



Speeches

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Introduction: Alexis Glick

Distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

Good afternoon. I'm Alexis Glick from the Fox Business Network, and it's a privilege to be here at the United Nations to welcome all of you, on behalf of UNIFEM and Avon Products, to the second Global Summit for a Better Tomorrow.

The Global Summit for a Better Tomorrow was launched last year with the inherent belief that when you empower women, you change the world. And this year, in celebration of International Women's Day, we gather once again to reaffirm our commitment to creating an even better tomorrow for women. ...

The theme of this year's Summit is "partnerships for women's rights and empowerment." In today's complex globalized world, there is no doubt that the most effective way to make a lasting, long-term investment in women's lives is by merging our strengths and our resources. So today, we will discuss ways in which we can partner to create powerful solutions that will empower women and girls around the world. Our focus today will be largely on two of the most persistent barriers for women — lack of financial resources and lack of personal safety. These are two mutually reinforcing, co-dependent crises, and we must address them as one. Our two partners for today's Summit, UNIFEM and Avon Products, share a proven commitment to ending them both.

In addition, we are also privileged to have with us a number of other extraordinary leaders who are changing the future landscape for women. Each one of our esteemed speakers is dedicated to removing barriers that impede women's rights and empowerment, and today they will share with us how their remarkable work is helping to advance the lives of women around the world. ...

[Introduction of Joanne Sandler]

And now, I'm pleased to introduce one of our hosting partners for The Global Summit for a Better Tomorrow. UNIFEM is recognized for doing amazing work in more than 100 countries around the world, from Afghanistan to Zambia. For the past 31 years, UNIFEM and its allies — women's organizations, civil society, and other UN organizations — have tirelessly promoted and advocated for change to empower

women so they can fully engage in community and civic life, and influence policies and decisions. As UNIFEM's Executive Director, Joanne Sandler is a guiding force in the implementation of innovative programmes to foster women's right and empowerment.

For 25 years, Joanne has been spearheading campaigns and partnerships to advance women's rights, and build women's leadership around the globe.

I'm honored to introduce the Summit's opening speaker, Joanne Sandler.

Ms. Joanne Sandler

Thank you Alexis, and my deepest thanks, on behalf of UNIFEM and its many partners, to Avon — and especially to Andrea Jung — to the extraordinary line-up of stars and grantees on the podium with me today, and to all of our guests for joining us.

Today is an historic moment in the two decades of UNIFEM's support for efforts to end violence against women. When we started supporting this work, many of our colleagues cautioned us that this was a private issue, not one that belonged in the halls of the United Nations. Now, twenty years later, almost every UN organization has programmes that respond to different manifestations of violence against women. On February 25th, the Secretary-General launched a UN campaign to the year 2015 to end violence against women. And we are here at the United Nations, with Avon, launching a global initiative. Progress is possible.

UNIFEM — as the UN's women's fund — is particularly thrilled to welcome Avon — the company for women — as an engaged and long-term partner. Together, we can reach constituencies at national and global levels that we could never reach without each other. Together, we can demonstrate what we all know to be true: the pandemic of violence against women can never be diminished without creative partnerships, without broad-based support, without our unswerving determination to put ending violence against women on everyone's agenda.

Both Avon and UNIFEM share a strong commitment to remove barriers that keep women from achieving their full potential — the inequality, poverty and violence that millions and millions of women and girls confront day-in and day-out.

Women are over-represented amongst those living in poverty. It is estimated that 60 percent of the one billion working poor that live on less than \$1 dollar a day are women. In the United States, of the 37 million people living below the poverty line — according to US Census Bureau 2006 figures — 21 million are women. We will never meaningfully address poverty as long as we fail to take special action to address women's poverty.

While some of the reasons that more women than men live in poverty are visible, others are not as obvious. Violence against women remains the hidden pandemic. It is hidden in the estimated \$9.5 billion that criminal networks earn from human trafficking, with the majority of those trafficked women and children. It is hidden in cultural practices like female genital mutilation that turn rites of passage into rites of gender-based violence. It is hidden in the young women and girls who make up over 61 percent of people with HIV/AIDS in Africa who are too often infected because they are sexually violated by someone that they know. It is hidden in rape as a method of warfare, where women and girls become targets to humiliate and defeat the enemy. And it is hidden in homes, schools and other places where women and girls should feel safe, but they do not because too often it is a family member that is responsible for the violence perpetrated on women.

The partnership with Avon for empowerment and rights represents a great opportunity to give voice to what is too often shrouded in silence. It signals a significant long-term commitment by a major global company to spread the word to others in the private sector to join with UNIFEM, the United Nations,

governments, women's organizations and with men as partners. It represents a determination to address both poverty and violence as barriers to women's advancement and rights. When powerful forces speak out and advocate for change, remaining hidden is no longer an option.

The partnership with Avon is going to generate badly needed resources for the UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women. UNIFEM manages the Trust Fund for the United Nations system. It is a leading multilateral mechanism that supports innovative programmes in the developing world. Established in 1996, the UN Trust Fund has supported nearly 250 programmes in more than 120 countries since its establishment. Taken together, these programmes begin to help us see that violence against women is a problem with solutions.

The Trust Fund has supported community-based and pilot programmes throughout the developing world. It has supported successful efforts to get village leaders in Africa to agree to end female genital mutilation by convincing them to substitute this practice with different and painless rites of passage. It has supported door-to-door campaigns in Arab countries that secure signatures from families that they will never subject their daughters to so-called honour killings. It has supported young boys on soccer teams in Latin America to become leading spokespeople for preventing domestic violence. And it has supported scores of successful efforts to introduce or strengthen laws and policies that strengthen protection of women from violence and that end impunity.

But pilot programmes and laws and policies are not enough. The challenge, now, is full-scale implementation of what we know works. The challenge is cutting off the fuel supply that violence against women provides to create obstacles to equality, like poverty or HIV and AIDS.

