THE BROOKINGS INSTITUTION

# EMERGING TRENDS IN WOMEN'S GLOBAL LEADERSHIP

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**INTRODUCTION**

**LAEL BRAINARD**
Director, Poverty and the Global Economy, and New Century Chair in International Economics, Brookings

**PATRICIA ELLIS**
Executive Director & Co-Founder, Women's Foreign Policy Group

**OPENING REMARKS:**

**MALANNE VERVEER**
Chair, Board of Directors, Vital Voices Global Partnership

**MODERATOR:**

**SANDRA WILLETT JACKSON**
President, Vital Voices Global Partnership

**PANELISTS:**

**CAROL GRAHAM**
Vice President and Director, Governance Studies, Brookings

**AMAT AL ALEEM ALI ALSOSWA**
Minister of Human Rights, Sana'a, Yemen

**MARINA PISKLAKOVA-PARKER**
Human Rights Activist, Moscow, Russia

**REYNA McPECK**
Businesswoman and Community Leader, Caracas, Venezuela

**QUESTION & ANSWER SESSION**

**P R O C E E D I N G S**

MS. BRAINARD: Good evening, everybody. I'm going to get this program started because I think we could otherwise spend the next hour chatting and catching up with people.

Let me just say that it is a great honor for us here at Brookings to co-host a panel of truly outstanding women leaders from around the world whose efforts are contributing to a more peaceful, and prosperous and equitable world. And the panelists who are going to speak to you tonight--Melanne will describe in greater detail--but really are working on the front lines in a host of areas, including trafficking, democratization, legal rights and freedom of speech, and so all of the areas that we think are so vital to development, as well as to democracy and to peace.

It's a personal pleasure for me, I will say, to host this event because I have been a very big fan of Vital Voices ever since it began as a governmental organization back in 1997. I was personally familiar with this work when it started as an initiative spearheaded in 1997 by Secretary Madeleine Albright and then First Lady, now Senator, Hillary Rodham Clinton, following the work of the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing.

And it turned out to be such a compelling and inspirational organization that it has spawned conferences and regional networks around the world, and ultimately the tremendous energy gave birth in 2000 to the creation of the Vital Voices Global Partnership as an NGO here in town.

Let me say that I will just start briefly by introducing the two cohosts, the two organizing cohosts of this, but let me just say a word about Brookings own interest in this area. This event, tonight, dovetails with a new initiative here at Brookings to

focus on Poverty and the Global Economy to bring to bear policy-oriented research and outreach around the key poverty challenges facing the world today.

And one of the areas in the field of development that has the most compelling research base, I think, underlying it is the close connection between achieving sustained growth, equitable outcomes and the role of women within the family, within the workforce, within the political system. Basic education and basic health programs have been revamped to really target girls because those research connections are so strong.

It happens to be that a large number of the scholars in this program are actually women, and we have perhaps the best here today with us--Carol Graham--to talk about her work in Latin America.

Let me now introduce Patricia Ellis and Melanne Verveer.

Patricia Ellis is Executive Director and Co-Founder of the Women's Foreign Policy Group. She has very extensive experience in the area of news coverage of foreign affairs. She worked for a long time at the MacNeil/Lehrer NewsHour, which is one of the finest when it comes to foreign affairs coverage. She was a member of the faculty at American University, a fellow at Harvard. Let me just say that this little book, which is the directory of the Women's Foreign Policy Group, is kind of the Bible when it comes to recruiting. It certainly was for me when I worked at the White House and continues to be a very, very important network.

And then also let me just introduce Melanne Verveer, who is the guiding vision behind Vital Voices. And I want to say, personally, how honored I was. I had the chance to overlap with her at the White House, and I will say that I thought, at the time, we had an amazing roster of women leaders throughout the administration, especially at

the White House, and she really stood out, even among that group, as one who yielded extraordinary power, with a minimum of fanfare and a maximum of effectiveness.

She served as Assistant to the President, Chief of Staff to the First Lady in the Clinton administration. Prior to that, she was Executive Vice President of People for the American Way and has worked at the U.S. Catholic Conference, Common Cause, is a founding member of the Coalition on Human Needs and also has a lot of experience on the Hill. So it's really an amazing line-up tonight, and it's a great honor for us to be part of it.

Thank you very much.

[Applause.]

MS. ELLIS: Thank you very much, Lael.

It is a great pleasure, on behalf of the Women's Foreign Policy Group, to welcome everyone tonight. We're an organization that promotes women's leadership and global engagement, and so what better partnership to be here tonight with our great friends, Vital Voices. In fact, we honored their co-chairs at our recent Congressional Awards Luncheon, and it was just a fabulous occasion. We are also so pleased to be joining together with Brookings, and so all around we're so pleased.

Our organization promotes global engagement, women's leadership, and we're very concerned with having women's voices heard on pressing international issues of the day. And so that's why we're so glad that we could participate in this celebration with the awardees from vital voices who are just such outstanding women and have a lot to say and that we could provide a platform and a vehicle for more people to hear what they have to say because we want to make sure that women's voices are heard.

Just very briefly, we are known for our programs and all different international issues, and the key thing, besides our directory, which was mentioned, and I appreciate that, the key thing is that we have women speakers. And we have a program coming up next week. I just want to mention a slight plug. It's called, "Trying Saddam," and it's with a professor who is an expert on war crimes, Professor Orentlicher from American University. So we hope there's information out there. We hope you can all join us.

And I just want to say thank you again for coming and turn it over to my friend and colleague, Melanne Verveer.

[Applause.]

MS. VERVEER: Well, I too want to take my turn to thank Brookings for, on very short notice, pulling this together so that all of you could have the opportunity to hear from these extraordinary women.

