

Address to Congress  
Guatemala City, Guatemala  
November 19, 1998

**FIRST LADY HILLARY CLINTON  
SPEECH AT GUATEMALAN CONGRESS  
*November 19, 1998***

Thank you very much to the President, to the distinguished first Vice President, who just delivered such a powerful speech about the aspirations and hopes of her people, to the first secretary, to the distinguished members of Congress, to members of the judiciary, to other representatives of the government, excellencies, and ladies and gentlemen:

It is for me a great honor to be invited to address this Congress, the first in your history to lead a truly peaceful and democratic Guatemala.

I also want to commend you for understanding the hard work that legislators do and extend a special greeting to the 60 legislative assistants of CEDEL, who will be assisting you with your important labors.

As I prepared for this trip, I read some poetry of Humberto Ak'abal, the internationally celebrated indigenous writer who educated himself, often bringing home books and reading by candlelight. He wrote of a land so beautiful that "if you climb up an ancient cypress tree and creep among its branches...you will see the earth is not so far from heaven."

I understood exactly what he meant as our plane approached Guatemala yesterday, and I could see the mountains and volcanoes and ravines that almost did seem to reach up to meet us half way. I felt that way again earlier today as we made the beautiful drive from Antigua. I have walked those cobblestone streets, I have seen the colorful houses, and I understood even better why this land is renowned for its beauty and its history.

I have thought often of the meeting I had yesterday with women leaders, including the First Vice President. They may have represented different ideologies, they may have stood on opposite sides of the conflict for 36 years, but they discussed similar hopes for their country: education for every child, health care, jobs, a justice system that upholds the rule of law, a full recovery from the hurricane, a country that leaves no person behind.

People from all over the world who live in war-torn communities from Bosnia to Northern Ireland can now look to Guatemala and know that, even after 36 years of war, you can let go of old hatreds. You can defy history and rewrite it. You can transform a nation--from a culture of violence to a culture of peace. From authoritarian practice to democratic principle. From exclusion to inclusion.

I want to congratulate this Chamber. I want to congratulate your President, whose vision of peace inspired this process, and I especially want to congratulate all the people of Guatemala for having the courage to start walking down the long road to peace, even

when the path was rough, even when the mountains were hard to climb.

And, on behalf of my husband, the President of the United States, and his Government as well as the American People, I want you to know that the United States will continue to stand with you as you implement the Peace Accords, as you strengthen democracy, as you encourage economic growth, and a broad tax base, as you make social investments, as you protect human rights, and as you rebuild after one of the worst storms in our hemisphere's history.

The sympathy and prayers of myself, my husband, and our entire country have been with you since hurricane Mitch first struck. Yesterday, I received a full briefing on what this tragedy has meant for Guatemala--the children who lost parents, the families who lost homes, the communities that lost roads and bridges, crops and infrastructure. And I will bring that information back to my country and our Government.

I want you to know that my husband has increased U. S. Government disaster assistance in Central America to over \$300 million now. He is also halting all deportations to Guatemala, El Salvador, Nicaragua and Honduras until into the new year, while our government explores long-term solutions to your concerns.

I am also pleased to announce today that an additional donation of 60 million pounds of wheat for Guatemala will be coming soon. In addition, the United States is increasing the amount of low interest loans provided for food to \$10 million. Former Peace Corps volunteers, who love your country so much, will help in the rebuilding process. And USAID and the Inter-American Development Bank are providing \$17 million to finance micro businesses in this region, many of which were devastated by the storm, so that people can get back on their feet and get back into business again.

The food and clothing and medicine arriving here comes not just from our government but from people in every corner of my country. Many of those living in the U.S. trace their roots to Guatemala. And we are all bound by our relationships among our religious communities, our personal ties, our friendships and our families. All Americans have been inspired by how you have come together as a nation to repair and rebuild.

At the height of the storm, I heard about Guatemalans working who risked their personal safety to rescue and comfort people who had just lost every material possession. And in the moving video of the storm that your Vice President showed me yesterday, it was clear that every person of every background came together in this time of tragedy.

I can't help but think how that same courage, unbreakable spirit and trust in each other have sustained you in your struggle for peace. On the way here, I heard a wonderful story about two communities that had been on the opposite sides of the civil war. For decades they did not speak--separated by much more than the ravine between them.

