

**PHOTOCOPY  
PRESERVATION**

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REMARKS BY THE FIRST LADY

Nile Center  
Kampala, Uganda

MRS. CLINTON: Thank you very much, Mrs. Museveni, for your kind remarks and your gracious hospitality and for your friendship as you accompany me through this wonderful visit that I have enjoyed here in Uganda. Madame Vice President, ministers, members of Parliament, ambassadors, commissioners, distinguished guests -- it seems fitting that we gather on Good Friday here in this great (inaudible) center because this is the day that Christians around the world know marks the passage of sorrow and despair to hope and renewal. (Applause.)

And that is also the journey that Uganda and so many other countries in Africa have taken in the last 10 years. Just over two weeks ago I stood at a podium like this in the United States State Department and spoke about why I was coming to Africa. The President and Secretary of State had asked me to come to Africa in order to highlight Africa's economic and democratic renewal.

I wanted to come to remind Americans of the importance of our partnership with Africa -- (applause) -- to underscore how America's modest contributions in foreign aid yield enormous results. I wanted to help our country understand the importance of investing in the people of Africa. I wanted to make sure that my country understood what was happening in your country and throughout so many of the countries in Africa as you are growing and trading and strengthening democracy.

I also knew that Africa had a positive story to tell --(applause) -- one that Americans could learn from. All across Africa individuals like yourselves and communities are coming together, forging bold and creative solutions at the grass-roots level and at the highest reaches of government. Today I can report that this trip has exceeded even my most optimistic expectations. (Applause.)

Starting in Senegal and going on to South Africa and Zimbabwe and Tanzania and now Uganda, I have been privileged to meet Africa's leaders and to see Africa's renewal firsthand.

Moreover, women will not flourish and neither will democracy if women continue to be undervalued inside and outside of the home. I'm often told by economists and others who look at what makes up the economy of countries that the work women do does not count. And I often respond -- when I think of the women gathering fire wood, fetching water, raising children, doctoring family members, keeping communities together -- I often think to myself, if women stopped working inside and outside the home tomorrow, the economy of the world would stop working. (Applause.)

But women constitute 70 percent of the world's poor, and so we have not done enough yet to liberate the economic potential of women the world over. Women must be assured the respect their work deserves, inside and outside the home. And they must be assured the opportunity to earn a decent income and become economically self-sufficient. When women are able to contribute to their own economic self-sufficiency, their husbands and children prosper, and their communities prosper as well.

But if more than the half citizens on this earth are underpaid, uneducated, under-represented, fed less, fed worse, not heard, threatened by violence in their own homes and on the streets of their communities, we cannot sustain the democratic values and way of life we have come to cherish.

What I have seen here in Uganda is that from your President all the way through the teachers in the primary school I visited, the workers in the AIDS information center, the women in the bank that is run by FINCA, I have seen that the people of Uganda understand that women will be a necessary part of building this nation's future. And that is a very important recognition indeed. (Applause.)

It is also true that a vibrant democracy requires investing in the education and health care of the people. That means we are willing to make a commitment to the future. I saw that for myself this morning. At the primary school, I heard how teachers as part of a national effort are getting better training. I saw new and creative learning materials in the hands of children. And in the energy-filled classrooms that we visited, I saw the results of your government's promise of free and expanded primary education.

While this commitment has put tremendous pressures on your schools, it has provided infinite hope for your people. Two million new students have registered nationwide for school. In the school I visited, the enrollment has nearly doubled. (Applause.)

I was also very pleased to see at Seguku school that you value education of girls as much as the education of boys. In other places I have visited around the world, that has not been the case. But we now know, based on both research that has been done, as well as first-hand personal observation by many people involved in government and politics and development around the world, that the single most important investment any nation can make for building a very prosperous democratic future is in the education of girls and women.

Nowhere has Africa's progress been more impressive than in the building of democracy. Until very recently, as you know so well, there were only five democracies on this great continent. In the last six years that number has jumped to 23. But democracy is not just about one election; it is about free and fair elections that are repeated successfully. It is also about other essential processes and institutions: a functioning parliament, an independent judiciary. It is about political parties, a free press, and the basic rights of assembly and association.