Lael mentioned that she and I worked together at the White House. She was the Deputy Assistant to the President for International Economics, and she tended to deal with very easy issues like globalization, and trade, and poverty, and we always considered her just one of the brightest lights imaginable in government, and here she is at Brookings overseeing this extraordinary project on poverty and global economics. So she tends to deal with the really tough issues, but the issues that matter tremendously.

And I think what we know from research, whether it's the World Bank's engendering development or whether it's the U.N.'s Human Development Report that the Arab Intellectuals did, is that women are critical in this equation, that if countries want to be prosperous, if governance is going to be less corrupt, if poverty is going to be

alleviated, as the World Bank study says, then women have to have their place at the table, and women's potential needs to be tapped. It makes a difference.

Similarly, in that part of the world that is the subject of enormous focus today in the Arab World, what the U.N. Development Report very explicitly said was that illiteracy needs to be dealt with. It is a huge problem, and actually that is the region of the world that is making enormous strides, although two-thirds of the illiterate are still women and girls. But you cannot marginalize half of your country from its economic life and its political life and expect to have positive outcomes.

And what the women before you represent this evening are extraordinary people in the economic life of their country, in combatting human rights, in political participation at the highest levels. They span the regions from this hemisphere to the Arab World to Russia. They are dealing with some of the toughest issues--issues that are on the front burner of what we read about and what our world has to grapple with. So we are just so delighted that the Women's Foreign Policy Group and Brookings could come together with us to make them present here for you tonight.

Vital Voices, as Lael said, started in the United States government. It was part of our commitment, after the Beijing Women's Conference, because we recognized that if women were marginalized there weren't going to be strong democracies. If women were marginalized, there weren't going to be vibrant free-market economies. And so at the time, enormous commitments were made--investments in girls' education, in microcredit, in development programs of all kinds and in leadership training.

And when many of the people who were involved in those programs over the years, particularly in the private sector, said that they wanted to be engaged more

fully, they established the NGO, and that is the place where we find ourselves today, and we are mostly engaged in providing leadership training so that women aren't just at the table, but they are effective when they get to the table.

And so without further ado, I will introduce my colleague, Sandra Willett Jackson, the President of Vital Voices, and she will act as moderator tonight, and hopefully you will be able to participate in a stimulating discussion and ask these extraordinary women your own questions.

Thank you.

[Applause.]

MS. JACKSON: Thanks, Melanne. I think you've said it. This is a time for discussion, but first we are going to have some introductory remarks, brief, from our stellar panelists. And the topic is, "Emerging Trends in Women's Leadership Around the Globe."

I would like to remind you of something that Martin Luther King said. To me, it's so relevant every day, and it certainly is relevant when we have the leadership at the table now, these vital voices from around the world. Martin Luther King said, "We will have to repent in this generation not merely for the hateful words and actions of the bad people, but for the appalling silence of the good people."

The women you are going to be talking with this evening are not silent at all. They are vital voices that speak messages loud and clear. So I am honored to get the program underway. What we are going to do is start with an overview by Carol Thompson from Brookings, and I am not going to be formal about this. Their impressive bios are in handout form, so you can read about them through the paper that's on the table as I'd like to get right into the discussion.

So Carol Graham--I'm sorry, Carol Graham--who is the Vice President and Director of Governance Studies at Brookings will start us off with some discussion about the linkages between economic, social and political development throughout the world.

We're then going to look at three, and possibly four, if our ladies from Haiti arrive, but three examples, something about the rise of human trafficking in the former Soviet Union, and this will be from Marina, something as an example of the threats to democracy, and we will look at Venezuela with the help of Marina, who I have just spent the past 48 hours with. I'm sorry.

And then we will look at increasing women's political participation throughout the Middle East.

So, Carol Graham, would you lead us off with an overview, please.

MS. GRAHAM: Thank you for the invitation to participate and for the chance to shed some broader perspective on this.

First of all, I'm not an expert on women's issues at all. So, in that sense, I'm sort of an interesting person to be on the panel. However, I've spent most of my life studying poverty and inequality in Third World countries, particularly in Latin America, but not only, and most recently from the perspectives of the "Economics of Happiness, which is an approach which merges the traditional approaches of economists with approaches taken by psychologists and makes up part of the movement in behavioral economics.

But I think this is a particularly interesting and relevant approach when one thinks about gender issues and, indeed, some of what the literature tells us, and certainly some of my own survey work, the results from this work really shed some light

on issues that are very relevant to the role of gender and in particular gender rights in the developing world and possibly even the developed world, but I will keep my remarks to the developing world. And let me just show a couple of slides.

The first thing that is probably not going to be too new to many of you, but yet seems to be new to economics, is that as countries grow wealthier over time, and as individuals grow wealthier over time, they're not necessarily happier. This is just a simple slide showing average happiness levels and income per capita in countries across the world.

And what you'll see is that there really isn't much of a pattern between income and happiness. There are clusters of countries. The wealthier countries are, on average, happier because generally there are less people that are deprived, but among the wealthy countries, there's no trend. The wealthiest country, here. The U.S. is by no means the happiest. In fact, the Netherlands is. As my husband is from Holland, and it's cold and rainy there, I haven't quite understood that finding. But I'm from Peru, and we're all the way down here. So, as someone remarked when they read my recent book, "We must have an interesting marriage."

[Laughter.]

MS. GRAHAM: But anyway, the point here is, if you look, we did all of the Latin American countries, and showed that for developing countries, it was very similar, that the wealthiest countries were not necessarily the happiest, and some of the poorest and most unequal countries, people were happier.

What explains this? Well, what explains this is that once people are above the starvation level, other things matter to their well-being or happiness much more than just income. Health is a huge issue--people's health and health of their

children. A stable marriage is extremely important to happiness, stable employment is extremely important to happiness, and there's also an age effect. Now, this slide will make you happy or unhappy, depending on where you are on it.