But then something changed. One community wanted their children to be able to attend

the other's school, which was the envy of the area. And, the second community in turn, needed the first to reach the nearest market.

Both of them realized that their lives and livelihoods dependent on each other...that they, like all of us, shared a common destiny. So, with help from the local government and USAID, they rolled up their sleeves and built a bridge, both literally and figuratively, between them.

What they created that day was the birth of a partnership to improve the lives of citizens of both communities. And even after the hurricane, what they created that day is still standing strong.

Perhaps that's because it was built not just from metal and cement and concrete, but on a foundation of peace, that so many others struggled and sacrificed for so long to lay down.

We think of the leaders of civil society here, the leaders of private sector, the leaders of the military who rejected the "autogolpe", defended the constitution and preserved democracy.

And we can think of so many individuals who played such critical roles. Two come to mind: Rosalina Tuyuc. After her husband and father disappeared, she drew attention to the plight of women widowed by violence and left unable to support their children. Or of Amilcar Mendez, who despite being beaten, terrorized, and threatened, refused to yield in his fight for equality and justice.

Today the work of these two pioneers, along with so many others, continues, not from the streets, but from this new Congress, from this new Government, from this new Military. It is sometimes hard to see progress from the inside as you live and breathe it. But just think of what you have accomplished in less than two years. Nearly 3,000 ex combatants of the civil war have rejoined society. Victims of war are being resettled. The military is assuming its rightful role, helping out heroically during the hurricane, saving lives and providing relief.

And from different political parties, and with different pasts, you had the courage to come together to make the hard choices, to pass constitutional reforms, and help fulfill the promise of the Peace Accords. Now, the decision is in the people's hands. There may be differences over individual words and provisions. And it will not be easy. Nothing worth doing ever is. But one thing is clear: These reforms represent the future of a new Guatemala.

But you who are in this chamber understand better than most, that writing and passing laws, putting words of peace on paper, is not at all what needs to be done. That is just a beginning. It is what is in the hearts and minds of human beings that will determine whether peace is lasting. Their fulfillment by people every day in the decisions that they make will really tell us whether peace is real, whether there is freedom and justice, and

dignity for all, will be lived out in the countless villages and on the streets of every city in this country.

As the Popol Vuh says, "May they rise up, may they rise up, may not even one or two groups be left behind." Your Peace Accords call for everyone to rise up, for no one to be left behind.

And by example, you have the opportunity to teach the world about the power of inclusion. If individuals are respected as members of families, communities and countries. If they have a say and a stake in their nation's future. If women and men, Mayans and Ladinos, young and old, rural and urban, former guerillas and former soldiers have the opportunities and responsibilities of citizenship: That is the difference between a peace that is promised and a peace that is fulfilled. And Guatemala is in a unique position to show the rest of the world what peace truly means.

Now I am well aware it is easy for me to say these words. I come here today as someone who did not have to live through nearly four decades of war. I did not lose my parents or brother or husband to a conflict I was too young to understand. I didn't have to worry about whether my daughter or my husband would make it home safely after they went to work or to the market. Or if there'd ever be a time we could live in peace. So I come here with the utmost admiration for all you've been through and all you have done to end this conflict. And I am also very admiring for what you are doing now and I trust you will do in the future to fulfill the promise of peace for every woman and man, every boy and girl.

Over the next few years, you can show the world that to fulfill the promise of peace, all people must be given the tools of opportunity to make the most of their God-given promise in life. That means translating words into actions, promises into results. In preparing for this trip and acquiring information and research about your country, I was given a piece of paper with the words "Cycle of Misery" printed across the top. It was a chart that showed with arrows what that cycle of misery was.

At the top of the chart it said that 75 percent of rural women in Guatemala are illiterate. They are likely to have more children, to receive less pre-natal care and less family planning. They are more likely to die in childbirth leaving orphans. Their children are far more likely to die before their first birthday. If they survive they are more likely to be malnourished --and to grow up to be illiterate...thereby beginning the cycle all over again.

So I want again to congratulate you for understanding that that cycle must be broken, for including, as part of the Peace Accords, a commitment to increase spending for education and health care by 50 percent in order to break this cycle of misery once and for all.

At a hospital in Antigua yesterday, I met a group of trained indigenous midwives. Spread out on the floor with colorful blankets, they performed a skit they use to teach women and men about the fundamental lessons of safe child birth. They then went around the room,

telling one compelling story after another how this training is helping them save the lives of pregnant women and their babies.

