

November 12, 1997

Anne & Kevan McCarten-Gibbs
1708 Vine Street
Berkeley, CA 94703

Dear Anne and Kevan,

A few months ago, in a small office near the Afghan-Pakistani border, I sat at a table with women covered from head to toe in heavy black robes. Their frank and courageous eyes shone from under their head scarves as they told me about their work. These women, organized as the Afghan Institute for Learning, risk their lives to train women teachers to run schools for girls hidden in homes in Kabul and Herat, where the ruling Taliban movement has outlawed education for girls. "One day," one of them said, "Afghanistan will be free, and our daughters must be ready. They have a right to be educated." Last month, the Global Fund gave a \$10,000 grant to the Afghan Institute for Learning.

As we prepare to give thanks and celebrate traditions of sharing, the Global Fund for Women would like to thank you for your continued commitment to women's rights around the world. As you will see from the enclosed annual report, your gifts have helped women to transform lives. Over the past year, the generosity of donors like you has enabled us to give more than \$1.5 million in grants to over 200 women's groups around the world. "The Global Fund believed in us when all we had was a dream. Thank you," writes Radna Burmaa of Women for Social Progress in Mongolia.

But it is *we* who owe these extraordinary women our gratitude. They fight the difficult, relentless battles to defend the dignity, well-being, and equality of women and girls around the world. The Global Fund is privileged to share in their dreams, aspirations, and challenges. We feel a deep responsibility to do more to help women in their struggles against injustice and in their efforts to ensure a more hopeful future for all of us.

Women around the world still suffer—from violence, poverty, and discrimination. Two weeks before my meeting with the Afghan teachers, a young woman was stoned to death in the marketplace of an Afghan town for the crime of not properly covering her ankles. In Bahia, Brazil, female domestic workers earn less than \$4 a day for hard labor and are uninformed about their legal rights. In developed nations like Japan, discrimination in the medical system subjects women to unnecessary surgical procedures, such as hysterectomies, that jeopardize their overall health.

As we enter our second decade, we are ready and able to do more. First, of course, we want to provide more resources to women's groups working to create a better world. In recent years, as the international women's movement has matured and as word of the Global Fund's work has spread, we have had to turn away deserving groups. Not because their work is unimportant, but simply, sadly, because the need is greater than our resources. With your support, we hope to increase our grantmaking by 20 percent in the coming year.

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The Global Fund is also preparing to actively seek out women's groups whose isolation limits their access to funding. In the coming year, we will commit additional resources in these areas:

- ***Outreach to African Women's Groups.*** War, civil strife, desperate poverty, the prevalence of HIV/AIDS and other factors make it particularly difficult for African women to organize. We seek to nurture their efforts through increased grant support, especially to encourage meetings and collaborations.
- ***Religious Traditions and Women's Rights.*** In recent years, religious extremism has torn apart communities and silenced women's voices. We will increase funding to women's groups working *within* different traditions that seek to empower women without severing connections to their own cultural and religious roots.
- ***Economic Opportunity for Women.*** Structural adjustment and economic globalization have resulted in increased poverty and reduced welfare benefits for women and children around the globe. We plan to sustain groups that strengthen the economic independence of women and girls through access to micro credit, education and training programs.

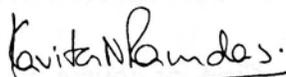
"The Global Fund today is touching the lives of so many women around the world. Women who had no hope, have hope; women who had despaired, are coming to life," says Olive Shang, president of Kongadzem, a Global Fund grantee in Cameroon. Her words attest to the significance of Global Fund grants in supporting international women's development.

Women in every part of the world have achieved so much in the last ten years, and the Global Fund is proud to have supported their efforts. But there is still so much more to do. A grant of just \$8,000 enables disabled women of the *Women's Program of the Kenya Society for the Blind* to raise public awareness and improve the status of blind women; support opportunities for blind girls to enroll in and stay in school; and counsel and place blind women in employment. Your tax-deductible contribution to the Global Fund helps these courageous Kenyan women to stand up for their rights.

Tom Layton, a long-time donor to the Global Fund, said it best: "Women in the developing world contribute to the well-being of other women, their neighbors, and their communities in ways that are almost beyond our comprehension. It is both an obligation and a privilege for those of us in better, healthier, and safer circumstances to provide as much help as we are able."

We know you share this commitment and we welcome your generous contribution to the Global Fund for Women this holiday season.

With warm appreciation,



Kavita N. Ramdas
President

P.S. The Global Fund has been selected to appear on the 1997 Working Assets donation ballot and share about \$3 million. The money is divided up solely by the votes of Working Assets members. If you are a member, please look for the ballot in your November bill and cast a vote for the Global Fund.