

interest in them and why I want to extend my thanks to the Members of the Appropriations Committee for their support for these programs.

JOAN HOLMES, PRESIDENT OF
THE HUNGER PROJECT, BRIEF'S
THE WOMEN'S CAUCUS

HON. MARCY KAPTUR

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 16, 2003

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, earlier today the Women's Caucus received an outstanding briefing from Joan Holmes, the President of the Hunger Project. The focus of her briefing was to help us understand the essential and often overlooked role that women play in ending hunger around the world.

As we look towards the real needs that people face, it is vital that programs we fund through the instrumentalities of the Departments of Agriculture and State, as well as the Agency for International Development, I encourage all of our colleagues to take the time to read this most helpful presentation. The Hunger Project works to empower women in many countries around the world, and in my view is deserving of our support and understanding.

I ask unanimous consent to insert in the RECORD at this point the statement by Joan Holmes, entitled "Women and Ending Hunger: The Inextricable Link".

WOMEN AND ENDING HUNGER: THE
INEXTRICABLE LINK
(By Joan Holmes)

INTRODUCTION

Madame Chairperson and Distinguished Members of Congress, it is an honor to testify before the Women's Caucus today. I commend the Caucus for focusing on the inextricable link between women and ending hunger.

My name is Joan Holmes, and it's been my privilege to be the president of The Hunger Project since its inception in 1977.

In my testimony I will address:

First, Chronic Hunger and who is most affected;

Then, the three distinct ways women are essential to ending hunger and achieving sustainable development;

Next, what happens to a society when women are empowered; and

Finally, where the world is now—in recognizing the vital role of women.

AN UNDERSTANDING OF CHRONIC HUNGER

Chronic hunger continues to be the greatest failure of our age. It takes the lives of 20,000 of us each day. Eight hundred and forty million of us are chronically undernourished. The largest number of hungry people are in South Asia, but the most severe hunger is in sub-Saharan Africa.

When most of us think of hunger, we think of famine—sudden shortages of food due to war, drought or natural disasters. Less than 8% of hunger deaths are due to famine—the rest are due to chronic hunger.

The persistence of hunger is not an issue of the quantity of food. The world produces more than enough food for everyone. Hunger persists when people—particularly women—are systematically denied the opportunity to produce enough food—to be educated—to learn the skills to meet their basic needs. Hunger persists when the poor—mostly women—have no voice in the decisions that affect their lives.

WOMEN MOST AFFECTED BY HUNGER

When we speak of hungry people—we are literally speaking of women and children. The vast majority of the world's poor are women. The gap between women and men caught in the cycle of poverty has continued to widen in the past decade.

An estimated 80 percent of the world's refugees are women and girls. Two-thirds of the world's illiterates are female. Of the millions of children kept out of school—2/3 are girls.

WOMEN ARE AT THE CENTER OF THE
DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

The fundamental thesis of my testimony is—women are at the center of the development process, and until and unless we make the empowerment of women a central strategy in ending hunger—hunger will persist. Until and unless we empower women, none of the UN Millennium Development Goals will be met.

My testimony today does not come from the perspective of empowering women to achieve gender equality as a matter of social justice—even though that has my unequivocal support.

The analysis I am presenting today comes from looking strategically at what needs to happen to end hunger and achieve sustainable development. In this analysis, I am going to use the phrase "women's empowerment". It is important that we know what that phrase means.

Although there is no country where there is gender equality, in the countries that have the persistence of hunger—the subjugation, marginalization and disempowerment of women is particularly severe.

So, when we say empowering women—what this means is to lift some of the shackles that constrict and suppress their lives.

THREE DISTINCT WAYS WOMEN ARE
FUNDAMENTAL TO ENDING HUNGER

Let's examine three ways in which women are fundamental to the end of hunger:

First, the inextricable link between women's well-being and the overall health of a society.

Second, the enormous, yet largely unrecognized and unsupported role of women as producers.

Finally, women's leadership—a necessary component of ending hunger.

WOMEN'S WELL-BEING AND THE HEALTH OF A
SOCIETY

Girls and women are deprived

With regard to women's well-being and the link to the health of a society, let's look to South Asia. India and Bangladesh account for more than 1/3 of the remaining hunger, and their malnutrition rates are among the highest in the world. One-third of all babies in Bangladesh and 1/4 of the babies in India are born underweight and malnourished. This compares to 12 percent in Africa.

The question is—Why are these rates so high in Bangladesh and India, countries which are food self-sufficient? In fact, India has more than 40 million tons of surplus food in storage.

Why are the rates of malnutrition higher in South Asia than in Africa, which we know is considerably less developed? In 1996, UNICEF commissioned a landmark study to answer that question. In a report called, "The Asian Enigma", they concluded, "The exceptionally high rates of malnutrition in South Asia are rooted deep in the soil of inequality between men and women."

Women eat last and least. They eat only the food that is left over after the males have eaten. Often men and boys consume twice as many calories—even though women and girls do much of the heavy work. Girls in India are four times more likely to suffer from acute malnutrition than boys.