Now that we have seen democracy emerge strongly in this country, on this continent, the question for all of us who care about the future of democracy in Africa includes what can be done to sustain and deepen this democratic transformation. What is needed to ensure that new democracies take root and prosper. How can we spur other nations to make the transition to sustainable democracy. To thrive, a democracy depends on many essential elements, some of which (inaudible).

It should be obvious, but often isn't, that the health of a democracy also depends fundamentally on empowering and enabling average citizens to participate fully in the decisions that touch their lives. It depends, in short, on what you are doing here in Uganda. The efforts I have seen here and the other countries I have visited are essential to building a vibrant democracy.

Now, what are some of those elements and what have I seen, and, particularly, what have I learned here in Uganda? First, a vibrant democracy requires that all women become full participants in their society. (Applause.) As the Vice President and Mrs. Museveni has said before, for too long in too many places, both in Africa and around the world, women have lived on the outskirts of opportunity. Yet we know we cannot build the kind of future we want for ourselves and our children without the contributions of women.

Over the last two weeks, I have been privileged to see women shaping their own destinies and the destinies of their countries -- building homes on a worn patch of land in Capetown; learning to manage a health clinic in a village in Senegal; working to reform the laws affecting property ownership and inheritance rights in Zimbabwe and Tanzania. Women are playing a greater role than ever here in Uganda. Women's rights are now enshrined in your constitution and I congratulate you. (Applause.) Women in Uganda have been welcomed into the government at the highest levels.

As President Museveni has rightfully said, women form more than half of our society, so you'd be hurting yourself if you left behind six of every 10 people. To your wise President, whom I enjoyed meeting first in Washington a few months ago and then again last evening, I would simply add: you wouldn't just be hurting yourself, you would not be living in a democracy, because a democracy without women's full participation is a contradiction in terms. Only with women's rights, the fullness of human rights are respected. When women begin to experience the authority over themselves that is the bedrock of the democratic experience, only then can they begin to experience the consciousness of full citizenship and the action that inspires.

In country after country, the benefits of educating women go far beyond the school house. They turn up in stronger families, better nutrition, and higher wages. They also result in stronger democracies because, by telling girls that if they work hard and make the grade they too can have a rightful place in society, we are supporting the most important of democratic ideals -- the belief that every citizen, regardless of where that man or woman comes from, who their parents might be, what kind of village or family they call home -- that that person is entitled to his or her rightful share of personal, political, economic, and civic power.

So teaching people to read and write is essential, as is investing in health and addressing public health challenges. I have seen many programs in my visits that focus on trying to expand health care access to citizens. But I was very impressed by what I saw today. Uganda's world-leading efforts to educate its people against HIV and AIDS is a clear demonstration of your country's commitment from the highest levels to help.

At the AIDS Information Center, I learned that the center has already served more than 320,000 families and is part of a broader campaign to slow the spread of HIV and AIDS, and one in which the government, starting with your President, has assumed an important responsibility. Because your President refused to ignore HIV-AIDS and instead championed openness toward this terrible disease, you have seen positive results. (Applause.)

I know I have seen the results of the public information campaign on the more than a dozen billboards I have seen since I landed at the airport yesterday. You have made an all-out effort. There is still much to be done. The Minister of Health was eloquent in our meeting this morning in pointing out that there are many challenges ahead -- not only with HIV-AIDS, but with malaria, diarrhea, and many other diseases. But as a result of Uganda's commitment to fighting HIV-AIDS, Uganda is the only country in Africa where the rate of new HIV infections is actually decreasing. (Applause.)

As the (inaudible) group sang to me this morning, Ugandans are fighting to ensure that AIDS cannot win. And the United States is committed to helping you with that fight. (Applause.)