[Laughter.]

MS. GRAHAM: This is happiness by age level in Latin America, but we find that Latin America holds with both the U.S. and Europe. And for those of you that thought your twenties and your thirties were it, you're all wrong. In fact, the low point on the happiness curve is in the mid-forties, and after that, as long as people are healthy and married, they get happier as they get older. And this really holds across the U.S., Europe, Latin America.

So the whole point here, this slide is an amusing slide, but the point is that things other than income matter a lot. And one thing we find matters a lot to unhappiness or makes people extremely unhappy is insecurity. Unemployment makes people extremely unhappy. The risk of losing a job, people that live in developing economies with very unstable economies tend to be unhappy even if they're not the poorest people, they're doing okay in income terms, if their risk of losing a job and having no safety net, no unemployment insurance is very high, they tend to be less happy.

The same goes for inequality. Large differences not just in income, but in status, in other kinds of measures of inequality, make people unhappy. It's not a stretch to think about gender issues.

Before I turn to that, just quickly, we've also done some work that shows that unhappiness and frustration is linked to worse performance in the labor market to less support for markets and democracy, and to all kinds of other views about policies

that would be negative in terms of long-term development. So these frustrations do matter to how people behave economically and to how they behave politically.

So what about gender equality? What do we know? Ignore all of the numbers on this slide. I'm just going to point to two that matter. This is comparing the determinants of happiness in Latin America to those in the U.S. They're extremely similar. But one thing that stands out here is that in the U.S. women--this is a sign for men, it's negative--women are happier than men, on average, in the U.S. In Latin America, however, the sign is reversed.

Now, what could explain that? Many things, presumably, but I think it must reflect, the quite large difference must reflect differences in gender rights. Women have achieved much more equality on many fronts in the United States than they have in Latin America.

So just before coming today, I decided I'd look a little more closely at these issues. I just did this quite quickly, but I looked in my data set and found what percent of women in Latin America feel discriminated against and found a question that said, "How often have you been discriminated against?" This is Latin America.

And what surprised me is how few women, the percentage of women, actually reported that they felt discriminated against. In fact, 55 percent of women in Latin America reported that they had never felt discriminated against, and I think that's extremely low in a region where gender rights are very unequal.

So what explained this? Let's look a little more closely? Again, don't get caught up in the numbers. I'll walk you through, but this was basically trying to see the determinants of having answered the question that you've been discriminated against positively. And it turns out that there's an age relationship. There's a U curve in the

same way with the curve I showed on happiness, there's a U curve, with younger women up to age 40 more likely to report that they have felt discriminated against. And I think this supports a generational trend where younger women are more aware about discrimination.

Also, another point is that married and older women were less likely to say that they've been discriminated against. And then women who were in the labor force or had had experience in the labor force--they were either self-employed, private or public employees, or reported themselves as unemployed, which suggests they've been looking for a job, were also more likely to say that they've been discriminated against.

The point here is, quite simply, that in Latin America, if you have to think about getting closer to equality in terms of gender rights, there is still an awareness issue. You can see a trend, that it's younger women, women that are trying to earn an income, trying to become leaders, which is a broader topic of the seminar, that are actually even becoming aware of gender inequality. So this suggests to me that there's still a long way to go, that there's sort of a fight against the tide, but as we know, it's well worth fighting. As Lael mentioned, we know, from a poverty reduction standpoint, that doing things to equalize gender rights and to make women more educated and more aware have positive effects on poverty outcomes.

And in terms of inequality, we know a lot about the negative effects that inequality can have on everything from political attitudes to economic outcomes, and gender inequality is part of this. And I think it's actually, at least for developing countries, awareness about gender inequality is still on its way up. So, before we can even start to think about the negative effects of gender inequality on broader economic,

social and political trends, we're going to see it rise before we can even begin to think about its effects.

So those were just some thoughts on how looking at reported well-being and how people evaluate their well-being and can shed some insights into how this plays out in terms of gender issues. And I think that the whole issue of gender inequality will become, in the future, another of the forms of inequality that we look at and analyze and try and think about the aggregate benefits for society of reducing this kind of inequality, and I'll stop there.

[Applause.]

MS. JACKSON: My goodness, a lot of serious food for thought here. Carol, interesting. In my mind, I was thinking, Oh, wait a minute. There's something wrong here because older women are not trafficked, younger women are. And then I thought, wait a minute. Older women's daughters are trafficked. So it's tragedy all around, all age levels.

What I'd like to do now, please, is to ask our panelists to bring us to the real world of everyday lives and do so--this sounds so rude to say--but in a short 3-minute segment. Kate, in front, will give you some cues about how long you have left to speak for your formal remarks or informal remarks because we want to take your questions and answers, and I know you have the most willing and expert panelists here too.

[Pause to fix microphone.]

MS. JACKSON: Consider everything I've said prior to this to be unimportant because we're going to turn to the panelists now.

I'd like to start with Amat, please. Before I do, I would like to introduce His Excellency, the Ambassador of Yemen, Mr. Abdulla Al-Hajjri. He is right here in the middle of the room.

Thank you for coming.

[Applause.]

MS. JACKSON: Amat is the Minister of Human in Yemen, and she's much, much more than that. She will not tell you so much about the leadership roles she's had as the life she has led and the influence she has tried to exert on people in Yemen, people in the region, and women globally to bring us all into better consciousness.

Amat?

MINISTER ALSOSWA: Thank you very much. I think you are really making it very difficult for me. Thank you very much, first of all, for this wonderful introduction. As a matter of fact, my ministry sounds very funny, ministry, because I don't think you have heard of a Ministry of Human Rights at any part of the world, but we have a Ministry of Human Rights.

