

WOMEN OF TODAY AS RELIABLE PARTNERS IN NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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**(An Inspirational Message Delivered During the Kick-off Ceremonies
for the Celebration of the 2008 National Women's Month/International
Women's Day Held at the DAR Oval Garden on March 10, 2008)**

Good day to all of you!

Long gone were those traditional days of earlier generations where majority of women just stay at homes contented of successfully playing their familiar roles of a 'plain housewife' to their husbands and a 'caring mother' to her children, devotedly doing household chores for their family in each day of their lives. Through the time and for one reason or another, things have drastically changed and such women can now be considered 'women of the past'.

And what a 'change for the better' it has been. Today, career women abound in society, both in the national and global landscape, with a lot of them achieving greater accomplishments in their own respective fields which in earlier times were mostly dominated by men. We now see these women in practically all cross-section of society be it in politics, in the corporate world or business, in the glamorous world of show business, in news writing and broadcasting professions, in various fields of sports, and what have you. The world of politics would give the best examples in our very own President Her Excellency Gloria Macapagal Arroyo. Even the United States of America has a woman in the person of Hilary Clinton as one of its leading candidates for President in the country's forthcoming national elections. And this morning, we see in person

another great example in our very own keynote speaker for this occasion, the Honorable Congresswoman Cynthia A. Villar from the lone district of Las Piñas.

Indeed, 'woman power' has become an integral part of our lives. And these women and you, every woman who is here today, undoubtedly, have become 'indispensable reliable partners' towards the achievement of our country's various national development agendas.

Along such recognition, I hereby manifest my own strong support to every endeavor of the DAR's GAD Steering Committee and its Technical Working Group that seeks for the advancement of every woman both in our own DAR bureaucracy and the agrarian sector, and I hereby give instructions to Undersecretary Boy Nieto of FMAO to ensure the allocation of your yearly budget and its proper utilization in accordance with the guidelines issued jointly by the Department of Budget and Management, the National Economic and Development Authority and the National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women.

And so, to every woman who is present here today, I say that you are not just a 'simple light of your home' that you were known yesterday, you now have indeed become a 'shining chandelier' providing a better light for the future generations of our nations.

In the grace of our One God, Mabuhay po Kayong Lahat!