

Washington, DC (March 8, 2012) - Congresswoman Jan Schakowsky (D-IL) released the following statement in honor of International Women's Day:

“As we mark the 101st International Women's Day and celebrate the achievements and contributions women have made to the international community, we also need to recognize the ways in which we have more work to do to protect and promote the rights of our sisters around the world.

Every day, around the world, women are shaping the future of their communities, cities, and nations. From business to sports to diplomacy to medicine, women have made huge strides forward in recent decades. Despite the progress of recent years, the figures are staggering and underscore the work that remains. While women account for two-thirds of the world's working hours, they earn 10% of the world's income and own less than 1% of the world's property. One in three women worldwide is beaten, coerced into sex, or otherwise abused over the course of her lifetime. Women still make up the majority of the world's illiterate population.

That's why I believe we need to place more emphasis on educating girls; on ensuring that women have access to job training, microfinance, and other economic opportunities; on ending the global epidemic of gender-based violence and trafficking of women and girls; and on ensuring that all women have access to reproductive health services and family planning. All of these are critical steps toward not only protecting the rights of women, but also strengthening communities throughout the world.

And, as the Obama Administration has emphasized, women need to be at the table for peace negotiations. In conflict zones throughout the world, although women bear the brunt of war, they must also form the underpinning of peace. United Nations Women Executive Director Michelle Bachelet once said that “we simply can no longer afford to leave women out” when advocating for peace – I wholeheartedly agree.”

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