And its work actually is meant to be the driving force for all of the government agencies to improve the situation of human rights in Yemen and to admit, to start with, to the problems that we are facing in human rights and then to finding solutions and answers for the questions of human rights. So we did that until today and actually until yesterday. We are there for one year only as ministry, and we actually established a complaint mechanism so that people can come and complain and mainly, of course, they complain about governments, and its actions, and sometimes you also have some complaints about different individuals.

And we were encourage by the enthusiasm and by the number of people who turned out to come to us, and to present their cases and to be able to make them vocal and for people to know them. And for that we, in addition to the establishment of the complaint mechanism, we are also relying on the newspapers and the magazines. We have in Yemen a very big number of newspapers. We have more than 110, and they are all owned by individuals or private businesses or by political parties, and they are all not subjected to any forms, to any prayer or after censorship, and all of these happenings are taking place only from 1990. So we are still learning how to deal with the freedom of the press, and sometimes it's very difficult to do that. But anyway, this is just an introduction to the kind of work that I am doing so that if you have anything to ask about, so that also we can leave some time as well for my colleagues. And I hope I'll be useful in answering some of your questions.

Thank you very much.

[Applause.]

MS. JACKSON: The briefest of introductions. Thank you.

Let's turn to Reyna McPeck from Venezuela, a strong businesswoman, a community leader, and really an advocate for women during these difficult times that Venezuela faces, helping to help women understand and act on their roles and the possibilities in the economic field, as well as in the political field.

Marina?

MS. McPECK: Thank you very much for this opportunity. The situation in Venezuela is very complex at the moment. We are going through a period of transition from, I don't know how to put this, but from an electorally elected government to a dictatorship, but dressed as a democracy, and that's what's been happening.

We have this government where it has a majority in Congress. It controls all governmental institutions. The Attorney General is appointed by him, by the President, I mean. The Public Defender, he controls the military, and he's now, they just passed a new law where they are going to increase the number of judges in the Supreme Court, so then they will control also the Supreme Court.

Even though the press is free, he's passing now a law that is supposed to go to Congress during the next month that will subject the owners of the media or the journalists to very large penalties or even prison for what they say. So we are going to see a change in what you can read and hear in the papers and in the television.

So all of this situation has provoked a response in the people who do not agree with this government, and people are starting to--well, they started to go to the streets and have presses in the streets and marches, opposition marches, huge. We have seen marches of almost a million people in the capital city, and we have seen marches the same day in maybe 15 cities at the same time.

So there is a movement where women have taken a strong position,a need this is something that I feel it's a big change in the attitude of the people towards democracy. They understand now that democracy is not a passing thing. Democracy has to be active. It's not only that you are allowed and you have the right to elect a candidate. You have to keep on and following this person's actions and commit your compromise with your community, so that the things that they promised, the promises are kept, and the things that they said they were going to do are done.

So now people realize they have to participate either through their community, their political parties, their NGOs or any institution that will help develop a really democratic system.

I come from the business community. I don't have any experience as a politician. Maybe I am too candid when I speak. I speak as my heart tells me and of what I see. But I believe in the social responsibility of the private enterprise. You cannot have a healthy business surrounded by poverty and by injustice and in a society that doesn't offer equal opportunities for all of its citizens. So that's why I think it's very important to watch this process of what is going on because people are getting involved, and they really want to participate, and the women are taking a stand in this problem.

So I'm also open to your questions, and thank you very much for giving me this opportunity.

[Applause.]

MS. JACKSON: Marina is known in Russia and throughout the world, really, as a human rights advocate for her work against domestic violence and trafficking. And her leadership with her own NGO-- her own, she started and runs an NGO in Moscow--her leadership and this NGO has been able to gather others around, individuals, other NGOs worldwide, into an informational and training network so that they, in turn--we, in turn, together--help each other raise public awareness and combat domestic violence and antitrafficking.

Marina?

MS. PISKLAKOVA-PARKER: Thank you very much.

When we talk about trafficking, very often people know only certain things--something on TV, stories about girls trafficked from India to Pakistan or vice versa. But when the Soviet Union collapsed, it was a different type of trafficking because that opened to traffickers a totally new market--girls who were mostly well-

educated. They had a profession. What they didn't have is an opportunity to find a job back in their countries of the former Soviet Union.

In Russia, women are 52 percent of the population, and the salaries of women at the beginning of the '90s, after Perestroika, dropped from average of 75 percent of salaries of men to 42, and women were first to lose their jobs, last to find. Still, my last--I just came from Moscow, and I went to the store, and I see advertising for the job in the store. And I see for the management position, men under the age of 35; for the cleaning lady position, a woman. Here, the discrimination is so clear and obvious. And though people who post those advertisements for jobs, they don't feel responsible. They are not afraid that somebody will come after them for that.

Trafficking is an economic issue, it's a poverty issue, it's an awareness issue, but also trafficking is conducted by organized crime groups around the world. They build networks before we in the world realize that they're going to do it. At the beginning of the '90s, the newspapers in Russia were flooded with advertising of the jobs for women going to work as models, nannies. And when you look at all of those advertisements, you realize that there are not so many models in this world, as they try to recruit, but girls don't know that.

So what happened in Russia is a combination of economic situation which was truly against women in Russia, with inexperience of the country that was closed for so long time and mostly women didn't know that for finding a job abroad, they need a certain type of visa. And that's how they were lured. With the intent to find a job abroad, with intent to improve their lives and be happier, they got into the situation of slavery. And now, on average, it's up to 750,000 people in the world are bought and sold every year. That's the statistics of the United Nations.

So, with this, I probably will stop. I do work in Russia, both practically with women who were able to escape trafficking situation and domestic violence, which are very connected, and also on changing policy, education of governmental officials. And that's what we've been doing with Vital Voices.

