

118TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. RES. 582

Supporting the goals of International Women’s Day.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

MARCH 7, 2024

Mrs. SHAHEEN (for herself and Ms. COLLINS) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations

RESOLUTION

Supporting the goals of International Women’s Day.

Whereas, as of March 2024, there are approximately 4,045,000,000 women and girls in the world, making up $\frac{1}{2}$ of the world’s population;

Whereas women and girls around the world—

(1) have fundamental human rights;

(2) play a critical role in providing and caring for their families and driving positive change in their communities;

(3) contribute substantially to food security, economic growth, the prevention and resolution of conflict, and the sustainability of peace and stability;

(4) are affected in different and often disproportionate ways by global, country, and community circumstances, including economic downturns, global health concerns, conflict, and migration; and

(5) must have meaningful protections and opportunities to more fully participate in and lead the political, social, and economic lives of their communities and countries;

Whereas the advancement and empowerment of women and girls around the world is a foreign policy priority for the United States and is critical to the achievement of global peace, prosperity, and sustainability;

Whereas, on October 6, 2017, the Women, Peace, and Security Act of 2017 (Public Law 115–68; 131 Stat. 1202) was enacted into law, which includes requirements for a government-wide “Women, Peace, and Security Strategy” to promote and strengthen the participation of women in peace negotiations and conflict prevention overseas, enhanced training for relevant United States Government personnel, and follow-up evaluations of the effectiveness of the strategy;

Whereas the United States Strategy and National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security, dated October 2023, recognizes that—

(1) the “implementation of the [Women, Peace, and Security] agenda is both a moral and a strategic imperative for U.S. foreign policy and national security”, reiterating that “the status of women and the stability of nations are inextricably linked”;

(2) the challenges posed to the United States and the global community cannot be solved without addressing the inequities faced by $\frac{1}{2}$ of the world’s population; and

(3) the United States must “eliminate barriers to women’s meaningful participation . . . in peace and security decision-making processes” in order to “achieve and

safeguard our national security priorities” and achieve “sustainable peace, international security, and economic stability”;

Whereas, according to the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (commonly referred to as “UN Women”), peace negotiations are more likely to end in a peace agreement when women and women’s groups play a meaningful role in the negotiation process;

Whereas, according to a study by the International Peace Institute, a peace agreement is 35 percent more likely to last at least 15 years if women participate in the development of the peace agreement;

Whereas, according to the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs of the Department of State, the full and meaningful participation of women in criminal justice professions and security forces vastly enhances the effectiveness of the resulting workforces;

Whereas, despite the contributions of women to society, hundreds of millions of women and girls around the world continue to be denied the right to participate freely in civic and economic life, lack fundamental legal protections, and remain vulnerable to exploitation and abuse;

Whereas, every year, approximately 12,000,000 girls are married before they reach the age of 18, which means that—

- (1) nearly 33,000 girls are married every day; or
- (2) nearly 23 girls are married every minute;

Whereas, despite global progress, it is predicted that by 2030 more than 150,000,000 more girls will marry before reaching the age of 18, and approximately 2,400,000

girls who are married before reaching the age of 18 are under the age of 15;

Whereas girls living in countries affected by conflict or other humanitarian crises are often the most vulnerable to child marriage, and 9 of the 10 countries with the highest rates of child marriage are considered fragile or extremely fragile;

Whereas, on August 15, 2021, the Taliban entered Kabul, Afghanistan, and toppled the elected government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, resulting in de facto Taliban rule over the people of Afghanistan;

Whereas the Taliban continues to restrict the ability of women and girls to exist in Afghan society, including by—

(1) prohibiting girls from going to school past sixth grade, including banning women from attending university;

(2) limiting the employment that women can pursue outside of their households;

(3) mandating that women cover their heads and faces in public and punishing those who wear brightly colored clothing;

(4) restricting the independent movement of women and girls;

(5) closing domestic abuse shelters, sometimes forcing residents to return to their abusive families;

(6) preventing women aid workers from operating in Afghanistan, thus restricting operations in support of humanitarian assistance for all Afghans;

(7) jailing women human rights defenders; and

(8) limiting access to women’s healthcare, including preventative and emergency services, and requiring a male chaperone at most clinics and hospitals;

Whereas, according to the United Nation’s Children’s Fund (commonly referred to as “UNICEF”)—

(1) globally, 1 in 5 girls between the ages of 10 and 19 have experienced recent intimate partner violence;

(2) approximately 120,000,000 girls worldwide, about 1 in 10, have experienced forced sexual acts; and

(3) an estimated 1 in 3 women around the world has experienced some form of physical or sexual violence;

Whereas the overall level of violence against women is a better predictor of the peacefulness of a country, the compliance of a country with international treaty obligations, and the relations of a country with neighboring countries than indicators measuring the level of democracy, level of wealth, or level of institutionalization of the country;

Whereas women around the world remain vastly underrepresented in government positions, as women account for only 25.6 percent of national parliamentarians and 21 percent of government ministers;

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, self-reliance, and political and social stability;

Whereas, although the United Nations Millennium Project reached the goal of achieving gender parity in primary education in most countries in 2015, the COVID–19 global pandemic has deepened gender inequality in education and more work remains to be done to achieve gender equality in primary and secondary education, particu-

larly in secondary education worldwide as gender gaps persist and widen, by addressing—

- (1) discriminatory practices;
- (2) harmful cultural and social norms;
- (3) inadequate sanitation facilities, including facilities to manage menstruation;
- (4) child, early, and forced marriage;
- (5) poverty;
- (6) food insecurity and malnutrition;
- (7) early pregnancy and motherhood;
- (8) conflict and insecurity; and
- (9) other factors that favor boys or devalue girls' education;

