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INVESTING IN WOMEN AND GIRLS: NYC CELEBRATES INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

New York (March 11, 2008): Several hundred women and men gathered last Thursday evening at St. Bartholomew's Church in midtown Manhattan to celebrate International Women's Day. The celebration, organized by a coalition of organizations was one of the only public events in New York City outside the United Nations system.

The celebration's theme "Women Investing in Women!" was interpreted by each of the featured speakers in distinct and powerful ways.

Helen LaKelly Hunt, founder of The Sister Fund, said that we are at a unique moment in history. She claimed that for the first time women are investing in women.

Mahnaz Maqsudi, Vice President of the Charitable Services Group at Goldman Sachs, described "10,000 Women", an initiative launched by her company, that funds business and management education for women from the developing world with a view to enrich and support entrepreneurship.

Amy Goodman, executive producer and host of independent current affairs program *Democracy Now!* used the occasion to highlight the lesser known facets of historic female figures. She spoke of Helen Keller, who used her famously hard-won communication skills to speak out as an anti-war and socialist activist, and Rosa Parks, who is often painted as a humble seamstress too exhausted to move to the back of the segregated bus, but in fact was a deliberate activist. Goodman called for greater democracy in the media so that stories of courageous women like these would not be sanitized.

The event was emceed by the charismatic Khaliah Ali, author on the subject of healthy weight loss, fashion designer of her own clothing line, supporter of many charitable causes and daughter of boxing great Muhammad Ali.

Audience members from around the world also enjoyed performances by La!Quartet, the Def Dance Jam Workshop, Joanna Rush, and Ex-Rockettes.

Sponsoring organizations were The Hunger Project; UN Division for the Advancement of Women; St. Bartholomew's Church; AWE—Anglican Women's Empowerment; Center for Women's Global Leadership; EngenderHealth; International Museum of Women; Justice for Women Work Group of the National Council of Churches; League of Women Voters of the City of New York; Life Works; MADRE; Ministries with Women, Children and Families, General Board of Global Ministries of the United Methodist Church; One Spirit Learning Alliance; The Population Council; UNIFEM; Women's Bond Club; Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children; Women's Media Center; Women's eNews; and Zonta Club of New York

In 1908, 15,000 women marched through New York City demanding shorter hours, better pay and voting rights. Since then, International Women's Day has grown to become a global day of recognition and celebration. In 1975, the United Nations began celebrating International Women's Day.

For more information, visit www.womensdaynyc.org.

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