I have seen that strength of purpose in the faces of so many people from Guatemala, at a gathering of microcredit organizations a few years ago in Costa Rica, a woman from Guatemala stood up and proudly told her story. With the help of a very small loan, she went from being a mango seller on the streets to owning a market stall and eventually running a small business with 15 employees. She went from someone who started out working on the streets at the age of 12 to someone who now has the resources to send her oldest son to college in the United States. That is the story of success and commitment and strength that I hear over and over again about the people of your country.

The most powerful weapon a society has to achieve peace and progress is education, particularly the education of girls and women. There have been many studies done over the past twenty or so years. By the World Bank, by the International Monetary Fund, and other multilateral institutions to determine exactly what were the best investments that would move a country forward economically and socially.

I believe that the researchers, when they began their work, thought that the answers would be perhaps better transportation, perhaps better and stronger banking systems, improving infrastructure of all kinds. But time and time again, when the studies were done, the answer turned out to be investments in educating girls and women.

Because when you educate a child, you educate a future citizen. But when you educate a woman, you educate a family. And by doing that you create even more future citizens who will be productive and contributing members of your society.

Yesterday, at the beautiful Colonial Museum in Antigua, where the oldest university in Central America once stood, I heard how you are meeting your goal to help one million more Guatemalans read and write by the year 2000. That truly will break the cycle of misery. That truly will create economic opportunity for this country. I met a 13 year old girl, who can now go to school because of one of the scholarships that is being provided. A Mayan woman who can now read and write because of a literacy program. A young man, who is getting his master's degree in bilingual education, because of a scholarship. And I was pleased to announce a new United States program to help you meet this critical goal.

In the aftermath of war, too often women are the ones left behind, forced to raise children alone. Too often women and children make up the vast majority of refugees. Too often women alone must be the architects of their own lives and now they must also join men in being the architects of this peace.

I want to recognize in the audience today Guatemalan women leaders. They formed one of the most impressive delegations to attend the recent Vital Voices conference in

Montevideo. And I want to thank all of you here for creating a National Women's Forum dedicated to ensuring that women are full participants in the social, political, and economic future of Guatemala.

Fulfilling the promises of peace also depends upon all citizens making their voices heard at the ballot box and even on the soap box, in the board rooms and the classrooms, in the national government and in local governments -- at every level of the political process. It is also important to make it clear to all that with citizenship, comes not just rights but also responsibilities. One responsibility is to vote, one responsibility is to pay one's fair share for the common good of our nations. I know you are working to enforce a fairer, broader, and more adequate tax system. That is a challenge every nation, including my own, faces. And I know it's particularly important for you right now, as you strive to make these critical social investments in education and health.

You also have the opportunity to teach the world that you cannot have a lasting peace without strengthening the rule of law and ensuring justice and security for all citizens of your nation. None of us who care about Guatemala, or justice or the rule of law will ever forget what Bishop Gerardi did to defend the human rights of all people and support the power of reconciliation to heal a nation. His murder offends all we stand for as human beings. And I am hopeful that the authorities will succeed in bringing all those responsible to justice.

It is also important to make it clear to all that with citizenship comes not just rights, but responsibilities. One responsibility is to vote, one responsibility is to pay one's fair share for the common good of our nations. I know you are working to enforce a fairer, broader, and more adequate tax system. That is a challenge every nation, including my own, faces. And I know it is particularly important for your right now, as you strive to make these critical social investments in education and health.

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There is no greater tribute to Bishop Gerardi than to see justice done, not only in his case but in every case, and impunity rejected throughout the country. Because of your reforms, people who enter the criminal justice system will now have the right to confront witnesses, the right to plea bargain, to have oral arguments, to be represented by counsel. The process you begun cannot afford to fail.

Because when the rule of law fails, when the justice system elicits not comfort, but fear, our entire societies fail. Justice is basic to everything else. Democracy depends on it.

Economic progress depends on it. And the fulfillment of peace depends on it as well.

I am well aware that when we have places where political conflict has ended, violence often reemerges in other forms like street crime and domestic violence that continue to terrorize people. In another country I just visited, I saw an image that will stay with me forever. At a program to deal with both the victims and perpetrators of domestic violence, there was a display of the weapons that had been used to beat and abuse and even kill members of families. There were descriptions under each weapon of how they were used. There were spoons that had been broken over the heads of babies, machetes that had been used to beat and cut. These were weapons that had other purposes, legitimate purposes, but they had been turned against women and children.