Thank you.

[Applause.]

MS. JACKSON: The topic, as you know, for the discussion is, "Emerging Trends in Women's Global Leadership." Carol started us off with looking at gender and inequality. We've had three specific examples from three different parts of the world. I know they want your questions, and please raise your hand and say what your name is and where you're from. And we'd be happy to now take your questions.

Thank you.

MS. ZAN: Trinity Zan, Vital Voices.

Amat, I wanted to ask you, you talked a little bit about the mechanism for registering complaints about human rights abuses. I wonder if that, to me, is one example of the reaction from the public to the creation of this Ministry of Human Rights. I am wondering if you could talk a little bit more about the reaction from the public, those people just out there living their lives, and particularly have you seen more of a response from women than men or not?

Thanks.

MINISTER ALSOSWA: Actually, the majority of the people who came to us were illiterate men and women, and that was really interesting to really find that. When they came to us, of course, they came with different issues, and not necessarily all of the issues that we received were really directly dealing with violations of human

rights. Most of the time it was like complaint about the economic difficulties and not really being able to find a job. It was really vital of just complaining, finding somebody as well to tell, but also trying to get help. Of course, also, we were faced with certain real violations, and we were able to take some cases even to court, and we were happy that people trusted us, although we were representing the government, and the government was the accused in most of the cases, but also they were looked at as the place where they can as well get sometimes some actions to be taken. And we are happy. We are really trying to develop that.

But also at the same time we did not only rely so much on the complaints which we received in written form directly from the people. We were also relying on complaints that we read in the newspapers. So we would screen all of the newspapers, and we follow every case as written because we have, wonderfully enough, in all of our newspapers, at least special sections, sometimes article, sometimes pages, if necessary, to presenting certain issues, and we are also relying on that.

But also we have developed a nongovernmental mechanism, whereby we are considering them our special rapporteurs for cases and violations of human rights. And we mostly found out that people are suffering from poverty actually, and poverty as well was degrading them truly in the human level to the extent where they can't, you know, spend their kids to school or they cannot really find proper jobs, and other real issues.

Now, we are also thinking about developing a system that would be relevant or something like an ombudsmen. Because, in Yemen, we have different ombudsmen and different nongovernmental offices, but not directly dealing with questions of human rights. Of course, that requires a more independent body, whereby

people can come and also with more authority, constitutionally and also legalwise. So we are also working on that.

And I think, in the near future, we will not really find this ministry. And I think the best replacement of what would be really an ombudsman, which is more authoritative, more independent on that issue.

MS. ZIEFERT: Hello. My name is Madeline Zeifert [ph]. I'm from George Washington University, and I'm originally from East Germany, and this is also what kind of my question is about

In Germany, we have right now, concerning the gender issue, a very split labor market. That means women in the East are more likely to look for jobs. They are much more involved in the labor market than in the West.

My question is, in Germany, it is that this new situation on the labor market to women and the lives of women is kind of more institutionalized. It's very much like frowned upon these women. And my question concerns how is it in Russia? What are the constraints that change actually the will of women or force them in a direction into more unemployment? Is it just economic or are there other like constraints?

MS. PISKLAKOVA-PARKER: Thank you. It's a great question.

Of course, labor market is always formed by different factors, and at the beginning of the '90s, additional to women losing jobs primarily because women were mostly employed in the state sector, and the state sector was the mostly low-paid sector. I'm talking about like being teachers, medical doctors, and other areas. Now, you can see certain trends.

One trend is as their private market develops, men had better access to the resources from the beginning, when the resources were real divided in Russia. As a result, there were more men who started businesses, and of course all of our oligarchs are men. That's known.

[Laughter.]

MS. PISKLAKOVA-PARKER: But women are more in a small business, and a lot of women started really creative small business jobs. A lot of women at the beginning of the '90s started, for instance, going to China, buy clothing there cheaper, coming back to Russia, selling it in the market and making living like that and supporting families.

But at the same time, like in 1992, the Minister of Labor, publicly, on television said we are not going to provide women with jobs until all men are employed. That's a policy. Additionally to that, somebody started publishing Rules of Domostroi in Russia. Domostroi is the written law of 16th century where women were property of men, and basically here it was like an additional declaration, and they started talking about the role of women as martyrs and that women should stay more at home, that women should be homemakers, that it's bad for children when mothers work and, at the same time, they started increasing their child benefit. But, again, the highest child benefit at that time was $3 a month. You cannot survive on that.

So, of course, it was additionally, it was like, one, the beliefs in the society based on gender inequality and additionally it was kind of a propaganda for traditional women's role where men should support a family and women should stay at home. But in reality, women adapted, and I don't remember statistics, but there are

surveys that show that women adapted to the transition actually easier than men. And in many cases women started providing families.

I hope I answered your question.

MS. JACKSON: Way in the back.

MS. GREER: Hi. My name is Mary Greer, and I manage the criminal law programming at the American Bar Association's CEELI program, and we work a lot in the area of human trafficking. I would be anxious for any feedback, Marina, on any--I know you all have new legislation. A lot of countries have new legislation, but especially on the supply side, if we're making an impact at all in our efforts to help train prosecutors and combat the organized crime rings. Appreciate any guidance.

MS. PISKLAKOVA-PARKER: Yes, thank you. I have a long relationship with ABA CEELI in Moscow. Your organization is doing a great job.

With legislation in Russia, in December, we had first criminal articles and a criminal code. Before that, as in many countries, there were no articles--basically, there was no definition for human trafficking, and that's why it was possible to have this multi-billion business for organized crime groups.