There are a growing number of systematic efforts to develop credible evidence to meet this challenge. For example, the IMAGE programme in South Africa combines teaching women about their rights with extending access to micro credit. After three years, women reported significant improvements in their economic well-being and achieved increased influence within their household. What's more, they experienced a 55 percent drop in intimate partner violence from the previous year.

A key message that we hope everyone today will walk away with is that we can break the stranglehold of gender inequality, feminized poverty and violence against women. The victories that we have been privileged to support need to be the rule, not the exception. That is our task and the reason that this partnership with Avon is so critical at this time.

And, as evidence of the kind of change that is possible, I want to end with a quote from one of our partners in Cambodia: "Ten years ago, many countries in Southeast Asia did not even have a word for violence against women. It was not that it did not happen; it simply was not spoken about. In Cambodia, domestic violence was explained through a simple traditional proverb, 'plates in a basket will rattle.' That is, when people live in the same house, clashes are inevitable. That phrases like domestic violence, rape and violence against women have now been absorbed into the language and have a shared understanding in local communities is a major achievement of the last decade."

Like plates in a basket, we too need to rattle loudly, to make it crystal clear that violence against women is NOT inevitable. Today, that becomes more possible than it was just yesterday. And for that, we give huge thanks to Avon.

[Alexis Glick: Introduction of Andrea Jung]

Thank you so much Joanne for your powerful words. The statistics are shocking and underscore why all of us must join efforts and work aggressively to end violence against women everywhere.

The good news is that both UNIFEM and Avon are two formidable global catalysts in this effort.

And on that note, I'm delighted to introduce the other partner of today's Summit. As Chairman and CEO of Avon, Andrea Jung is a leading crusader in improving the lives of women, and her company has been

dedicated to women's economic advancement for more than a century. Today, as a result of her leadership, passion and commitment to women's empowerment, Avon provides earning opportunities to more than 5 million independent Avon Sales Representatives around the world.

Andrea Jung has also been the driving force behind major philanthropic achievements in women's health, education and empowerment through the Avon Foundation. Through her vision and personal dedication, the Avon Foundation has raised millions of dollars to help eradicate breast cancer, domestic violence and other obstacles to women's health and well-being. In fact, under her watch, the Avon Foundation has become a recognized public charity as well as one of the largest corporate foundations for women in the world.

As a passionate leader and a proud supporter of women's causes, Andrea Jung has become a role model for executives worldwide. She has been ranked on countless "watch" lists – including Fortune magazine's "50 Most Powerful Women in Business" list, which she has been on since the list first came out. She has been ranked on The Wall Street Journal's "50 Women to Watch," since 2004, and was one of only 18 executives included in U.S News & World Report's "America's Best Leaders 2007."

There is nobody more dedicated to the Avon's mission to improve women's lives, and now, it is my great privilege to introduce you to a true visionary – Chairman and CEO of Avon Products, Andrea Jung.

Ms. Andrea Jung

Thank you, Alexis, for your kind introduction. We're so glad that you could join us again this year for our second annual Global Summit for a Better Tomorrow.

I'd like to begin my remarks today first and foremost, by thanking the United Nations for hosting us at this important event. In every corner of the globe, the UN represents a universal haven of hope and harmony, as it works tirelessly to champion human rights and improve lives around the world.

I also want to say a special word of acknowledgement to Joanne Sandler, Executive Director of UNIFEM. As a leading organization for women's rights and equality in more than 100 countries around the globe, UNIFEM shares Avon's mission to help improve the lives of women and girls globally. We are honored to sponsor this important event in partnership with UNIFEM. Together, our two organizations are committed to a productive partnership to help bring about positive change for women.

I would also like to acknowledge and thank our other wonderful speakers today: Reese, for your dedication to Avon as our first global ambassador; our friend Suze, for your contagious enthusiasm for women's empowerment; Mallika and Liliana, for your invaluable leadership in the area of women's rights; and the outstanding community activists, Alfa Demmellash of the United States and Gürsel Çilingiroğlu of Turkey, for your incredible dedication to women.

And finally, a special thanks to everyone here in the room with us today. All of you have taken time from your busy schedules to participate in this important discussion. Whether you work in government, business, nonprofit, academia or the media, each and every one of you is lending your voice to the vital causes affecting women.

We are very excited to be holding this second Global Summit for a Better Tomorrow in the days leading up to International Women's Day. Those of you who attended last year may recall that we unveiled the results of a major global survey of women in 16 countries asking them to tell us how they felt about their lives. One year later, we are committed to taking action to address the many issues spotlighted by the survey. We will focus on how we can partner together to secure women's rights and give women access to the resources that will help them create fully empowered lives.

Our commitment to empowering women is based on the simple yet fundamental premise that when women are empowered, they not only improve the conditions of their own lives, they also improve the lives of their children, their families and society at large. Simply put, when we empower women, we change the world.

At Avon, this is not simply an abstract belief. It is a deeply held truth based on 121 years of experience working with women in every corner of the globe. The company was founded in 1886 on the revolutionary concept that women could run their own entrepreneurial businesses and earn their own money. At a time when women had virtually no role outside the home and were still 34 years away from winning the right to vote, it was a pretty bold idea to envision a business model based on offering financial opportunities to women. But that's just what the company's founder did.

Today, Avon is known as the company for women. With 5.4 million Representatives serving 300 million women in more than 100 countries, we are by far the largest women's company in the world. We are also, arguably, one of the world's largest micro-lenders for women. Avon Representatives collectively earn almost \$6 billion dollars each year. We extend them credit to acquire the products they sell. They pay us back only when they get paid. This means that on any given day, Avon is extending hundreds of millions of dollars in credit.

This is good news because studies show that the rise of micro-entrepreneurship — especially in developing countries — is a powerful tool for reducing poverty and stimulating economic growth. In every country where we do business — from Brazil to China; in Russia, Turkey and India; all across the globe — we have seen first hand the powerful impact that the opportunity to earn a decent living can make in a woman's life.