Domestic violence, like street violence, like political violence, cannot be brushed aside in any society. It too is a crime that must be punished with the full force of the law.

Finally, you can teach the world that fulfilling the promise of peace means reconciling those on both sides of the conflict and reconciling the past with a future that offers so much more to everyone.

In country after country that has made the transition from violence to peace, reaching that future has depended upon a full, complete and honest recounting of the past. No one knows the difficulty and pain that opening up old wounds may produce; but few doubt how crucial it is to national healing. I think of the courage of the individuals from Chile to Argentina to South Africa to Bosnia across our world who have told their stories and of those who have tried to answer their questions.

Soon, the Historical Clarification Commission will issue its report. My country has supported the work of this Commission. And I was pleased to learn that the Guatemalan Government has made a commitment to ensure that this report does not just sit on a shelf gathering dust. Recently, your Foreign Minister told a gathering in Brussels that when the report comes out, your president wants to use it to spark a national dialogue and launch a major education campaign.

I have heard from some of the victims of violence here in Guatemala. I will never forget listening to a young Guatemalan woman tell her story at the Vital Voices Conference in Montevideo last month. Like many, she was forced to flee the country she loved during the war. But, like so many others, she is now coming back. She is not coming back to avenge the past, she is coming back to help build the future. She wants to make her contribution to a new Guatemala by organizing young people to help them heal their own psychic wounds and to rebuild their nation.

We know that a country with no memory is a country with no history. Whether it is the evil of slavery in my own country or the ravages of war in another, it is up to us to teach our children about our past, not only in classrooms, but in living rooms as well. Because

children carry a nation's memory. They are the ones who will pass down the pictures of the Mayan ruins I will visit later in Tikal, or of the beautiful buildings still standing from colonial times that I saw in Antigua. It is the children who will help finish the long journey of peace that their parents and grandparents so courageously began.

I saw the faces of such children yesterday: five young Mayan girls, all recipients of scholarships, who I had met earlier in Washington at a conference about girls' education. Without these scholarships, these girls might have been destined to live a life without reading and writing, a life without education, a life without hope. But when they spoke to me yesterday, their eyes lit up as they talked about all they were learning in school and the progress they were making. I could tell that they too were eager to join the rest of their fellow citizens in making their contributions.

Your country's celebrated poet Otto René Castillo wrote, "Yes, I am always singing, always struggling, so that the world may exchange its sadness for a simple cascade of joy, for spark of love, for a rose of sweet words and sweet eyes."

The people of Guatemala, despite the conflict, never stopped singing and struggling for 36 long years. You have exchanged sadness for joy, war for peace, division for reconciliation.

And it was because you never stopped singing and struggling, that those five little girls can put on their school clothes, pick up their book bags, and walk out the door, confident they can travel as far as their dreams now, and their hard work today and tomorrow will take them...in a new peaceful Guatemala, where no one is left behind.

President Kennedy once said, "On this earth, God's work is our own." The people in this Congress, in this Government, in this country are, I believe, certainly doing God's work. Blessed are the peacemakers. Our nation and our world thank you. God bless you...and God bless Guatemala.

Thank you very much.

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PREPARED

FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON  
REMARKS BEFORE THE GUATEMALA CONGRESS  
GUATEMALA CITY, GUATEMALA  
NOVEMBER 19, 1998

President of the Congress Barrios, Vice President Flores, distinguished members of Congress, Ambassador Planty, and a special greeting to the 60 legislative assistants of CEDEL: It is for me a great honor to address this Congress -- the first in your history to lead a truly peaceful and democratic Guatemala.

As I prepared for this trip, I read some of the poetry of Humberto Ak'abal, [Oo-m-berto Aw-kah-ball] the internationally celebrated indigenous writer who educated himself, often bringing home books and reading by candlelight. He wrote of a land so beautiful that "if you climb up an ancient cypress tree and creep among its branches...you will see the earth is not so far from heaven."

I understood exactly what he meant as our plane approached Guatemala yesterday, and the mountains, volcanos and ravines almost seemed to reach up to meet us half way. And I felt that way again, just now as we made the beautiful drive from the cobblestone streets, colorful houses, and almost spiritual ruins of your ancient capital Antigua to your modern capital, here in the city of Guatemala.