Other countries in Africa are tackling various health problems. In Zimbabwe, I saw a commitment, also on the national level, to family planning, to giving woman the knowledge that they needed to determine for themselves how many children they want to have and when they want to have them. As a result of Zimbabwe's cutting-edge family planning clinics, fertility rates are falling and contraceptive use is high. Infant mortality rates are low for the simple reason that healthier women are having healthier babies. So there is progress in health and education in those countries committed to improving the conditions of life of their people.

And by doing so, we are recognizing that a vibrant democracy requires that every citizen be given the opportunity to participate fully in the economic life of their countries. It is hard to be a full economic participant if one is not educated, if one is not healthy. But I think one can participate in the economy, then one can raise one's own standard of living and, by doing so, raise the standards of living of one's country.

Africa has been making tremendous progress to this end. Last year, 30 African countries reported positive economic growth, and Uganda was one of them. I know you are proud of your surging economy. An economy that had been destroyed by decades of war now registers the stunning growth rate of 8 percent a year.

And it is not only at the level of big business, investment, and trade that we are seeing this kind of growth rate in Uganda; I saw it for myself when I visited the FINCA village bank today. That bank provides modest loans to about 4,000 women, helping them to start small businesses. I visited similar programs in Zimbabwe and Tanzania. In each country, these lending institutions are helping to stabilize democracy because they assure women and men the opportunity to earn a decent income. They help families and communities become self-sufficient.

I have also been impressed by the economic reforms carried out by your government that have encouraged Ugandan farmers to increase their agricultural production. Hundreds of new farmers have not only bolstered your economy through exports but they have brought you true security. In the last five years, child malnutrition rates in Uganda has dropped by 20 percent. That is a remarkable accomplishment.

When you expand economic opportunity, you do much reinforce democracy because people feel that they have a stake in the future of their country.

Uganda is also reinvesting new revenues in better social investments for people such as health and education. So the cycle of hope repeats itself, enriching successive generations.

A vibrant democracy also requires citizens to take personal and collective responsibility for creating a civil society. Civil society means that we call on all elements -- individuals, community groups, houses of worship, businesses, academia, government -- to take responsibility for the common good.

And again, I have seen that happening on my trip. In Senegal, I watched as villagers acted out a drama about the rights and responsibilities of citizens in a democracy. There and in Tanzania, in a village outside of Arusha, I saw community groups coming together to work on ways of improving the common good. I've also today met with a remarkable group of Rwandan women working to rebuild their country. I was privileged to hear how they're working to heal their country from the experience of genocide, to ease the great sufferings of women and children in the refugee crisis they have endured. They described to me how they are growing together in associations to better their lives.

I was moved by what they told me, and I know how much Uganda has supported refugees and supported the Rwandan reconstruction, and I assured them that all of us would stand with them in their efforts to reconcile and rebuild their torn society. We know from our own experience -- (applause) -- in the United States, where we have been working at democracy for more than 200 years, that democracy requires patience, hard work, flexibility, and the acceptance of inherent human imperfection.

Not only does democracy ask each of us to take responsibility and to do our share, it also asks us to count on others -- people whose views you may never agree with; people from different religions and ethnic groups and tribes; people who hold ideas you may never understand. But democracy asks that we trust and rely on people unlike ourselves. With democracy, there is no day off. For democracy depends on the internalization of these values in people's hearts and minds.

Finally, we believe that a vital democracy requires Africa's friends and partners to make a contribution to Africa's democratic transformation. The United States intends to continue its partnership with Africa in its efforts to deepen and strengthen democracy. We can do this by supporting programs such as the ones I saw today -- efforts to allow women to take their rightful place at every table, efforts to educate all Africa's people, efforts to see to it that everyone has access to good health care, efforts to ensure that women as well as men have access to credit so they can participate in Africa's growing economies. These are the tools of opportunity, and these are the tools that will help sustain democracy.