I don't want to take too much time. There was a prodigal of the United Nations. Over 100 countries signed it. Now, the countries are obliged to make changes in their national legislation. Russia has done only criminal code. And it's not enough because, as usual in Russia, we have tendency to criminalize issues, but then we will have trouble with implementation. And, additionally to that, there has to be provisions for victims rights, and we are liking that. So we have a lot of work to do in training people who will be implementing the legislation, add an article--

[Tape change.]

MS. PISKLAKOVA-PARKER: --codes because only criminal code alone cannot resolve the problem and give the opportunity to really resolve this problem comprehensively.

MS. VERVEER: Marina, what about the noncriminal code changes? The legislation, I understand, there's legislation pending in the Duma that would address the broader aspects. That includes victims' protection, repatriation, et cetera, et cetera. Is that going anyplace? And how is the NGO community working with the government or working as a coalition in trying to affect that process?

MS. PISKLAKOVA-PARKER: Well, that is true, there are attempts to advance the legislation further. And there was a long process to make it through the witness protection because victims in this case have to be treated as witnesses to the crime, and their testimony is usually key to the prosecution.

My concern--and I will be very candid here--my concern will be only one. Our country doesn't have enough financial resources for the implementation. And as with other legislation, that may be the major obstacles. When the legislation will go to the evaluation through all of the governmental ministries and agencies, if they will calculate that it will be too expensive, then it will be not to the full extent as we expected. We have had that experience with domestic violence law.

The way we tried to deal with that, of course, we work with legislators, we work with key people who are having constant dialogue with them. And I think at this point we have a pretty good understanding. And again thanks to Vital Voices and the recent group that met with you again that came here, Yelena Missoula[?], and others, the discussion at the international level helps a lot to push through, but again there are so

many internal issues, and the major issue is that the budget and how much money basically there will be inside the country to resolve the issues.

MS. : Just in follow up to Melanne's question, it relates to you have a number of women in government and in the Duma, and I am just wondering how involved and how supportive they are in terms of women leaders working on your issues? Have they been willing to take up the charge, and do you think that they are having any impact or are they willing to step forward on these issues?

MS. PISKLAKOVA-PARKER: Well, as usual, we have kind of indifferent group of even women who live in the male environment who, and it's not really a negative against all men, but when it is, in Russian politics, when it is not a priority sometimes to go and push for the issues that are not so accepted is really tough, and sometimes it's too challenging.

But we have very good example of Galina Karelova, for instance, who was Deputy Prime Minister, and she was a Deputy Minister of Social Affairs. Since '98, we have a good cooperation with her, and she developed basically a plan with a budget dedicated to opening shelters for abused women every year. And since '98 now, we have 18 shelters. It's not enough for Russia, but considering that we are not a rich country, considering that she made it a priority, and she helped us to put domestic violence on the government agenda, that's a good example of cooperation.

MS. JACKSON: Hi. My name is Hannah Faye Jackson [ph]. I'm from the Hannah Faye Jackson International Praise[?] Corporation. And as I'm listening to what you are stating about the human trafficking condition in your country, I'm wondering what I'm hearing are responses to the actual problem, but I'm wondering what emphasis or what focus is placed on creating viable strategies and alternatives for folks,

say, for example, who have been a former traffickee or to avoid making the decision that would opt for that desperate situation, what is being done, for example, with your shelters? Do you provide an education and training to elevate women from their present quality of life or nonquality of life?

MS. PISKLAKOVA-PARKER: Yes, that's a very good question. Of course, prevention is the key element. And as an NGO, we don't have enough resources. We need actually government to be involved with resources to provide enough working places and job training for women.

As an NGO, what we do, we developed another strategy of informing women about the danger. All hot lines in Russia trained on like if a woman was approached to go and find a job abroad, she can call and talk about that. And we tell her about the danger. We warn her about what can happen, but also traffickers usually tell women don't go to the police, don't call anybody because you will be arrested, you will be in danger, you will be in prison, and you don't speak the language and things like that.

So we tell them ahead of time that it's okay to go to the police, that it's okay to find any hot line and call there. It's okay to talk to anybody in the street or find help, especially in developed countries. So we tell them about safety plan that they can have ahead of time. And of course if we have heard about the country, something more, there are now brochures like printed by the American Embassy, for instance, with all phone numbers in the United States. We give those numbers, depending on the country.

In our country as an NGO, with reintegration, we don't have well set-up process like in Ukraine, for instance. In Ukraine, the process of repatriation and reintegration for women was developed together with International Organization for Migration, and that's the model we want in our country, but we don't have it yet. We are

still working, and we hope that it will be established, but it takes efforts and funding not only from us, but also from the international community.

MS. JACKSON: Never adequate, but essential to have information in advance, and Vital Voices puts out trafficking alerts and some health and safety cautions. They are in Russian, and French, Spanish, Chinese, other languages, and you can find that at www.vitalvoices.org.

Another question in the back? I'm sorry, right here. Yes, please?

MS. DEMPSEY: Hi. I'm Guya Dempsey [ph] from Mount Madonna School, and I have a question for Reyna.

Obviously, from those statistics that we've seen today and also from experiences of people I've met, I've learned that wealth doesn't necessarily make you happy, and in poorer countries people are generally happy with the little that they have. So I'm wondering, with your efforts to improve the quality of life of people in Venezuela, how do you think that the people there can hold onto the joy that they have, that it doesn't come from material things?

MS. McPECK: I was looking, and I was surprised when I saw the statistics because they were from 1998. That's almost 6 years ago. I wonder what they would be now. I believe that joy doesn't come from material things, and our people are very warm, are happy. They like to sing. They like to dance. You get five Venezuelans together, one plays a quattro, the other one dances, the other one sings. It's just our nature.

[Laughter.]

MS. McPECK: That's the way we communicate with each other, and we show love, and that's the way we do.