When a woman's income rises, her access to health care improves as do her educational opportunities and her personal safety. And these benefits flow beyond the family and into the community, building hope and spurring broader social progress.

It is against this backdrop of corporate commitment that we are honoured to participate in this important Summit to discuss how we can continue to create better tomorrows for women around the world.

As we commemorate International Women's Day, we should all feel so inspired by the progress women have made in every dimension. The dramatic economic growth we've seen in the world's developing nations has coincided with greater economic participation by women. The percentage of women taking part in the global workforce now exceeds 40 percent. Wherever we look, we're seeing more women rising to the top of their professions, whether they're in business, politics or academia. Equally important, female life expectancy has increased by 15 to 20 years in developing countries over the past few decades, and educational opportunities have improved as well.

But this progress notwithstanding, there is still a long road ahead. Women remain disproportionately affected by the world's most serious problems. As Joanne mentioned, 600 million women still live on \$1 or less a day.

Women account for two-thirds of the population living in poverty and three-fifths of the chronically hungry. And despite great strides in developed countries, women in most of the world have little access to the mainstream economy. In fact, women's participation in non-agricultural employment increased by only 3 percent worldwide between 1990 and 2005.

But beyond the significant economic obstacles facing women, one of the most devastating and destructive elements impeding their advancement is domestic violence. As we know, approximately one in three women around the world are victims of domestic and sexual violence. That's nearly a billion women — truly a staggering number. And our global survey last year underscored the severity of the issue, reporting that 40 percent of women in developing countries cite personal safety as a significant concern. In country after country, violence against women is embedded into society as an insidious reality — whether it is honour killings, acid violence, dowry-related deaths or domestic violence.

Time and time again, studies show that violence against women remains a profound barrier to their empowerment. In the U.S. alone, up to half of domestic violence victims report having lost their jobs as a direct result of abuse. And without adequate economic resources, they can become imprisoned in a vicious downward cycle from which there is often no escape.

At the end of the day, all of us are accountable to take action to reverse these deeply troubling statistics.

A philosopher once said, "It is not only for what we do that we are held responsible, but also for what we do not do."

For those of us in business, working actively to make a difference in the communities we serve has never been more important than it is today. Although corporate philanthropy increased by almost 5 percent last year, this figure actually represents a double-digit deceleration in growth rate compared to the previous year. And this decline comes just at the moment when the needs have never been greater.

At Avon, one way we do our part is through the philanthropic efforts of the Avon Foundation, which is the largest corporate foundation for women in the world. Since its inception, the Avon Foundation has raised and awarded more than \$580 million in funds to causes that are important to women. Until recently, the Foundation's primary focus has been on the fight against breast cancer. But as violence against women has escalated in both the developing and developed worlds, we have marshaled our resources to join this critical fight.

Three years ago, we launched our Speak Out Against Domestic Violence program, which has awarded over 6 million dollars in financial grants to support awareness, education and services to affected women and their families in more than 38 states and 10 countries. Last year, we introduced a program to assist the silent victims of this crisis: the ten million children who witness domestic violence in their homes every year.

We're only at the very beginning of this major global effort, but we know we can't go it alone. The problems are too great. The solutions too complex. That's why the answer lies in forging strong partnerships between the public and private sectors. If we fuse our strengths — the vast resources and commitment from the private sector, combined with the public sector's regional expertise and grassroots networks — then I truly believe our collective efforts can help drive a dramatic paradigm shift in the lives of women everywhere.

Of course, no organization better exemplifies the successful use of powerful partnerships than the United Nations. Private contributions have assisted the UN's work since its founding — and are playing a critical role in the global fight against HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria and other epidemics.

Today, Avon is very pleased to announce that we will become the United Nation's newest private partner.

Last week the Secretary-General called for broad cooperation and support for the United Nation's multi-year campaign to end violence against women. Avon is responding to that call. We are joining forces with UNIFEM to support the important work of the United Nations Trust Fund to End Violence against Women, which focuses on strengthening judicial enforcement and accountability around the world. Very proudly, we have committed \$1 million dollars to support the important work of the Fund — the largest corporate grant ever awarded in one year.

We are very pleased that this money will be set aside in a new Avon Empowerment Fund, which will help institutionalize the protection of women's legal rights and enforce laws where they exist. Over the past four years, the number of countries with domestic violence laws has nearly doubled, but too often the laws aren't effectively enforced. UN statistics show that over 100 countries have no specific legal provisions against domestic violence. Marital rape is not a prosecutable offense in over 50 countries, and less than half of countries examined have legal conditions for human trafficking. The truth is that when a

woman is attacked without consequence to the perpetrator, the law is failing to protect her. We want to help change this.

As part of Avon's commitment to the legal protection of women, we are also proud to help organize a global forum in Washington, DC, next week sponsored by the US State Department, which will focus specifically on giving women access to justice to ensure their safety. Women judges from around the world will attend the event on March 12, along with Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, former Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor and others. This will be another important dialogue where we will focus on global solutions to the epidemic of violence.

So, it is with great determination and commitment that we aggressively take action in the global fight to end domestic violence. As part of our \$1 million commitment to the UN Trust Fund, we have created a new global fundraising product, which Avon has created specifically for this cause that will be sold by our Avon Representatives worldwide. The first \$500,000 of our commitment will come from sales of the new product, and the Avon Foundation will match this amount with a donation to the Fund.

[Introduction of Reese Witherspoon]

And now, to talk more about our new global fundraising product, I'm proud and privileged to introduce another very special Avon partner. She is an award-winning actress and global role model who has taken a stand for women's empowerment in Hollywood and around the world. She's also Avon's new Global Ambassador and the Honorary Chair of the Avon Foundation. Please join me in welcoming Reese Witherspoon.

Ms. Reese Witherspoon

Thank you so much, Andrea.