On this drive over, I thought about a meeting I had yesterday with women political leaders from different ideologies. And though they may have stood on opposite sides of war for 36 years...they discussed similar hopes for Guatemala: education for every child, health care, jobs, a justice system that upholds the rule of law, a full recovery from the hurricane, a country that leaves no one behind.

People from all over the world who live in war-torn communities from Bosnia to Northern Ireland can look to Guatemala and know that, even after 36 years of war, you can let go of old hatreds. You can defy history and rewrite it. You can transform a nation – from a culture of violence to a culture of peace. From authoritarian practice to democratic principle. From exclusion to inclusion. ✓

I want to congratulate this chamber, your President, whose vision of peace inspired this process, and all the people of Guatemala, for having the courage to start walking down this long road to peace, even when the path was rough, the mountains hard to climb.

And, on behalf of my husband and the American people, I want you to know that we will continue to stand with you as you implement the Peace Accords, <sup>as you</sup> strengthen democracy, encourage economic growth and a broad tax base, <sup>as you</sup> make social investments, protect human rights and rebuild after one of the worst storms in our hemisphere's history.

My sympathy and prayers have been with you since Hurricane Mitch first struck. And yesterday, I received a full briefing on what this tragedy has meant for Guatemala – the children who lost parents, the families who lost homes, the communities that lost roads and bridges, crops and infrastructure. And I will bring that information back to my country.

I want you to know that my husband has increased U.S. government disaster assistance in Central America to over \$300 million. And he is also halting all deportations to Guatemala, El Salvador, Nicaragua and Honduras until after New Year, while our government explores long-term solutions to your concerns.

I am also pleased to announce today an additional donation of 60 million pounds of wheat for Guatemala. In addition, the United States is increasing the amount of low interest loans provided for food to \$10 million. Former Peace Corps volunteers will help in the rebuilding process. And USAID and the Inter-American Development Bank are providing \$17 million to finance micro businesses in this region, many of which were devastated by the storm, so they can pay off their loans and get back on their feet.

The food, clothing, and medicine arriving here comes not just from our government, but from people in every corner of my country. Many of those living in the U.S. trace their roots to Guatemala. And we are all bound by the relationships among our religious communities, personal ties, friendships and families. All Americans have been inspired by how you have come together to repair and rebuild your nation.

At the height of the storm, I heard about Guatemalans working who risked their personal safety to rescue and comfort people who had just lost every material possession. And in the moving video of the storm that your government showed me yesterday, it was clear that every person of every background came together in this time of tragedy.

I can't help but think how that same courage, unbreakable spirit and trust in each other have sustained you in your fight for peace. On the way here, I heard a wonderful story about two communities that had been on opposite sides of the civil war. For decades they didn't speak -- separated by much more than the ravine between them.

But then something changed. One community wanted their children to be able to attend the other's school, which was the envy of the area. And, the second community, in turn, needed the first to reach the nearest market.

Both of them realized that their lives and livelihoods depended on each other...that they, like all of us, shared a common destiny. So, with help from the local government and USAID, they rolled up their sleeves and built a bridge, both literally and figuratively, between them.

What they created that day was the birth of a partnership to improve the lives of citizens of both communities. And even after the hurricane, what they created that day is still standing strong.

Perhaps that's because it was built not just with metal and cement, but on a foundation of peace, that so many others struggled and sacrificed for so long to lay down.

We think of the leaders of civil society, the private sector, the military who rejected the autogolpe [auto Goal-pay], defended the Constitution and preserved democracy.

And we think of individuals. We think of Rosalina Tuyuc [two-Youk]. After her husband and father disappeared, she drew attention to the plight of women widowed by violence and left unable to support their children. Or of Amilcar Mendez, [a-Mil-car] who despite being beaten, terrorized, and threatened, refused to yield in his fight for equality and justice.

Today the work of these two pioneers continues, not from the streets, but from this new Congress. It is sometimes hard to see progress from the inside as you live and breathe it. But just think of what you've accomplished in less than two years. Nearly 3,000 ex-combatants of the civil war have rejoined society. Victims of war are being resettled. The military is assuming its rightful role, helping out heroically during the Hurricane, saving lives and providing relief.