But I want to say something. I think that happiness, I don't know how they measure it, but happiness is related to your state--you have to have economic security, job security, you have to have hope for the future. When you lose hope in the future, how can you be happy? It's uncertainty that creates unhappiness.

And so I was very interested. I would love to talk to Carol and see how they do to measure these things, but I think it's related, economic stability and progress is very important. And that's one thing that we have to think about democracy. Democracy is not only politics. Democracy has to bring a better quality of life to the people.

And if that doesn't happen, look at the last report of the United Nations on Latin America. It's a paradox. It's a country where for the last 50 years we have had a democratic government. They were elected by popular vote, but we have more poor people now than when it all started, so how can you explain that? It's interesting that this report poses these questions because those are things that have to be analyzed. And if a system doesn't give answers and solutions to the people, is this a good system? So where is the answer? It's very interesting. You see these statistics, and you start thinking.

MS. JACKSON: Anybody in the back?

MS. : Thank you. My name is Isabella [?] from [?], Colombia, and my question is for Reyna McPeck.

She was talking about how people in Venezuela are finally realizing that democracy is also about them, and I would like Reyna to comment on what strategies you have found that are successful to engage women in participating more in the

political arena, both as advocates, as well as candidates, and as well as public officers and also at the [?] civil society.

MS. McPECK: Isabel, I thought I was going to have breakfast tomorrow with you.

[Laughter.]

MS. McPECK: It's good to see you here.

Usually, we used to think that politics is something dirty, that it's not transparent, that it's threatening to your reputation, that you risk a lot when you go into politics. For women, especially in our culture, they can be very, very mean to you as a woman. They can destroy you as a woman, so people have to be, beforehand, they have to be sure if they want to take that risk, and their family has to be supportive, their husband, the people who surround them.

But the situations, the circumstances come to a point where you know you have no escape. You have to get involved. How do you participate if there are no political parties established as they were before? Political parties were destroyed. So now we have new political organizations, and civic society has started to get organized. It's a very interesting process. You see more communities with small NGOs that act like if they were political. They are community oriented, but they are really political.

The media, you see the press, they took the position that a political party should have had. So you see journalists as if they were politicians. They are journalists, but they are speaking out.

So I think that it's a process, Isabel. Our women are prepared, the ones that are educated, and the ones that are not are suffering from such immediate problems

that they react, and they get organized. It's the only way that they are going to get results.

MS. CAIVANO: Thank you. Hi. I'm Joan Caivano from the Inter-American Dialogue. I'd like to follow up on Isabel's question and on Pat's.

We've done a lot of work looking at women in leadership, and that's the topic today. Does it really make a difference, do you think, to have women in positions of leadership? And, Reyna, in particular, in Venezuela would it make a difference if more women were taking the lead or what we saw in Iraq recently, women participating in those scandals?

You know, from a position of equity and from a position of economic effectiveness in combatting poverty, there's a jurisdiction for promoting more women into leadership. But from a position of "N's," I mean, are the "N's" different when you have more women in power or can we really know that? I suppose it may be too early to tell because in some countries we haven't had much experience with women in power, particularly here, but in Latin America you've had a lot of experience, and particularly in Venezuela I think you've, in the private sector and in government, so--

MS. JACKSON: Let's hear from both Reyna and from Amat on that question.

MS. McPECK: I usually ask myself the same question. Why would it be better if more women were in power? I come from the business sector, and I see that many women do not want to take a public stand. They want to do their business. It's not that they don't want. This is not what I want to say. It's so difficult because you have to deal with many other things, and you have to really be committed to take a stand and step forward.

We have had a process in Venezuela where there was a time I guess about maybe 15, 20 years ago, there were many women in top governmental positions, and there was a change. The laws were better, and there was a Ministry for Women's Issues, and I think it was a good thing.

But then, you know, we have seen less participation in the last 10 years. Why is that so? I think it's, as you say maybe it's early, something that has to be started. But I really believe in my heart that women are good for government because they bring in a different point of view just because of what they do every day and just because you have the responsibility of your family. So, when you bring your family values to your business or to your community or to your political activities, you bring something else.

And in Venezuela, women are the heads of the family. They take all of the decisions. I heard Amat, and she's going to tell you now, but I heard her this morning saying, you know, even though maybe sometimes you think it's the men who take all of the decisions, women take important decisions in family issues. So I think that it's important that women participate. It's definitely important that they participate.

MINISTER ALSOSWA: I think I should really approach the issue from the stand that why shouldn't women be in power anyway, as well? That's also another thing when one is also to think about it, why women were not able to reach such positions. And that's why it's also very difficult for all of us in different countries, as a matter of fact, to see whether it's better to have women in power or not. Because, to a great degree, women are still not, and this is the vast majority.

I mean, when it comes especially to the political power, we are not yet talking about the decisions on the family sides. In Yemen, for example, women are so powerful even if they are veiled, even if they are not seen, even if they are not heard

most of the time publicly in the ways that you hear them here or see them here, but still they are there, and their decisions make so many big differences in their lives, and the people who live with them, and their families, but also in the places where they work, and of course they bring about a different dimension.

They bring about a more human, in my view as well, like Reyna was saying because, again, it's not natural by all means to have just that very, very sharp voice of the other sex only, and the others are not there. But, of course, on the other hand, we have seen in so many political parties, in so many other settings that even women who came to power sometimes, they were not great politicians, they were not great humanists at all, and we can still see that in so many levels of our daily life everywhere.

So it's not really, also--by the same token, I mean, it's not also the rule that every time we have a woman also in power that means automatically everything else is going to be wonderful and better, but we believe that a growing number of women participating in such decisions for sure will bring about another way of looking at things, will make things more human, will make things also looking at the direction of the rights of this also majority of human beings are not really calculated in that equation.

But, yes, sometimes also the question of having woman in power doesn't necessarily mean that you know the world is going to be better for sure.

