

3/21/97 Women's Rndtable,
Harare (open)

**PHOTOCOPY
PRESERVATION**

U.S. First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton

(Opening Remarks at the Women's Roundtable--Harare--3/21/97)

Thank you for joining me this afternoon. I am looking forward to learning more about what you are doing, and the activities you are undertaking here in your country.

On our trip to Africa, my daughter Chelsea and I have been privileged to see, first-hand, Africa's democratic and economic renewal. I look forward to learning about the progress that is happening here in Zimbabwe.

I know, and all of you do as well, that a democracy depends on the full integration of women into society, especially on seeing to it that women have equal access to the same tools of opportunity as men do. Tools such as education and health care, legal rights and political participation, a chance to participate fully in the economy, and to have their economic contributions appropriately valued. I have had an opportunity to learn more in just a brief time I've been here and talking with the women who met me at the airport and the wonderful conversation that I had with President and Mrs. Mugabe and the reception that the President hosted for me at which he introduced me to a number of prominent women here in your country.

I know from what I have already learned and what I expect to see in my visit here that you have been making remarkable progress at both the grassroots level and the highest levels of government on issues ranging from education to health care, from employment to AIDS. I'm particularly interested in hearing how each of you in your various capacities have seen the progress that has been made here in your country and what obstacles are still to be overcome and how we might work together as women supporting one another in areas such as micro-credit and healthcare that were highlighted at the Beijing Conference on Women.

As I have travelled around the world and I saw it again here on this continent in Senegal and South Africa, women are coming together in a spirit of solidarity to solve problems for themselves, to work with the men in their families and their communities, to create better opportunity for girls and boys. So I would like to hear from each of you as to what you see as the accomplishments and the continuing challenges that confront women and men in your society.