I am proud of the role that America has played in African renewal. I wish the American people could see for themselves what I have seen, what is happening in Africa today. They would see that a modest contribution in United States aid to Africa, less than one-tenth of one percent of our budget, yields extraordinary returns. Aid from the United States helps train teachers, supports AIDS prevention, sparks microenterprise development, keeps family planning centers open, helps to strengthen democratic institutions.

I'm also pleased that American assistance creates the conditions of self-sustained economic growth. Assistance goes hand in hand with private investment. I've had the opportunity to see American companies do well themselves, and doing well for the countries of this continent. I know that President Clinton is eager to work in Congress to find new and effective ways to support Africa through a balanced approach that involves a continuing developing partnership and an expanding role with trade and investment. We believe this approach will enable African countries to achieve their goals of greater self-reliance and full integration into the global economy.

As President Museveni told me last evening, he looks forward to a time when America's relationship with Uganda is based on investment, trade, and tourism. I am mindful that there are other threats to Africa's fragile democracies that require our concern and vigilance. That is why the United States attaches such high importance to its collaboration with regional leaders and organizations in seeking to resolve conflicts that threaten economic and democratic progress. That is why the United States is eager to support African efforts to enhance their capacity to respond to crises, such as the African Crisis Response Force. And that is why we seek to strengthen measures to protect us all from new threats to security and welfare of democracies everywhere, such as crime, narcotics trafficking, and international terrorism.

And my husband asked me to make clear his commitment on another issue. He asked me to tell you that he will come to Africa during his second term as President. (Applause.) We will have much to show him based on my own remarkable visit. I have been very privileged to learn what is happening here. And as I prepare to return home, it is with the hope that this trip may reflect the growing consciousness in the minds of the people of Africa and America that, despite the wide ocean between us, we are neighbors on this shared earth. We cannot, if we ever could, any longer live without each other. And we have much to learn from each other. In our relationship, there must no longer be an "us" or a "them" but only a "we," a "we" committed to -- (applause.)

Yesterday, I was in a place in Tanzania, the Oldavai Gorge, where many of the discoveries about our ancient ancestors have company from. And it was very clear to me as I walked through that gorge with the archaeologists and anthropologists, that we -- black, white, brown, of every religion, of every corner of the globe -- we come from the same place. We share a common home. We are part of a larger family. And if we stop for a minute to think about what we have learned about the origins of humankind, we know that we come from Africa. (Applause.) The message embedded in that rock is that we must recognize both our common past and our common future, and we must never let respect for any human being be eroded. We must make the dignity of every single person our governing principle.

Tomorrow I will end my trip to Africa in a place that is just beginning -- Eritrea -- a new country founded on timeless ideals. And I hope that its story, like that of Africa, will be one of constant renewal. One cannot come to Africa, and particularly one cannot come to Uganda today, without being moved by the faces of the people -- people who lined the streets, greet me as Mrs. Museveni and I came from the airport, the people who were out on the streets this morning, the people who were out on the streets this morning, the faces of those I saw at the school, at the center, at the village. (inaudible).

The Vice President is correct that my visit has been much too short. I have not been in a home for a meal. I have not been in many other places in this beautiful country outside Kampala. And I will look forward to opportunities to return when I can see more of the natural beauty -- (applause.) But I have seen enough to convince me that you have a commitment to a future that transcends all the divisions and the differences of the past. (Applause.) And I can see that most clearly in the faces of your children.

As I stood in the classroom at the primary school and the teacher proudly told me that she had 30 boys and 44 girls -- a brave woman to teach 74 8-year-olds -- I heard in her voice what I love to hear. I heard love and commitment, I heard determination, and then I saw on the faces of those boys and girls that they were loved, they were valued. There were adults -- not just parents, but teachers and political leaders and businessmen and women and others in Uganda who believe in them.

And if you believe in a child and you set high expectations for a child, you are more likely to see that child reach and grow. What Uganda is doing is setting those high expectations. I thank you for what you have shown me. But more than that, I thank you for the example you

are setting and what you are giving every day to your children so that they, too, will join the children in America to build the kind of future that all of us want them to have. Thank you very much. (Applause.)

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