I'm honoured to be here with all of you today at the United Nations to celebrate International Women's Day and to be part of this extraordinary effort to empower women around the world.

I feel lucky to have had incredible role models in my own family — my grandmother, who taught me about self-respect, and my mother, who showed me how to be a great mom while continuing to help others at work.

I've drawn strength from female friends and colleagues and I've had the opportunity to play some strong and inspiring women as well, like June Carter Cash, Becky Sharp, and Elle Woods.

We're here today because we know that helping women do better — promoting their health, safety, education, economic power and political voice — improves the lives of all.

When adverse circumstances for women are addressed, economies grow faster, poverty is reduced, and children grow up with hope. From one generation to the next, we can effect real change.

I've known Avon as a beauty brand for as long as I can remember, and I've seen firsthand how Avon opens the door for women to become entrepreneurs and support their families. But I've also learned that Avon's commitment to women goes far beyond its products and its business model.

In establishing the Avon Foundation over 50 years ago, the company made an equal commitment to philanthropy and to social change. The Foundation's initiatives in breast cancer, domestic violence and emergency relief have had an enormous impact already, and I'm proud to support them. But I am particularly proud to be here on the ground floor of this joint effort between Avon and UNIFEM. The goal of addressing women's needs around the world, and working to change the quality of their lives and their children's lives, is very close to my heart.

All women deserve physical safety. It's deeply disturbing to face the fact that one billion women — that is one in three women worldwide — are likely to be affected by violence at some point in their lives.

Violence against women is devastating not only to those who are physically abused, but to everyone around them as well. It destroys and impoverishes families, and drains the life from communities. In terms of sheer economics, one report estimated that the costs associated with domestic violence — in the United States alone — exceed \$5.8 billion a year — from lost wages, child care expenses and medical bills.

But of course, that is nothing compared with the physical and emotional toll on women, children, and families, and the crippling psychological legacy that perpetrates the cycle.

And even as we work to establish laws to protect women from violence, we've learned that we also need to teach people how to use them. According to a 2005 study by the World Health Organization, well over half of the women who had been physically abused by their partners never went to the police, or to a shelter, or to any social institution for advice or help. Some are refusing to seek assistance for fear of retribution or social stigma, while for others, the process is just too complicated and intimidating.

But we can change that — and we are. Just by gathering and talking here today we are working to bring the issue to light, and diminish the stigma. We are supporting education, prevention and more accessible guidance and help.

I'm honoured to partner with Avon and UNIFEM and stand by their shared commitment to ending violence against women wherever it occurs.

So I'm very excited to announce a way that everyone — including all of you here today — can support the new Avon Empowerment Fund that Andrea spoke about earlier.

Avon has had great success with fundraising products. They've used their worldwide sales force as agents for change through true viral fundraising: door to door, woman to woman.

Now, for the first time ever, Avon has created a global fundraising product — specifically to support the new Avon-UNIFEM partnership. It's called the Women's Empowerment Bracelet.

Every purchase of the Women's Empowerment Bracelet is an investment in women — because 100% of the net profit will go directly to the Avon Empowerment Fund. The bracelet will be sold in every country where Avon does business. Here in the US, it costs a mere \$3, \$2.25 of which goes to the Fund.

The bracelet's clasp is the infinity symbol, which represents the limitless potential for women, and our infinite possibilities when we stand together. As a special gift, everyone here will receive one. Please wear it proudly, buy one for a friend, and most importantly, talk about it wherever you go.

I am continually touched by how much the women I know care about helping women who are suffering in other parts of the world. We recognize that they are just like us, and we want to reach out to them. But most of us don't know how.

\$3 is not a lot, but \$1 million is, and another million, and another, and another. Together, we can change the world.

Thank you for having me here today. Thank you for your commitment to women's empowerment.

I believe that every woman has the strength and ability to achieve great things, but too many do not have the chance to try. We've made enormous progress, but we're not there yet.

My children, and yours, can grow up in a world where gender equality is the norm. Let's make it happen.

Thank you so much!

Ms. Andrea Jung [continues]

Thank you, Reese. We are so privileged to have you represent Avon as our Global Ambassador to help us support the important work of UNIFEM and the United Nations Trust Fund. You are truly an inspiration.

Today, we've talked a lot about partnerships for women's rights and empowerment. There are many different forms of partnerships that can truly help change women's lives. There are global partnerships, such as our exciting work with UNIFEM. But there is also an incredible amount of meaningful and innovative work being done at the grassroots level, where just a little bit of investment can make an enormous difference.

I spoke earlier about Avon's role as one of the world's largest micro-lenders. Last year we decided to take the concept of micro-lending and extend it to the community service arena. If a small amount of financial support is all it takes for a woman to build a successful business and change her life, how might a similar concept assist a grassroots charitable enterprise and help it transform a community?

It was with this thought in mind that a year ago, at our first Global Summit for a Better Tomorrow, we launched the Avon Hello Tomorrow Fund. Through the Fund, Avon provides cash awards to individuals across the globe to help them implement or expand worthy programmes that empower women in their local communities.

And although this is a grassroots program, it is on a global scale. The Hello Tomorrow Fund launched in over a dozen countries, with others slated to join this year. In the US, for example, we award \$5,000 every single week to a new winner. We have been overwhelmed by the response. In year one, we received nearly 4,000 applicants — both women and men — and already, as we enter year two of the programme, we have received over a thousand. Perhaps some of you are among our applicants and, if so, we thank you for sharing our commitment to empowering women.

Around the world, 100 individuals have already received the Hello Tomorrow Fund award, and each and every one of them is personally dedicated to taking action to empower women at the community level.

Their diverse programmes range from self-defense classes for women and children in Japan, to a women's cooperative that helps mothers of children with cancer in Brazil, to free dental services for victims of domestic violence in Massachusetts. Around the globe, our Hello Tomorrow recipients are truly making a difference, and Avon is proud to be their committed partner.