And from different political parties, and with different pasts, you had the courage to make the hard choices, to pass Constitutional Reforms, and help fulfill the promise of the Peace Accords. Now, the decision is in the peoples' hands. There may be differences over individual words and provisions. And it won't be easy. Nothing worth doing ever is. But one thing is clear: These reforms represent the future of Guatemala.

But you who write and pass laws understand better than anyone, that peace is not what's on paper, but what's in our hearts. Not only the passing of laws one day. But their fulfillment by people every day. Not the absence of war. But, rather the presence of justice and freedom and dignity for all.

As the Popul Vuh [Poh-pull Voo] says, "May they rise up, may they rise up, may not even one or two groups be left behind." Your Peace Accords call for everyone to rise up, for no one to be left behind.

And by example, you have the opportunity to teach the world about the power of inclusion. If individuals are respected as members of families, communities, and countries. If they have a say and a stake in their nation's future. If women and men, Mayans and Ladinos, young and old, rural and urban, former guerillas and former soldiers have the opportunities and responsibilities of citizenship: That is the difference between a peace that is promised and a peace that is fulfilled in Northern Ireland, in Bosnia, and, yes, in Guatemala.

It's easy for me to say these words. I come here today as someone who did not have to live through almost four decades of war. I did not lose my parents or brothers to a conflict I was too young to understand. I didn't have to worry whether my daughter or husband would make it home safely. Or if there'd ever be a time that we would live in peace. And so I come here with admiration for all you've been through to end your conflict. And for all you will do to fulfill the promise of peace for every Guatemalan woman and man, girl and boy.

Over the next few years, you can show the world that to fulfill the promise of peace we must give all people tools of opportunity. That means translating words into actions, promises into results. I was given a piece of paper the other day with the words "Cycle of Misery" printed across it.

At the top of the chart are the 75 percent of rural women in Guatemala who are illiterate. They are likely to have more children. To receive less pre-natal care and less family planning. They are more likely to die in childbirth. Their children are far more likely to die before their first birthday. If they survive they are more likely to be malnourished – and to grow up to be illiterate...thereby beginning the cycle all over again.

So I want to congratulate you for including, as part of the Peace Accords, a commitment to increase spending for education and health care by 50 percent in order to break this cycle of misery once and for all.

At a hospital in Antigua yesterday, I met a group of trained indigenous midwives. Spread out on the floor with colorful blankets, they performed a skit they use to teach fundamental lessons about safe child birth. And they went around the room, telling one compelling story after another about how this training is helping them save the lives of pregnant women and their babies.

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*Commitment  
& strength*

But, the most powerful weapon a society has to achieve peace and progress is education – especially of women and girls. There have been many studies done by multinational institutions – such as the World Bank and IMF – about the most important investments countries can make to raise their standard of living.

Before the studies were done, some may have thought the answers would turn out to be stronger banks, better roads, or more integrated markets. But the answer every time was investments in educating girls and women.

Because when you educate a child, you educate a citizen.

When you educate a woman, you educate a family.

*create  
more*

Yesterday, at the beautiful Colonial Museum, where the oldest university in Central America once stood, I heard how you are meeting your goal to help one million more Guatemalans read and write by the year 2000. That truly will break the cycle of misery. I met a 13 year old girl, who can now go to school because of a scholarship. A Mayan woman who can now read and write because of a literacy program. A young man, who is getting his master's degree in bilingual education, because of a scholarship. And I announced a new U.S. program to help you meet this critical goal.

In the aftermath of war, too often women are the ones left behind, forced to raise their children alone. Too often women and children make up the vast majority of refugees. Too often women are the victims of war. And so too must they be the architects of peace.

I want to recognize in the audience today Guatemalan women leaders who formed one of the most impressive delegations to attend the Vital Voices conference recently in Montevideo. [And I want to thank all of you here for creating a National Women's Forum dedicated to ensuring that women are full participants in the social, political, and economic future of Guatemala.]

Fulfilling the promise of peace also depends upon all citizens making their voices heard at the ballot box and the soap box, in the board rooms and the classrooms, at the national government and the local government -- at every level of the political process.

And with citizenship, comes not just rights, but responsibilities. One responsibility all of us have is pay our fair share for the common good of our nations. I know you are working to enforce a fairer, broader, and more adequate tax system. It's a challenge every nation faces. And I know it's particularly important for you right now, as you strive to make critical social investments.

