



**U.S. Equal Futures Partnership Commitments to Expand  
Women's Political and Economic Participation**  
September 23, 2013

In response to President Obama's challenge to other heads of state to break down barriers to women's political and economic participation, former Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton and Valerie Jarrett launched the [Equal Futures Partnership](#) on behalf of the United States in September 2012.

The Equal Futures Partnership is an innovative U.S.-led multilateral initiative designed to encourage member countries to empower women economically and politically. Equal Futures [partner countries commit](#) to taking actions including legal, regulatory, and policy reforms to ensure women fully participate in public life at the local, regional, and national levels, and that they lead and benefit from inclusive economic growth.

This year at the United Nations General Assembly, the U.S. will join twenty three other partner countries in making specific commitments to advance our ultimate goal of a world in which our daughters and sons have equal opportunities and bright futures. Today, the U.S. is proud to announce new commitments to meet our collective goals:

**WHITE HOUSE SUMMIT ON WORKING FAMILIES**

The financial security of hardworking American families is the foundation of a strong and growing economy. That's why, building on his plan to ensure a better bargain for hardworking Americans, next Spring President Obama will convene a White House Summit on Working Families, in partnership with the Center for American Progress and U.S. Department of Labor. This summit will elevate the ongoing national conversation around making today's workplace work for everyone – from working parents struggling to balance the demands of their jobs with the needs of their families, to businesses seeking to attract and retain skilled workers and improve their bottom lines. In preparation for the Summit, the White House Council on Women and Girls will hold discussions with working families, employers, business and labor leaders, economists, and advocates to seek out new ideas for ensuring fair pay, encouraging more family-friendly workplaces, and improving and strengthening our businesses and our economy as a whole.

**OPENING DOORS TO QUALITY EDUCATION AND HIGH-PAYING CAREER OPPORTUNITIES IN SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING AND MATH**

Women employed in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) fields earn on average 33 percent more than their non-STEM counterparts, but they represent only

one-quarter of all workers in these sectors. The U.S., along with private and non-profit partners, is announcing a number of new steps to build on the President's agenda to attract and retain women and girls in the STEM fields, including:

### **In-Depth STEM Education for Girls**

The National Aeronautics and Space Administration's (NASA) [Digital Learning Network](#) (DLN) brings NASA professionals together with students across the country through web conferencing tools enabling in-depth exploration of STEM topics. This year, DLN will host specific events that target women and girls, including events during Women's History Month 2014.

Girls Inc. and Discovery Education will collaborate to provide girls with access to Discovery Education's STEM Camp – a dynamic series of standards-aligned STEM curricula built around the National Academy of Engineering's grand engineering challenges. This partnership will further Girls Inc.'s efforts to encourage girls' participation and achievement in STEM fields. This partnership will also create opportunities for educators and mentors to participate in a series of Discovery Education professional development opportunities and receive training around best practices for implementing innovative STEM curricula.

### **Spurring Research on Advancing Women and Girls in STEM**

The National Science Foundation (NSF) will connect with researchers across a number of existing NSF research, development and workforce programs to encourage submissions of proposals focused on advancing women and girls in STEM education.

### **EXPANDING SUPPORT FOR WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS**

Investing in women entrepreneurs is an essential part of the President's plan to create an economy built to last. Between 1997 and 2007, women-owned companies in the U.S. grew at nearly twice the rate of all privately held U.S. firms, adding roughly 500,000 jobs. Yet, many women entrepreneurs have difficulty accessing the tools, financing, and networks they need to start and grow their own businesses. The Administration is announcing a new partnership to further support women entrepreneurs:

### **Innovative Business Education for Women Entrepreneurs**

Freeport-McMoRan Copper & Gold, Thunderbird School of Global Management, and BlueDrop Performance Learning commit to advancing women's entrepreneurship through providing access to DreamBuilder, an innovative business training tool. Dreambuilder will be piloted with select Small Business Administration Women's Business Centers across the country, with an eye towards reaching a network of 100 centers nationwide serving almost 140,000 women.