Each story is unique and inspiring, and I would like to share a brief video that spotlights just three Hello Tomorrow Fund winners who are changing the world, one community at a time. Let's watch.

[Hello Tomorrow video]

As you can see, each of our winners are remarkable individuals accomplishing extraordinary things. And we are so pleased that 15 of our Hello Tomorrow award recipients could join us today, some of whom have traveled great distances to be here. Two will be giving brief remarks, but first I'd like them all to stand and be recognized: from China, Ye Chen; from the Philippines, Cory Arevalo; from Colombia, Catalina Jimenez; from Turkey, Gürsel Çilingiroğlu; and from the United States, Neda Biggs, Alfa Demmellash, Deborah Fallon, Joyce Ford, Keely Freeman, Georgie Jennison, Meghan McCartan, Victoria Pettibone, Michelle Simmons, Marcia Stephenson, and Donna Suskawicz.

Please join me in applauding these amazing women. They are heroines in the truest sense of the word. Now let's hear them in their own words.

[Introduction of Alfa Demmellash]

Our first speaker is a woman who was born in Africa and is herself an extraordinary success story. In her commitment to giving back, Alfa Demmellash has dedicated her Ivy League education to helping less fortunate women succeed. Alfa created a non-profit company that provides desperately needed business training and support to women entrepreneurs from low-income communities in her hometown of Jersey City, New Jersey. Please welcome Alfa Demmellash.

Ms. Alfa Demmellash

Thank you, Andrea.

Hello and thank you for the opportunity to be here before you today. On behalf of the Avon Hello Tomorrow Fund winners from around the United States, I want to express my deepest gratitude to the people at Avon for their dedication to the global empowerment of women. Your support of entrepreneurs like myself and my fellow winners here and around the world will transform communities by giving resources to those who have the vision and the commitment to change the world. I thank you for this opportunity.

My name is Alfa Demmellash. I am the founder and Chief Executive Officer of Rising Tide Capital, a non-profit organization based in Jersey City, New Jersey, which provides training in business management and planning to underserved entrepreneurs who are mostly women. Our vision is to harness the entrepreneurial energy that already exists in distressed communities and use it to transform lives, strengthen families and create vibrant, thriving communities from within.

Many of the women entrepreneurs who come to Rising Tide Capital remind me of my mother. When I was a two-year-old child in Ethiopia, my mother had to flee the country to escape the terrible, murderous dictatorship of Mengistu Haile Mariam. She spent two years in a refugee camp in Kenya before making it to the United States, where she worked for nine years as a waitress and a seamstress before she was able to save up enough money to bring me over to join her. I was 13 when I arrived in the United States. I did not speak a word of English and had no idea at the time that within five years I would be attending Harvard University, or that eight years later I would be inspired by my mother's late nights working as an entrepreneurial fashion designer and seamstress to co-found an organization dedicated to the success of women around this country whose only dream is for a better life for their children.

I remember the times when I tried to get my mother help growing her business. But often, I would sit in meetings in which questions about her market size, budgets and cash flow projections would leave the woman I knew to be confident and skilled paralyzed with a sense of "I don't belong in this world of business." At Rising Tide Capital, we add value to the hard work of entrepreneurs rather than intimidate and overwhelm them.

The average entrepreneur at Rising Tide Capital is a 39-year-old single mother of three children earning less than \$27,000 per year. Our programme provides a full scholarship to a 10-week basic business course called The Community Business Academy, followed by year-round consulting and advanced seminars. Over the past year and a half, we have graduated 34 women entrepreneurs, and 65 percent are currently in business. This year, thanks to the visionary support of Avon's Hello Tomorrow Fund, we were able to nearly double the number of entrepreneurs we are working with.

There is a wonderful artist named Jusleine who just opened a greeting card business, and Kim who paints murals for children's day care centers, and Angela who has a computer repair company, and Ruthie who just opened a shoe store down the block from us. There are so many strong, powerful women living in our communities who have the talent and the courage, but who need that extra bit of encouragement, support, and training. I am so proud of their success because I know what their businesses mean to their families and communities.

We are guided by a vision at Rising Tide Capital that we can grow our communities from within, using the talents and the strength of the hard-working men and women that live there. It is time for a change, and Avon's Hello Tomorrow Fund is exactly the kind of catalyst that women around the world need to see that the vision they have can become a reality.

I am here today because of my mother. I see her same passion and determination in my clients every day. There are literally millions of these women around the world, and your investment in them is an investment in their children. I thank Avon's Hello Tomorrow Fund for seeing the kind of impact that these grassroots initiatives can have and for supporting me as I follow my vision and my dream.

I want to leave you today by telling you that you too, each and every person in this room, can follow your vision, and I want to challenge you to do just that. It is not the easiest path, and you will have to pick yourself up during the many hard times. But find your passion and don't let go of it for anything in the world. Thank you.

[Andrea Jung: Introduction of Gürsel Çilingiroğlu]

Thank you so much Alfa. Your incredible personal story is an inspiration to all of us.

I am proud to introduce another winner who has travelled a great distance to be with us. Speaking on behalf of the Hello Tomorrow Fund winners around the world is Gürsel Çilingiroğlu of Turkey. Gursel is an electronic engineer who, like Alfa, is dedicated to helping other women with less opportunity access resources to support themselves and their families. Gursel has told us that she hopes her programme will be "a light for hope and goodness, for motivation and self confidence." And listening to her story, you will understand why this is true.

Please welcome Gürsel Çilingiroğlu.

Ms. Gürsel Çilingiroğlu

Thank you Ms. Jung, and thank you Avon.

Dear guests, dear fellow Hello Tomorrow Fund winners; it is an honour to be here with you today as a winner of Avon Turkey's Hello Tomorrow Fund, the global initiative of Avon with the goal to empower women and improve society.

