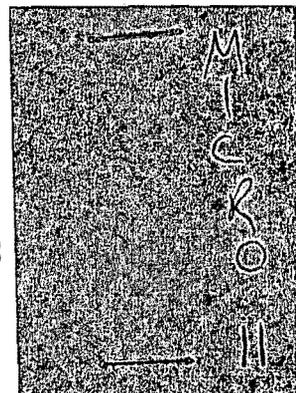


**FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
VIDEOTAPED REMARKS TO THE IDB MICROENTERPRISE CONFERENCE
WASHINGTON, D.C.
NOVEMBER 8, 1995**



It gives me great pleasure to join all of you gathered for this conference on "The Inter-Development Bank and Microenterprise: Promoting Growth with Equity." I am accompanying the President to Japan and unfortunately cannot join you in person.

Microenterprise is the heart of development because micro-enterprise programs work -- they lift women and families out of poverty. It's called "micro," but its impact on people is macro. We have seen that it takes just a few dollars -- often as little as \$10 -- to help a woman gain self-employment, to lift her and her family out of poverty. It's not a handout; it's a helping hand.

Through my travels in my own country and around the world -- most recently to Nicaragua, Chile, Brazil and Paraguay -- I have seen the profound impact that microenterprise initiatives are having on families. From the Grameen Bank in Bangladesh to the Self-Employed Women's Association in India to Finca in Nicaragua to Accion [ak-see-OHN] in Chile to Mi Casa in Denver, Colorado, I have met women whose lives are being transformed because, for the first time, they have access to credit.

In Bangladesh, one woman told me how with her small loan, she first bought a milk cow, then another milk cow, and then a rickshaw for her husband. She and others knew that by working together, they could do even better by their families.

In Chile, a woman who sews clothing for a living longed to own a sewing machine, which she finally could purchase because of a small loan. The machine meant so much, she said, that she couldn't stop kissing it. With it, she would be able to expand her business and prosper in ways before unimaginable. The feeling, she said, was like being a bird released from its cage.

Another special moment came in Nicaragua at a gathering of women who are small borrowers at the FINCA bank. The women talked proudly about the livelihoods they had carved out from bakery businesses, and from making clothes and mosquito nets. I asked them at the end of their presentations if they had any questions, and one woman asked that I tell her about the women I met in India in a similar setting. I felt at that moment the profound sisterhood women share around the world, from a barrio in Managua to a village in India and beyond.

The fact is: give a woman a seed, and she will plant it, she will water it, nurture it, then reap it, share its fruits, and

finally, she will replant it. In this way, step by step, the world's poorest women are leading their families, their communities and their countries to a better future. When we help these women to sow, we all reap.

I would like to congratulate the IDB and your President, Enrique Iglesias [ehn-REE-kay ihg-LAY-see-ahs], for your pioneering spirit and your leadership in promoting microenterprise development. The IDB's commitment to microenterprise is clear from today's extraordinary convening and from your record of contribution to the economic security of so many. For almost twenty years, the Bank has helped to provide the credit, training and technical support that microenterprise programs need to expand businesses and improve the quality of goods and services small businesses can offer.

I am also delighted to know that the IDB is building on its own success by devising a new microenterprise strategy to improve economic opportunities for the region's poor and to support strong, sustainable institutions that deliver the specialized services the sector needs. Partnerships with the private sector will be vital if the Bank and the international development community are to help microenterprises -- and economies -- grow and contribute to help people, no matter how poor, become self-reliant.

Please accept my best wishes for a fruitful Conference.

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