the Feed the Future Initiative will target interventions such as access to financial services, agricultural inputs, and extension services at women, as well as focusing on legal reforms that will allow women farmers to own the land they work.

Similarly, the Global Health Initiative lists improving health outcomes for women and girls as a “core objective” “both for its own sake and because of the centrality of women to the health of their families and communities.” Part and parcel of GHI’s focus on women and girls is support for “long-term systemic changes that promote gender equality,” removal of “barriers to quality health service for women,” and providing “access to a basic package of essential health services.” In addition, GHI focuses on building the capacity of women and girls “as health care providers, caregivers, decision-makers, and participants in and civil society organizations.”

Furthermore, the State Department’s first Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review took steps toward institutionalizing Secretary Clinton’s focus on women’s rights and empowerment. “Women and girls,” the QDDR declared, “should be integral to all of our diplomatic efforts.” Women and girls are to be integrated into “all State policies and programs,” and programs will be created focusing on women. New gender integration guidelines for State Department and USAID program planning, budgeting, and evaluation are to be adopted.

Finally, the State Department has engaged in a plethora of smaller initiatives—often in cooperation with nongovernmental organizations and the private sector—aimed at promoting women’s rights and empowerment, including:

- Establishing the Secretary's International Fund for Women and Girls to channel private funds for "flexible, rapid, targeted, and high-impact grants" for nongovernmental organizations
- Establishing the Secretary's Innovation Award for the Empowerment of Women and Girls "to find and bring to scale the most pioneering approaches to the political, economic and social empowerment of women and girls around the globe"
- Launching a Small Grants Initiative through the Office of Global Women's Issues to fund women's political, social, and economic empowerment in countries around the world
- Launching a number of programs promoting women's involvement in business in Pakistan, Kuwait, Africa, Latin America, and the Asia-Pacific region
- Launching the Global Partnership on Maternal and Child Health with the Norwegian government, the World Bank, the Gates Foundation, and a Canadian NGO
- Launching the Global Alliance for Clean Cookstoves public-private initiative, with a five-year, \$50 million U.S. contribution
- Launching TechWomen, a public-private initiative to bring 38 women from the Middle East and North Africa working in the technology sector to Silicon Valley for a mentoring program in the summer of 2011
- Launching the mWomen Initiative to provide women with access to mobile phones, a public-private initiative with the Cherie Blair Foundation for Women and the mobile service industry

On the diplomatic side, there have been a number of achievements. In a session chaired by Secretary Clinton, the U.N. Security Council adopted Resolution 1888, establishing a special representative of the secretary general for sexual violence in conflict and creating a rapid-response team of experts to help provide accountability for sexual violence during conflict in "situations of particular concern."

The Obama administration has also pledged money to reduce gender-based violence in war, including \$17 million to the Democratic Republic of Congo and almost \$44 million toward a National Action Plan to implement U.N. Security Council Resolution 1325 on the role of women in conflict resolution. Finally, the United States worked toward the creation of a unified U.N. agency—U.N. Women—dedicated to women's rights and empowerment.

There are more instances of the Obama administration's focus on women's rights and empowerment—such as a three-year, \$26.3 million program of small grants to women-run NGOs in Afghanistan announced in 2009—but progressives cannot rest on these laurels.

Secretary Clinton's historic prioritization of women's rights and empowerment cannot begin and end with her personal commitment to the issue. It must become a defining commitment of a progressive foreign policy, even if it does not rise to the level of terrorism or political change in the public consciousness. It should be expected and required that the next progressive secretary of state show the baseline dedication to advancing women's rights and empowering women as Secretary Clinton.

Advancing women's rights should be a key progressive foreign policy value—as Secretary Clinton has said, empowering women is "about making sure that every woman and girl everywhere has the opportunities that she deserves to fulfill her potential, a potential as a mother, as a worker, as a human being."

What is more progressive than that?

*Peter Juul is a Policy Analyst at American Progress.*