Let me begin by giving information about my project. This project is designed to increase entrepreneurial activities of women living in the Kirklareli region outside of Istanbul via workshops supported by local authorities that encourages them to have their own business. The aim of the project is coaching women who have an initial idea but don't have enough courage and knowledge regarding how to establish and conduct a business.

The project will include five-days workshops for 30 women. During the workshop, trainers will give information about how to establish the initial idea, make feasibility studies and market researches, determine the product or service that will be sold, solve legal issues in terms of tax, quality control and staff.

After the five-days workshop, each attendee will prepare her own business plan, and I will be giving entrepreneurship coaching and mentorship to all of them. Once the plans are finalized, the projects will be presented to KAGIDER (the Women Entrepreneurship Association), and the members of KAGIDER will also support the implementation of these projects. The Hello Tomorrow Fund is providing the money for the trainers, materials and the place to hold the workshop.

It is very important to provide this sort of help to women. In Turkey, women, especially the ones living in areas outside of major cities, don't have enough support and courage to have their own business.

Actually, they have very good and innovative ideas but, since they don't have enough capital on their own, they cannot establish a business and achieve economic independence. With the financial support of Avon and the moral force of being the winner, I believe I will effectively help our local people and change their world.

This is such a beneficiary project for both women and their families as it will help them have their own economic independence and impact their lives, their families and their communities. And I hope that this will become a model for similar programmes in other regions.

I'd like to thank to Avon as they have initiated such a meaningful project and invited me to share my experience with women all around the world.

[Andrea Jung: Closing of Hello Tomorrow Fund segment]

Thank you so much, Gürsel.

I would also like to take a moment to thank our Hello Tomorrow Fund judges who dedicated their time and expertise to this project. Some of our US judges are here today, and I ask them also to stand and be recognized: Jillian Dempsey, beauty industry icon and Avon's Global Creative Color Director; Anne Dowling, President of the Institute for Cultural Enterprise; Cynthia Rowley, award-winning designer and entrepreneur; our new UNIFEM partner Joan Libby-Hawk; and Suze Orman, who chaired our judges panel. The full list of judges is in your programme today, but I'm delighted to announce that two new judges have joined our US panel this year: Sarah Ferguson, Duchess of York, and award-winning actress Phylicia Rashad. They will bring their own unique experience and expertise to the Hello Tomorrow Fund, and we look forward to working with them in the coming year.

We are so proud of the powerful, positive impact that the Hello Tomorrow Fund is having on women's lives around the world. On behalf of Avon and the Avon Foundation, you have our promise that we will continue to empower more and more women around the globe. Through our efforts, we hope to shine a light on new possibilities and new opportunities to create positive change. One woman at a time, one dollar at a time, we are committed to making a difference. We hope that today's Global Summit will be just one of many inspirational touch points that will continue to fuel our collective commitment. By partnering together, I truly believe we can dramatically change the landscape for women around the world, with a lasting impact for generations to come.

Thank you.

[Alexis Glick: Introduction of Suze Orman]

Thank you so much, Andrea, for your stirring words and your powerful call to action. I also want to congratulate Alfa, Gürsel and all of the Hello Tomorrow Fund grant recipients for their incredible work in advancing women's lives.

And now I'm honoured to introduce a woman who is truly the nation's trailblazer for women's economic empowerment. She's inarguably America's most recognized expert on personal finance, and has been dubbed by USA TODAY a "one-woman financial advice powerhouse" and "a force in the world of personal finance." She is a two-time Emmy Award-winning television host, New York Times bestselling author, magazine and online columnist, writer/producer, and motivational speaker.

And as you saw earlier on today's film, she is also one of Avon's Hello Tomorrow Judges.

I'm thrilled to introduce, the inimitable Suze Orman.

Ms. Suze Orman

It is an honour to be here, to be in the presence of Avon, who in my opinion is probably the most important corporation in America today because it is a corporation that has decided they are going to help women around the world. That is very important, so for that, I am grateful, to Andrea, to Reese, to all our winners of The Hello Tomorrow Fund, but mainly to all of you. I stand here in the United Nations, and I will forever believe that the reason that we have domestic violence, not only in the United States but around the world, is because of lack of financial freedom. Women stay because they don't have the money to go.

Now you've heard many statistics. I heard them as I was sitting there, but we don't have to quote statistics of what's going on around the world, how many women are in poverty. All we have to do is look into your own lives. I sat up there and I looked out, and I saw many of you, the majority of you that are women in this room today. Have you looked at your own lives? Have you looked at what you have going on within your own self? It's not just enough to come here today and partner to save the world. I'm here in the hopes that you will save yourselves, because when one woman saves herself, she then has the strength and she then has the ability to save the entire world.

But no, no, no, ladies, no, no, no, men in this room that have women in their lives. We're all too busy to understand the severity of this problem. And maybe you could understand it when I relate it to the sub-prime crisis. Now, many people out there got loans for homes that they couldn't afford. But you didn't care about them because they weren't going to affect your life until their houses went under and now they're in foreclosure and now your homes are going down in value. The same is true with women. When one woman can't help herself and you refuse to take the actions necessary to help her, you're not just keeping her down, you are keeping yourself down, because she will pull you down. What's so sad today is how many women that are down; the few at the top aren't strong enough any more to pull us up. What we have to do is we have to push ourselves up. We have to push the top higher.

So today, with this Summit, with the efforts that Avon is making financially, that UNIFEM is making globally, that Reese is making with the efforts of this bracelet, that Alexis is going to make on television tomorrow — with the efforts that we are making, I ask all of us to reach out to others to pull the entire female population up, because with that you will save the entire world. Yes, empower women, you empower the world. But when you empower yourselves and you save yourselves and you get powerful with who you are and what you have, anything and everything is possible. So I ask you to look within, to see why you are doing without, what you can do to change your lives because when you change yourself, you change the whole world. Can you do it? You betcha.

Thank you very much.

