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S. RES. 97

Supporting the goals of International Women's Day.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

MARCH 4, 2015

Mrs. SHAHEEN (for herself, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. KIRK, Ms. MIKULSKI, Mrs. BOXER, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. CARDIN, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, and Mr. WHITEHOUSE) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations

RESOLUTION

Supporting the goals of International Women's Day.

Whereas there are more than 3,500,000,000 women in the world today;

Whereas women around the world have fundamental human rights, participate in the political, social, and economic life of their communities, play a critical role in providing and caring for their families, contribute substantially to the growth of economies and the prevention of conflict, and, as farmers and caregivers, play an important role in advancing food security for their communities;

Whereas the advancement of women around the world is a foreign policy priority for the United States;

Whereas, on September 24, 2014, President Barack Obama highlighted the United States support for the advance-

ment of women, noting: “Where women are full participants in a country’s politics or economy, societies are more likely to succeed. And that’s why we support the participation of women in parliaments and peace processes, schools, and the economy.”;

Whereas women remain underrepresented in conflict prevention and conflict resolution efforts, despite proven success by women in conflict-affected regions in moderating violent extremism, countering terrorism, resolving disputes through nonviolent mediation and negotiation, and stabilizing societies by improving access to peace and security services, institutions, and decisionmaking venues;

Whereas, on December 19, 2011, the Obama Administration launched the first United States National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security (referred to in this preamble as the “National Action Plan”) that includes a comprehensive set of national commitments to advance the active participation of women in decisionmaking relating to matters of war and peace;

Whereas the National Action Plan states the following: “Deadly conflicts can be more effectively avoided, and peace can be best forged and sustained, when women become equal partners in all aspects of peace-building and conflict prevention, when their lives are protected, their experiences considered, and their voices heard.”;

Whereas the National Action Plan requires the National Security Council staff to coordinate a comprehensive review of, and update to, the National Action Plan in 2015 with consultation from international partners and civil society organizations;

Whereas according to the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs of the Department of State, women's full and meaningful participation in security forces vastly enhances their effectiveness;

Whereas the ability of women and girls to realize their full potential is critical to the ability of a country to achieve strong and lasting economic growth and political and social stability;

Whereas according to the International Monetary Fund, "focusing on the needs and empowerment of women is one of the keys to human development";

Whereas according to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, two-thirds of the 781,000,000 illiterate people in the world are female;

Whereas according to the United States Agency for International Development, compared to uneducated women, "educated women are less likely to marry early and more likely to have smaller and healthier families. They are also more likely to get a job and earn a higher wage.";

Whereas according to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the majority of women living in rural areas of the developing world are heavily engaged in agricultural labor, yet they receive less credit, land, agricultural inputs, and training than their male counterparts;

Whereas according to the United Nations Population Fund, women have access to fewer income-earning opportunities and are more likely to manage the household and engage in agricultural work, making women more vulnerable to economic insecurity caused by natural disasters and long-term changes in weather patterns;

Whereas according to the World Bank, women own or partly own more than one-third of small and medium-sized enterprises in developing countries, and 40 percent of the global workforce is female, yet, women entrepreneurs and employers have disproportionately less access to capital and other financial services compared to men;

Whereas despite strides in recent decades, women around the world continue to face significant obstacles in all aspects of their lives, including underrepresentation in all aspects of public life, denial of basic human rights, and discrimination;

Whereas despite achievements by individual female leaders, women around the world are still vastly underrepresented in high-level positions and in national and local legislatures and governments and, according to the Inter-Parliamentary Union, women account for only 21.9 percent of national parliamentarians;

Whereas 1 in 3 women around the world has experienced some form of gender-based violence, and 1 in 4 women has suffered abuse during pregnancy;

Whereas according to the World Health Organization, approximately 800 women die from preventable causes related to pregnancy and childbirth every day, with 99 percent of all maternal deaths occurring in developing countries;

Whereas according to the United Nations Population Fund, more than 200,000,000 women and girls around the world would like to access family planning services but are unable to do so;

Whereas according to data from the World Bank, women between the ages of 15 and 44 are at a greater risk of rape

and domestic violence than cancer, war, traffic accidents, and malaria combined;

Whereas, on August 10, 2012, President Barack Obama announced the United States Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Gender-Based Violence Globally, the first inter-agency strategy to address gender-based violence around the world;

Whereas violence against women and girls impedes progress in meeting many international global development goals, including efforts to stem maternal mortality and the spread of HIV/AIDS;

Whereas, on October 11, 2013, President Barack Obama stated that the practice of child marriage was a “threat to fundamental human rights”;

Whereas according to the International Center for Research on Women, one-third of girls worldwide are married before the age of 18 and 1 in 9 girls are married before the age of 15;

Whereas according to the World Health Organization, suicide is the leading cause of death for girls ages 15 to 19, followed by complications from pregnancy and childbirth;

Whereas it is imperative to alleviate violence and discrimination against women and afford women every opportunity to be full and productive members of their communities;

Whereas 2015 marks the 20th anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women, where 189 countries committed to the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action to integrate gender equality into all dimensions of society;

Whereas 2015 marks the deadline for meeting the United Nations Millennium Development Goals, and progress to-

wards meeting the targets for gender equality and women's empowerment remains uneven; and

Whereas March 8 is recognized each year as International Women's Day, a global day to celebrate the economic, political, and social achievements of women past, present, and future, and to recognize the obstacles that women still face in the struggle for equal rights and opportunities: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the Senate—

2 (1) supports the goals of International Women's
3 Day;

4 (2) recognizes that the empowerment of women
5 is inextricably linked to the potential of countries to
6 generate economic growth, sustainable democracy,
7 and inclusive security;

8 (3) recognizes and honors individuals in the
9 United States and around the world, including
10 women who are human rights defenders, who have
11 worked throughout history to ensure that women are
12 guaranteed equality and basic human rights;

13 (4) reaffirms the commitment to ending dis-
14 crimination and violence against women and girls, to
15 ensuring the safety and welfare of women and girls,
16 to pursuing policies that guarantee the basic human
17 rights of women and girls worldwide, and to pro-
18 moting meaningful and significant participation of

1 women in all aspects of their societies and commu-
2 nities;

3 (5) supports international calls for a “Post-
4 2015 Development Agenda” to include a stand-alone
5 goal to achieve gender equality and women’s em-
6 powerment; and

7 (6) encourages the people of the United States
8 to observe International Women’s Day with appro-
9 priate programs and activities.

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