Whereas, according to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization—

- (1) approximately 118,500,000 girls between the ages of 6 and 17 remain out of school;
- (2) girls living in countries affected by conflict are 2.5 times more likely to be out of primary school than boys;
- (3) girls are twice as likely as boys to never set foot in a classroom; and
- (4) up to 30 percent of girls who drop out of school do so because of adolescent pregnancy or child marriage;

Whereas women around the world face a variety of constraints that severely limit their economic participation and productivity and remain underrepresented in the labor force;

Whereas, according to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations—

- (1) agriculture and food systems are a major source of livelihoods, particularly for rural women;

(2) wage and productivity gaps persist in agriculture and food systems, despite the crucial role that women play in those sectors;

(3) the work of women in agriculture and food systems is more likely than that of men to be part-time, irregular, informal, vulnerable, labor-intensive, and low-skilled;

(4) in countries reporting on Sustainable Development Goal 5.a.1, more men than women are owners or have rights to agricultural land;

(5) the gender gap in food insecurity is growing and has reached 4.3 percentage points, with more women experiencing severe and moderate food insecurity in all regions than men; and

(6) the empowerment of women can have important benefits for agricultural productivity, nutrition, and food security;

Whereas the economic empowerment of women is inextricably linked to a myriad of other internationally recognized human rights that are essential to the ability of women to thrive as economic actors, including—

(1) living lives free of violence and exploitation;

(2) achieving the highest possible standard of health and well-being;

(3) enjoying full legal and human rights, such as access to registration, identification, and citizenship documents, and freedom of movement;

(4) access to formal and informal education;

(5) access to, and equal protection under, land and property rights;

(6) access to fundamental labor rights;

(7) the implementation of policies to address disproportionate care burdens; and

(8) receiving business and management skills and leadership opportunities;

Whereas the Millennium Challenge Corporation (commonly referred to as the “MCC”), an independent United States foreign assistance agency, recognizes that inequality and the exclusion of women from economic opportunities can inhibit efforts to promote economic growth and reduce poverty and decrease a country’s economic growth trajectory, which is why the gender policy of the MCC requires gender inequalities to be identified and considered in every stage of agreements with participating countries;

Whereas, according to the World Health Organization, global maternal mortality decreased by approximately 38 percent from 2000 to 2017, yet approximately 810 women and girls continue to die from preventable causes relating to pregnancy or childbirth each day, and 94 percent of all maternal deaths occur in developing countries, putting the global community off-track to meeting Sustainable Development Goal 3.1 for reducing maternal deaths;

Whereas the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees reports that women and girls comprise approximately $\frac{1}{2}$ of the 78,900,000 refugees and internally displaced or stateless individuals in the world;

Whereas the Russian invasion of Ukraine that began on February 24, 2022, has resulted in a disproportionate number of women and children seeking safety outside of Ukraine;

Whereas those women and girls, like women and girls in all humanitarian emergencies, including those subject to forced displacement, face increased and exacerbated vulnerabilities to—

(1) gender-based violence, including rape, child marriage, domestic violence, human trafficking, and sexual exploitation and assault;

(2) disruptions in education and livelihood;

(3) lack of access to health services; and

(4) food insecurity and malnutrition;

Whereas malnutrition poses a variety of threats to women and girls specifically, as malnutrition can weaken their immune systems, making them more susceptible to infections, and affects their capacity to survive childbirth, and children born of malnourished women and girls are more likely to have cognitive impairments and higher risk of disease throughout their lives;

Whereas it is imperative—

(1) to alleviate violence and discrimination against women and girls; and

(2) to afford women and girls every opportunity to be equal members of their communities; and

Whereas March 8, 2024, is recognized as International Women’s Day, a global day—

(1) to celebrate the economic, political, and social achievements of women in the past, present, and future; and

(2) to recognize the obstacles that women 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;

1 (2) recognizes that the fundamental human
2 rights of women and girls have intrinsic value that
3 affect the quality of life of women and girls;

4 (3) recognizes that the empowerment of women
5 and girls is inextricably linked to the potential of a
6 country to generate—

7 (A) economic growth and self-reliance;

8 (B) sustainable peace and democracy; and

9 (C) inclusive security;

10 (4) recognizes and honors individuals in the
11 United States and around the world, including
12 women human rights defenders, activists, and civil
13 society leaders, who have worked throughout history
14 to ensure that women and girls are guaranteed
15 equality and fundamental human rights;

16 (5) applauds the women around the world who
17 stand against oppression in any form and fight for
18 a better future, especially in Ukraine, Iran, and Af-
19 ghanistan;

20 (6) recognizes the unique cultural, historical,
21 and religious differences throughout the world and
22 urges the United States Government to act with re-
23 spect and understanding toward legitimate dif-
24 ferences when promoting any policies;

25 (7) reaffirms the commitment—

1 (A) to end discrimination and violence
2 against women and girls;

3 (B) to ensure the safety, health, and wel-
4 fare of women and girls;

5 (C) to pursue policies that guarantee the
6 fundamental human rights of women and girls
7 worldwide; and

8 (D) to promote meaningful and significant
9 participation of women in every aspect of soci-
10 ety and community, including conflict preven-
11 tion, protection, peacemaking, and
12 peacebuilding;

13 (8) supports sustainable, measurable, and glob-
14 al development that seeks to achieve gender equality
15 and the empowerment of women and girls; and

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

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