[Alexis Glick: Introduction of UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women video]

Thank you Suze — your passion for women's economic empowerment reminds all of us why it is so important for us to join efforts in investing in programmes that advance women's lives.

We have heard a little bit today about how when women have income, they feel more empowered in their communities and safer in their households. But we've only begun to explore these deep-seated links between economic empowerment and ending violence against women. The UNIFEM-managed Trust Fund to End Violence against Women gives us more insight. The UN Trust Fund has distributed nearly \$18 million to 250 innovative programmes addressing violence against women in more than 120 countries. Let's watch this brief video to understand its range and impact.

[Trust Fund video shown]

Now that I've seen this UNIFEM Trust Fund video, I'm beginning to really understand Joanne's statement that violence against women is a problem with solutions.

[Alexis Glick: Introduction of Liliana Rainero]

Our next speaker is a UN Trust Fund grant recipient, and her work is an inspiring example of the innovative projects that the Trust Fund supports. Liliana Rainero is a feminist from Argentina, a professional architect and an urban planner. She is also the Director of CISCOSA Research and Service Centre, a dynamic women's rights organization in Cordoba that unites women in poor, urban communities with local governments to create public policies that build safer communities and neighbourhoods. CISCOSA works to strengthen women's participation as citizens and increase awareness of their rights in order to reduce violence against them. Liliana and her team at CISCOSA were recognized by the UN Trust Fund for their outstanding commitment to making cities safer for women. In addition to her impressive leadership at CISCOSA, Liliana is also the Coordinator of the Latin American Woman and Habitat Network.

I'm pleased to welcome Liliana.

Ms. Liliana Rainero

[Translated from Spanish]

Good evening and thank you to UNIFEM and Avon. Today I would like to highlight the achievements of women, as well as the challenges we have yet to overcome.

First, I'd like to acknowledge and thank the United Nations General Assembly for having created the Trust Fund to End Violence against Women, managed by UNIFEM. In Latin America, this support has been very significant, making it possible for women's thematic networks — such as the Woman and Habitat network, which I coordinate — to continue working and achieving progress in ways that help end violence against women. This effort to end violence is being carried out by many feminist organizations in the region, and the UNIFEM-managed Trust Fund has made it possible for some of these organizations to place innovative projects into the public and government's agenda, including the programme "Cities without violence against women; Safe cities for everyone." This programme, which was started in two countries — Peru and Argentina — with Trust Fund support, has now become a regional programme led by UNIFEM in seven countries that are successfully replicating the programme's in-depth experience.

Why is this programme so important? In countries that are increasingly urbanized, women are the majority of this growing urban population. And in these cities, it is common for both social and urban violence to increase, especially against women. Therefore, women must have their interests and perceptions included in policies that are intended to mitigate this violence and the public dialogue surrounding this issue. In particular, women must be able to share their concerns regarding urban dangers and crime, including the fear of suffering from sexual aggression or being raped in the street, on the bus, or in public spaces.

To illustrate the scope of this problem, we can use statistics from Argentina and Brazil, where significant data has been collected. During 2003, a total of 8,000 victims of sexual offences were counted and 83 percent of these were against women. In Sao Paulo, Brazil, a woman suffers from aggression every fifteen minutes. This data reflects the persistent scourge that must be eradicated. The consequences of women's fear of violence — for instance, not being able to walk freely around the city at certain hours — have not been completely assessed in all cities, but we can assert that this situation constitutes a restriction to their freedom and autonomy, as well as to their access to better opportunities and empowerment. Transforming this reality has been the main motivation for this project.

In Rosario, Argentina, under the slogan "A city without violence against women is a safe city for everyone," the programme engaged key government actors and different community sectors in the city to help solve this problem. Rosario is the second largest city in the country, with one million inhabitants, and has a local government that has been engaged for many years in search of equal opportunities for women. This has helped the project work successfully towards its goal. The majority of women taking part in this programme come from one of the poorest districts in the city of Rosario. Many of them are

immigrants and jobless; 30 percent of them are head-of-household with children; and many are victims of addiction, alcoholism, and drugs. There are women, however, that — even in these situations — have meetings with other women, support each other, and look for a way out of this crisis.

What has changed for these women? What has been the contribution of the project? We can say that this project, in Rosario, has started an empowerment process. Women have become conscious of the fact that the violence they suffer in both the private and public sphere is the same, and it is called gender-based violence — a product of patriarchal societies. This is why they have joined forces and formed the network, Women against Violence. The network has questioned the way mass media presents news of violence against women — as crimes of passion or insanity of the aggressor — concealing, therefore, the structural societal roots of violence against women. They have made their voice heard with city planners, and proposed creating maps that track city crime. Visiting the different districts and areas, the women have shown that the breakdown of communities and social networks, vandalized public spaces, lack of street lights, lack of services, etc., are factors that correlate with an increase in violence against women. They are taking ownership of public spaces by means of urban performances, painting murals and street actions, showing that the path to a safer city must coexist with the reconstruction of women's confidence — not repression or punishment.

They have generated proposals for productive projects to decrease city crime, including a proposal to occupy empty lots that, by not receiving maintenance, contribute to an increase in crime rates. In particular, they have proposed to farm these lots; a practice known as “urban agriculture,” which provides many additional benefits for these women. It is without doubt, after all, that economic autonomy is a precondition to behaviours of self-emancipation in women. This emancipation is a critical element of every egalitarian society, and a goal that societies and governments must work towards together. A society will not be democratic, in the end, if it does not provide women with access to equal opportunities and eradicate the scourge of violence against them.

Thank you very much.

[Alexis Glick: Introduction of Mallika Dutt]

Thank you so much, Liliana, for sharing with us your transformative work, and for shedding light on the urgent need to make public spaces safer for women.