When women and girls are deprived, society suffers

Next, let's examine the effects this deprivation has on society.

We've always been clear that the health of the mother is the single most important factor in determining the health of her child. New scientific data makes it clear that it is not just her health when she is pregnant, or even throughout her entire life, but going back to when she herself was in the womb. And so, let me describe for you the insidious "cycle of malnutrition" that persists in South Asia.

A baby girl in India and Bangladesh is born underweight and malnourished. She is nursed less and fed less nutritious food than her brother. She is often denied health care and education. She is forced to work even as a child. Her work burden increases significantly as she gets older—even when she is pregnant. She is married and pregnant when she is young, often just a teenager. She is underweight and malnourished when she gives birth to her children who are born underweight and malnourished. And the cycle continues.

Even in the Punjab, the region of India where the green revolution was most successful, this cycle and these high rates of malnutrition still persist.

New Research

It has been clear for some time that maternal deprivation and subsequent fetal deprivation cause children to be highly susceptible to infectious diseases like tuberculosis and malaria.

New research shows that maternal deprivation also makes the body susceptible to diseases we associate with affluence—hypertension, cardiovascular diseases, type 2 diabetes, among others. In the next 20 years, India will have the largest number of diabetic patients, and coronary heart disease will become the leading cause of mortality.

This new research underscores that what begins as the neglect and discrimination of women ends in causing adversity for the health and survival of all.

WOMEN AS PRODUCERS

Now as to the role of women as producers: just as we must learn to think "women" when we think "hungry people"—we must think "women" when we think food producers in the developing world. And, I regret to say, we do not. Women have been largely bypassed by development assistance and programs focused on agriculture.

Rural women are responsible for half of the world's food production and produce 60 to 80 percent of the food in most developing countries.

In sub-Saharan Africa, women food farmers produce 80 percent of Africa's food, do the vast majority of the work to process, transport, store and market Africa's food, and they also provide 90 percent of the water, wood and fuel. Food processing alone creates a heavy work load for women. In parts of Africa, women spend four hours a day grinding grain.

They do all this, despite the fact that they own 1 percent of the land, receive less than 7 percent of farm extension services, and receive less than 10 percent of the credit given to small-scale farmers.

Effects of HIV/AIDS in Africa

If this reality weren't challenging enough, we must also recognize that the impact of HIV/AIDS on agricultural production and food security has been devastating. Families affected by HIV/AIDS see their food production cut by 40%.

This epidemic in Africa is spiraling out of control because men have multiple partners and unsafe sex, and women because of their

low status are kept uninformed about prevention and powerless to protect themselves. Twice as many young women as men are infected.

Bottom line—there is a direct correlation between women's low status, the violation of their human rights, and HIV transmission. In epidemiological terms, persuading 10 men with several partners to engage in safe sex has far greater impact than enabling one thousand women to protect themselves from their only partner. The 10 men are at the beginning of the chain of infection; the 1,000 women are its last link.

Violence against women impedes development

The other health hazard is violence against women. Violence against women continues to devastate millions of women worldwide, destroying families and impeding development.

In this new century—in the year 2003—it is sobering to acknowledge that many societies still find it acceptable and justifiable to beat—rape—stone—burn—disfigure and murder women. When one group of people in society is treated as inferior to another—the only way to keep that lie in place is by violence and the threat of violence.

Women's invisible work in the informal sector

The majority of women in the developing world work in agriculture. But a significant portion also work in the informal sector. Their work remains largely invisible in official statistics, because it takes place outside the formal economic structure.

Women work as—vendors, weavers, potters, handicraft workers, laundry workers, and manual laborers. Women may be poor, illiterate and undernourished, but they are economically active. They contribute significantly to the economy and society with their labor.

Let me give you a specific example of the importance of women's work—regardless of how invisible it is:

In India, young girls and women include in their daily work collecting and drying of cow dung which is used primarily as fuel in most of rural India where 75 percent of the population lives. Their work saves India at least \$10.5 billion a year that would otherwise need to be spent on petroleum. It is estimated that, if the Indian women went on strike and no longer collected cow dung, India would be in an economic crisis in three weeks.

WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP

The third critical link—between women and ending hunger is women's leadership. In countries with the persistence of hunger, women bear full responsibility for the key issues in ending hunger: family health, nutrition, sanitation, education and increasingly—family income. Yet women are systematically denied the information, education and freedom of action they need to fulfill these responsibilities.

When women have more voice in decision making in the home, their families are healthier, better nourished and better educated. In Brazil, as well as other countries, research shows that income in the hands of mothers has four times the impact on child nutrition as the same income in the hands of fathers.

When women gain voice in decision making in their villages, they have the opportunity to alter the development agenda to address issues critical to meeting basic needs. They take action against dowry, domestic violence, child marriage and child labor. Women in positions of leadership begin to transform gender relations and to call into question the deeply entrenched patriarchal system. They help other women to know their rights.

