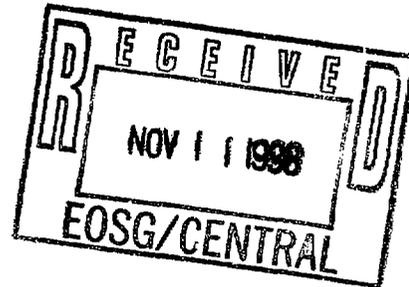


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THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

**MESSAGE FOR THE 20TH ANNIVERSARY
OF THE INTERNATIONAL CENTRE
FOR RESEARCH ON WOMEN
ON PRESENTATION
OF THE *INVESTING IN WOMEN* AWARD
Washington D.C. , 10 November 1998
(Delivered by Ms. Angela King,
Special Adviser to the Secretary-General
On Gender Issues and the Advancement of Women)**



I am pleased to convey my best wishes to the International Centre for Research on Women on its 20th anniversary. For these two decades, the Centre has provided a valuable forum for discussion and debate about gender equality and development. You have been a true partner to us in the United Nations. We will have a chance to work together ever more closely as we continue to assess progress achieved under the Beijing Platform for Action and plan new initiatives.

One of the most compelling issues to emerge from the Fourth World Conference on Women was whether we can, in partnership, develop a holistic framework for achieving gender equality; one which contributes to the eradication of poverty and to the achievement of peace, democracy and the promotion of human rights by addressing the needs of both women and men.

So long as more than a quarter of the world's people remain mired in poverty, there can be no real stability in the world. More than 550 million women, or 60 per cent of the rural population, live below the poverty line. And their numbers are growing rapidly. At the same time, rural women produce more than 55 per cent of food grown in developing countries and account for 67 per cent of agricultural workforce. There is no higher priority than breaking the vicious cycle of poverty contributing

to malnutrition, migrations, population pressure on environment, illiteracy, lack of adequate health care, high birth rates, and declining agricultural productivity.

The Bankura Project of West Bengal, India, is a shining example of how this vicious cycle *can* be broken; of how women, although faced with enormous difficulties, *can* be empowered. The Project, run by the Bari Nikas Sangha federation of women's cooperatives, shows us what can be achieved when women use their skill and energy to make the most of available productive resources such as land, credit, information and technology.

The partnership between Bari Nikas Sangha and the Centre for Women's Development Studies in Delhi is a paragon of what we have come to identify as a "good practice": the synergistic linkage of research, action and field experience. It is yet another example of how, when other economic activities and structures collapse, women's ingenuity, resourcefulness and creativity continue to provide a framework for empowerment.

I am pleased, therefore, to congratulate the women of the Bari Nikas Sangha and the staff of the Centre for Women's Development Studies on this award and on their remarkable achievement. I wish them, and the International Centre for Research on Women, every success as we continue our endeavours for the empowerment of women worldwide.

NOTE TO MR. RIZA

As requested by the Secretary-General, I will be travelling today to Washington D.C. to represent the Secretary-General at the 20th Anniversary of the International Centre for Research on Women and present this year's "Investing in Women" Award of the Centre to the Bankura Project of West Bengali in India. The Award ceremony will take place today, 10 November 1998, at 6:30 p.m.

Please find enclosed for clearance my short presentation at the Award ceremony. I apologize for such a short notice but, as I need to depart for Washington D.C. at 1 p.m., I should be most grateful for your early reaction. Alternatively, you may wish to call my Office (ext. 5086 or 4974).

With appreciation



Angela E. V. King
10 November 1998