Our next speaker is another recipient of the UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women who has also been recognized for her work in helping transform communities and bring about social change in her country. Mallika Dutt is Executive Director of Breakthrough, a non-governmental organization that uses media and pop culture in the US and in India to help spread human rights values into people's daily lives. Mallika has been on the cutting edge of this project, and a leader in the human rights movement now for more than two decades. She has received many awards for her work and authored many essays about women's human rights issues.

Please welcome Breakthrough's Executive Director and UN Trust Fund grantee, Mallika Dutt.

Ms. Mallika Dutt

Excellencies, colleagues, and friends, the last time I was in this room was a year ago for International Women's Day, when I was moderating a panel on the gender architecture for the United Nations moving forward. So, this is a very different time and space, and I'm very excited to be here.

Breakthrough is enormously privileged to be a recipient of the UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women. UNIFEM has been a staunch advocate for women's human rights around the world. With support from the Trust Fund, Breakthrough launched the first multi-media campaign in India that brought attention to the fact that the vast majority of HIV-positive women had been infected by their husbands. In

fact, more than 80 percent of the almost two million HIV-positive women in India have been infected by their partners. And more than 90 percent of them are thrown out of their homes once their husbands die of HIV/AIDS.

There is a great deal of conversation about sex workers, but very few conversations about the vast majority of women who are being infected by those that they are often closest to. Our multi-media campaign, which was called “What Kind of Man Are You?” reached more than 50 million people around the country in seven languages. It was heartbreaking to know it was the first time that a public conversation about HIV infections within marriage took place in India. With the support of the Trust Fund, we were able to work at the community level in small towns and small villages. We were also able to work with HIV-positive homeless women to harness their amazing energy and help them transform into rights advocates in their own communities.

I’d like to end with the following thought. If a poor, homeless, HIV-positive woman in India can become an advocate for change — a catalyst in her community who educates and empowers women to have difficult but necessary conversations in their own marriages and their own lives — if that is possible, then just imagine what the world could look like if we truly unleashed the potential of all women — if we took away the violence; if we took away the discrimination; if we took away the many obstacles that women face: poverty, despair, homelessness, and lack of access to resources. If poor women can be so powerful, let’s make a commitment. Let’s join Avon and the United Nations Secretary-General in calling for this multi-year campaign. And let’s support UNIFEM and the Trust Fund’s efforts to truly make women’s rights human rights. Thank you so much.

[Alexis Glick: Introduction of concluding comments]

Thank you so much Mallika, and congratulations to both you and Lilliana for being innovative frontrunners in women’s empowerment in your communities.

We’ve certainly had a provocative, engaging discussion today, and we’ve heard from remarkable women doing extraordinary things. Before we leave, I’d like to invite the two hosts of our Summit back to the podium to share their final thoughts on the programme — Joanne and Andrea.

Closing Remarks

Joanne Sandler

Thank you Alexis. I also want to thank Mallika, who as always, is an inspiration, calling us to do more.

This sets the stage for me to remind people in the room to sign up to UNIFEM’s *Say NO to Violence against Women* campaign. Spearheaded by UNIFEM’s Goodwill Ambassador Nicole Kidman, the campaign is gathering signatures for three important reasons: first, to make ending violence against women a top priority of governments everywhere; second, to let survivors of violence know that they are very much in our thoughts and advocacy efforts; third, to meet the challenge grant from the United Nations Foundation — which will donate \$100,000 to the UN Trust Fund if we can collect 100,000 signatures. Add your name and send on to your friends. Each gift bag contains information about the campaign. Just go to www.saynotoviolence.org. Click and be counted. Thanks so much.

We come together at a historic time. Empowering women, eliminating feminized poverty and ending violence against women are no longer just the dreams of feminists and activists — they are the solemn commitments of governments and international institutions. Experts, policy-makers and political leaders view actively engaged women as essential to meet the Millennium Development Goal targets, drive economies, build flourishing communities and stabilize volatile regions of the world.

But these results do not come easily or cheaply. Long-held attitudes, policies and practices that keep women outside and at the bottom do not change like the seasons — they change because people, organizations, governments and international institutions work together to change them. And they change because leaders are held accountable.

In today's world, no single actor or sector can succeed without partners. We particularly need the private sector to play a more involved role. And we need private sector leaders who take up the challenge and demonstrate a new kind of socially responsible global leadership.

Avon and its Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, Andrea Jung, are stepping up to show the way, and we are excited by the prospects of what we can do together. The UNIFEM-Avon Partnership for Empowerment and Rights is one example of how two distinctive international organizations — one from the public sphere and the other from the private — are coming together in a common purpose. Our public/private-sector partnership supports the UN campaign to end violence against women launched just last week by Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon. His message was loud and clear: "Violence against women impedes economic and social growth," he said. "It is an issue that cannot wait." The Secretary-General called for the cooperation of many actors, including the private sector, to make substantial progress.

Andrea Jung

As we close today, I just want to leave you with one final thought. Mahatma Ghandi said, "Be the change you want to see in the world." Each and every one of us, in our own way, is an important agent of change. And working together, there is nothing we can't accomplish.

On behalf of Avon and the Avon Foundation, I want to thank UNIFEM for their commitment to this incredible partnership. And I want to thank everyone here for joining us today. Together, I am confident that with our shared commitment, advocacy, and investment, we will continue to bring about significant positive change in the world.

Alexis Glick

Thank you, Joanne and Andrea, and all of our speakers for participating in this important dialogue today.

Before we adjourn, we have some special musical entertainment I'd like to introduce: Bethany Yarrow, a mesmerizing singer and the daughter of folk legend Peter Yarrow of Peter, Paul and Mary; and Rufus Cappadocia, a leading voice on the cello, who just released a new solo CD called "Songs for Cello" in early 2008. Known as Bethany & Rufus, this incredible cello and voice duo recently appeared on PBS. Today, we have the privilege of hearing them live. Please join me in welcoming Bethany & Rufus.

[Performance by Bethany & Rufus]

[Alexis Glick: Farewell]

Thank you so much everyone, and happy International Women's Day!