### **Expanding Networks**

WEConnect International commits to host business events that convene and assist women entrepreneurs and relevant stakeholders to connect and expand market opportunities and awareness. WEConnect International will partner with private sector leaders to provide training, skills and capacity building on how to access larger markets, including the supply chains of multinational corporations.

## **BREAKING THE CYCLE OF VIOLENCE AND ENSURING ECONOMIC SECURITY FOR SURVIVORS OF VIOLENCE**

Domestic violence costs the U.S. an estimated \$8 billion a year in lost productivity and health care costs alone, and some studies have suggested that the full economic impact is much higher. Domestic violence and other forms of abuse can also stand in the way of women achieving economic independence. To address these challenges, the Administration has taken the following steps:

### **Increasing Financial Capability for Victims of Abuse**

The Department of Health and Human Services collaborated with the Assets for Independence (AFI) Program to create a comprehensive online toolkit to provide grantees information on the nature of domestic violence and economic abuse, materials for domestic violence service providers to learn about a range of asset building services that can help their clients, and training materials for both communities on how to best help domestic violence survivors access financial services and savings programs.

### **A Presidential Directive to Combat HIV/AIDS and Violence Against Women & Girls**

In March 2012, President Obama issued a Presidential Memorandum creating an inter-agency Working Group to explore the intersection of HIV / AIDS, violence against women and girls, and gender-related health disparities. In 2013, the Federal Working Group established by the Memorandum has identified as one of its priorities to increase housing stability and economic opportunities for women living with HIV who experience violence. The Group will also focus on breaking the cycle of violence through prevention strategies aimed at young women and girls of color, as Black and Latina young women are disproportionately at risk for both violence and HIV / AIDS.

## **EDUCATING, TRAINING AND INSPIRING THE NEXT GENERATION OF WOMEN LEADERS**

In order to build a strong and diverse cadre of women leaders, the U.S. along with commitments from civil society, is announcing to efforts to educate, train and inspire women to become the next generation of American leaders, including:

### **Promoting Media Literacy**

*Miss Representation*, an award-winning documentary, exposes mainstream media's underrepresentation of women in positions of power and influence in America. MissRepresentation.org, a non-profit social action campaign and media organization, commits to partnering with community organizations such as Big Brothers Big Sisters, businesses and educators to bring its curriculum to high-risk communities. Miss Representation has already reached an estimated 500,000 students, and commits to reach at least one million more youth across the U.S. by 2016. Their goals are to educate students about the harmful effects of gender stereotypes and strengthen the emotional health and well-being of at-risk girls and boys.

### **Training Women Veterans to Run for Public Office**

The George Washington University's Center for Second Service will design a Veterans Campaign training workshop for female veterans. The program will train them to continue their commitment to public service by running for office, seeking political appointments, and getting involved in campaigns and advocacy programs. They will

work with veterans' organizations and organizations focused on encouraging more women to serve in government to recruit and train a diverse group of female veterans.

**Highlighting Women Veterans in Federal Government Leadership**

The U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) will create the Spotlight on Women Veterans in the Federal Workforce initiative which will consist of webinars and town halls with women veterans in the federal government. This effort will lift up role models for veterans transitioning out of active duty and for women veterans in the federal government who wish to take on leadership roles.

**Encouraging and Supporting Women Leaders in the Federal Government**

Women comprise 43.5% of the federal government workforce but only 33.5% of the Senior Executive Service, which represents the highest level of federal government leadership. In order to reconcile this disparity, as a follow up to the 2012 Federal Women's Leadership Summit and the previous work OPM has done to promote women's leadership, OPM will sponsor workshops focused on navigating the patterns of implicit bias that have historically kept women from moving into executive positions.

OPM also commits to creating three new mentoring programs to inspire and prepare the next class of women leaders. Finally, OPM will work to close the retirement savings gender gap (studies have shown that women participate at a lower rate than their male counterparts and usually save less, ultimately inhibiting their long-term savings growth) through the federal Thrift Savings Program by increasing women's financial literacy through education and awareness initiatives.

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