You also have the opportunity to teach the world that fulfilling the promise of peace means strengthening the rule of law and ensuring justice and security for all citizens. None of us will ever forget what Bishop Gerardi did to defend the human rights of all people and support the power of reconciliation to heal a nation. His murder offends all we stand for as human beings. And I am hopeful that the Guatemalan authorities will succeed in bringing all those responsible to justice.

There is no greater tribute to Bishop Gerardi than to see justice done in his case and impunity rejected throughout the country. Because of your reforms, people who enter the criminal justice system will now have the right to confront witnesses, the right to plea bargain, to have oral arguments, and be represented by counsel. The process you've begun cannot be allowed to fail.

Because when the rule of law fails, when the justice system elicits not comfort, but fear, our entire society fails. Justice is basic to everything else. Democracy depends on it. Economic progress depends on it. The fulfillment of peace depends on it.

Part of what we've seen in places where political conflict has ended, is that violence reemerges in other forms like street crime and domestic violence that continue to terrorize people. In another country I visited recently, I saw an image that will probably stay with me forever. At a domestic violence program, there were knives and weapons of all shapes and sizes arranged and hung along the wall. And there were descriptions under each weapon of how they were used. Not for cooking. Not as souvenirs. They were weapons used to hurt, perhaps kill, the women and children in their owner's life.

*street violence -*

Domestic violence, like political violence, is not a family matter to be brushed aside. It's a crime that must be punished with the full force of the law.

Finally, you can teach the world that fulfilling the promise of peace means reconciling those on both sides of the conflict, and reconciling the past with the future so we can move forward together.

In country after country that have <sup>has</sup> made the transition from violence to peace, reaching the future depends upon a full, complete and honest recounting of the past. No one knows the difficulty and pain that opening up old wounds may produce; but few doubt how crucial it is to national healing. I think of the courage of the individuals who have told their story and of those who have tried to answer their questions.

*Chel Anderson  
S. Africa  
Bosnia*

Soon, the Historical Clarification Commission will issue its report. My country has supported the work of the Commission. And I was delighted to learn that the Guatemalan government has made a commitment to insure that this report does not just sit on a shelf, gathering dust. Recently, your Foreign Minister told a gathering in Brussels that when the report comes out, your President wants to use it to spark a national dialogue and launch a major education campaign.

I will never forget listening to a young Guatemalan woman tell her story at the Vital Voices conference in Montevideo last month. Like many Guatemalans, she was forced to flee her country during the war. But, like so many Guatemalans, she is now coming back. She wants to make her contribution to the new Guatemala by organizing young people to heal their own lives and rebuild their nation.

*Play the  
wonder*

We know a country with no memory is a country with no history. Whether it's the evil of slavery in my country or the ravages of war in another, it is up to us to teach children about our past in their classrooms and living rooms.

Our children carry a nation's memories. They are the ones who will pass down the pictures of the Mayan ruins I'm visiting in Tikal later this afternoon and of the Colonial times I saw in Antigua. And it is the children who will help finish the long journey of peace their parents and grandparents so courageously began.

I saw the faces of those children yesterday. There were five young Mayan girls, all recipients of scholarships, who I had met earlier in Washington at a USAID education conference. Without the scholarships, these girls might have been destined to live a life without reading and writing, a life without education or hope. But when they spoke to me yesterday, their eyes lit up as they talked about all they were learning in school and the progress they were making there.

Your country's celebrated poet Otto-Rene Castillo [re-Nay kas-Tee-yo] wrote, "Yes, I am always singing, always struggling, so that the world may exchange its sadness for a simple cascade of joy, for a spark of love, for a rose of sweet words and sweet eyes."

It was because the people of Guatemala never stopped singing and struggling for 36 years, that you have exchanged sadness for joy, war for peace, division for reconciliation.

And it was because the people of Guatemala never stopped singing and struggling for 36 years, that every day, those five little girls can put on their school clothes, pick up their book bags, and walk out the door confident that they can travel as far as their dreams will take them...in a new peaceful Guatemala, where no one is left behind.

President Kennedy once said, "On this earth, God's work is our own." The people in the Congress, in the government, in this country are certainly doing God's work. Blessed are the peacemakers. Our nation and world thanks you. God Bless you...and God Bless Guatemala.

Thank you very much.