In India and Bangladesh, there is now an extraordinary opportunity. New laws guarantee that 1/3 of all seats in elected local government are reserved for women. As a result, in the region of the world where women have been the most subjugated—more than 5 million women have engaged in the political process by standing for elections and 1 million women have become elected local leaders—more elected women than in all the other countries of the world combined.

I consider this transfer of power to these one million elected women—who themselves are often illiterate and malnourished—to be a potent and direct intervention in the persistence of hunger.

WHEN WOMEN ARE EMPOWERED—SOCIETY BENEFITS

Now let's examine what happens to a society when women are empowered. The evidence is overwhelming—women's empowerment has the most far-reaching effects on the lives of all—men, women and children. Let's examine some of this evidence:

A recent analysis of development by the World Bank indicates that countries with smaller gaps between women and men in areas such as education, employment and property rights have lower child malnutrition and mortality, they also have less corruption in governance and faster economic growth.

Cross-country studies report that if the Middle East, South Asia and Africa had been as successful as East Asia in narrowing the gender gap only in education, the Gross National Product (GNP) per capita in these regions would have grown by an additional 16 to 30 percent from 1960 to 1990.

In sub-Saharan Africa, if women farmers were given the same support as that given to men their yields could increase by more than 20 percent. And, it is now clear that women's empowerment is more influential than economic growth in moderating fertility rates, thereby slowing population growth.

Bottom line: women are at the center of the development process. When they are empowered these are the results: faster economic growth, less corruption in governance, lower childhood malnutrition, lower child mortality, increased agricultural production, more children in school, including girls, health hazards are reduced, and the overall health and wellbeing of a society is greatly improved.

THE GAP BETWEEN RECOGNITION OF WOMEN'S VITAL ROLE AND POLICIES, PROGRAMS AND ACTION

Even though the evidence is overwhelming and there is increasing recognition that women are the key to sustainable development—the gap between this recognition, and policies, programs, and action is enormous.

Now let's look at 3 examples:

First, the International Conference on Financing for Development—known as the Monterrey Summit. The Monterrey Summit did address issues like good governance, people-centered development, and global responsibility—but the vital role of women in achieving sustainable development was not recognized. The words "gender sensitive" made it into the final Monterrey Consensus document, but the four people who control the world's purse-strings—President Bush, the heads of the World Bank, IMF and the European Commission never once mentioned the vital role of women. In fact, the word "woman" was used only once among these four keynote speakers and that was in reference to micro credit.

Regarding the 2001 New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD)—we need to know that this charter does not come close to recognizing that women are key to development. In fact, women are not adequately

included in any section of its analytical framework or its plan of action.

Now let's look at the constitutional amendment which guarantees women 1/3 of the seats in local village councils in India. It was passed by one vote. The amendment continues to be under attack, and is in danger of being repealed.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Given that women are at the center of the development process:

1. I recommend that women be placed in high level decision-making positions in all international organizations.

2. All legislation—budget allocations—and programs related to development must specifically empower women as the key change agents to achieve sustainable development.

JOSEPH A. PICHLER HONORED BY
HEBREW UNION COLLEGE JEWISH
INSTITUTE OF RELIGION

HON. ROB PORTMAN

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 16, 2003

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize Joseph A. Pichler, a constituent and friend, who will be honored by Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion at its 21st Annual Cincinnati Associates Tribute Dinner on November 2, 2003. Joe will be honored for his exemplary civic and philanthropic leadership.

Joe is a member of the Corporate Council of Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion. Founded in Cincinnati in 1875, the College-Institute is the oldest institution of higher Jewish education in the western hemisphere. The College-Institute prepares rabbis, cantors, religious school educators and Jewish communal workers at its four campuses in Cincinnati, New York, Los Angeles and Jerusalem. The College-Institute also awards Masters and Doctoral degrees to men and women of all faiths.

Joe brings leadership, hard work and energy to every assignment. Currently Chairman of the Board of the Kroger Company, he also served Kroger as Chief Executive Officer; President and Chief Operating Officer; and Executive Vice President. Joe joined Dillon Companies in 1980 as Executive Vice President and was elected to Kroger's Board of Directors when Dillon merged with Kroger in 1983. For fifteen years, he taught at the University of Kansas School of Business, and served as Dean from 1974 to 1980. From 1968 to 1970, he was Special Assistant to the U.S. Department of Labor's Assistant Secretary for Manpower. Joe is a member of the Board of Directors of Federated Department Stores, Inc., and Milacron, Inc.

In a career consistently marked by high points and achievements, Joe has pursued service to our community with equal enthusiasm. He is a member of the Board of Directors of the Cincinnati City Development Corporation; Member of the Board of Trustees of Xavier University; Member of the Advisory Board of the Cincinnati Chapter of the Salvation Army; CoChairman of the Greater Cincinnati Scholarship Association; and a Member of the Catholic Commission of Intellectual and Cultural Affairs. In 2000, he was presented with the Distinguished Service Citation by the National Conference for Community and Justice.