MS. JACKSON: I think we have time for one last question.

Yes, Marina, sorry.

MS. PISKLAKOVA-PARKER: It's just such an interesting discussion, of course, I decided to add two things.

I think there is a difference in development democracies and in the societies that have been in a democratic process for a long time. And the process for women in those societies are different. It's easier for women--and I am speaking about developing democracies like Russia. When we had more women in the Parliament, in Duma, in the first Duma, we had better legislation, but they also were better cooperating with each other. So, although the numbers matter, but I agree with Amat that quality matters, and women in power still need additional experience of networking and understand supporting each other because we often see women competing with each other, and that is damaging. And it's not that they are competing--it's like, for instance, legislation on domestic violence, it's, for some reason, for women it was more understandable, and it was the Committee on Women's Issues that promoted it, but because there were not enough women in the Parliament, we still don't have that law.

MS. JACKSON: I guess there are two last questions here. Thank you.

MS. : Hi. This is directed to each of you. James Wolfensohn, President of the World Bank, has recently stated that he feels religious organizations can play a greater role in reducing poverty and its associated problems. How do each of you feel about that?

MS. : If you ask me, I think he should clarify that because it's also a very general statement. It depends, of course, on which context also he is speaking. But also we all believe, I mean, the people of course should believe, and we have to believe also, all religions should be wonderful grounds as well for doing something good for everybody else, but I'm not sure what exactly he meant by that because, also, on the other hand, you would hear the opposite that sometimes the handling of such religious

organizations sometimes are not really the perfect example, and we know that in reality, especially in our part of the world too.

MINISTER ALSOSWA: It's not totally clear to me either, so I will just speak about what I see. In Russia, religion was separated from the state for a long time, and the new traditions are just kind of coming back. It's not new traditions. In other words, the church, when they started now approaching people, they tried to pretend that there were no 100 years in between, okay? We cannot like come into the church. And, again, we have now conservative and more progressive. There are priests who call me and say, "I have a woman in my parish, can you help her?"

But at the same time, we have churches where, by the entryway of the church, there is a skirt that you can wear, if you are wearing pants, for women because women have to wear skirts and scarves on their head, covering hair, in the church. I don't think this is the mean meaning of belief. And of course at the same time, when they are trying to develop some social programs, again, they are based on their belief in what the society should be, and it's not always the modern world.

So I think they have a great potential and money, but the question is how will they use it.

MS. McPECK: In my experience in Latin America, the church has a political side to it because they have been very radical at some times. But they do help the people, they do have social programs that work, and most of the population is Catholic. So they turn to the church for help. I think they do good.

MS. JACKSON: Is there one last question? Yes, thank you.

MS. : Hi. My name is Lulu, and I'm from Mount Madonna, also.

The other night coming back from the banquet, I was confronted by a woman, and I was explaining to her--the Vital Voices banquet--and I was explaining to her what Vital Voices was about and about you women, and she got very frustrated and said, "I am not a feminist." And I never really thought I was a feminist either, and I was wondering what you guys think a feminist is.

[Laughter.]

MS. McPECK: I don't know why feminist is such a degrading thing to be. I mean, I think it's great to be a woman. You are feminine.

[Applause.]

MS. McPECK: It doesn't have to have that stigma attached to it. I mean, just being a woman, it's different than being a man. I mean, it's different.

[Laughter.]

MS. McPECK: So feminists, it depends on what she meant. But feminist means that you stand for the women's values and their rights. Be a feminist, what the heck.

[Laughter.]

MS. PISKLAKOVA-PARKER: Regarding feminism, I thought we have those questions only in Russia.

[Laughter.]

MS. PISKLAKOVA-PARKER: Because it is a scary word for Russia still, but it's very interesting because once having a discussion with a man who actually understands and supports ideas of women being equal to men, I said, "Then, you're a feminist."

And he said, "So that's that simple?" I guess it is.

MS. JACKSON: Be a feminist, what the heck. Thank you all.

MS. McPECK: Do I have time? I want to--

MS. JACKSON: Oh, yes, you do, Reyna.

One of the things that Carol said before she left is that in her--I wasn't sure, and I want to talk to her again--but she said that 55 percent, I think, of women they interviewed in Latin America said they were not, they did not feel they were being discriminated. Sometimes they don't even realize it. It's a cultural thing.

I remember we had a panel once with women who had gone what here you call the "glass ceiling," and one of these ladies, she's a director in a bank, and she said, "What I have, I've earned with my own work."

And I said, "Well, that's great, but have you ever felt that you have been discriminated against?"

And she said, "Not at all." But, you know, when I saw her, she was dressed as a man, she talked as a man, and her attitude was like a man. So I asked her, "Why do you talk like a man?"

And she told me, "Because if I don't do it this way during our board meetings, no one will pay attention to me."

"Why do you dress as a man?"

"So I can blend in."

"So how can you say that you have not been discriminated?"

And then another woman who was in a top position in the oil industry at that time said the same, you know, the meritocracy, you went up, and I said, "Well, if that was true why there is only one president of the oil companies that is a woman, and

you have like 30 different companies that belong to the oil industry? If that was true, are the other ones dumb or how come they never got to the top?"

And then she said, "No, you've got me thinking." I mean, she had never even thought about the problem. So I think many times people answer, but they don't really go down to the roots of what's going on. So I just wanted to make that comment because, in Latin America, there is, as in everywhere, a lot of discrimination because women are now starting to be more a group, more people, more women. They are starting to go up, and it's a process. It takes time.

MS. JACKSON: Please thank our wonderful panel--Amat, Marina, and Reyna.

[Applause.]

MS. JACKSON: And thank you all very much for coming.

[Whereupon, the proceedings were adjourned.]