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Auszug aus:

*Speech Analysis: Hillary Clinton - Remarks to the U.N. 4th
World Conference on Women Plenary Session (5 September
1995)*

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It is a violation of *human* rights when a leading cause of death worldwide among women ages 14 to 44 is the violence they are subjected to in their own homes by their own relatives.

It is a violation of *human* rights when young girls are brutalized by the painful and degrading practice of genital mutilation.

It is a violation of *human* rights when women are denied the right to plan their own families, and that includes being forced to have abortions or being sterilized against their will.

If there is one message that echoes forth from this conference, let it be that human rights are women's rights and women's rights are human rights once and for all. Let us not forget that among those rights are the right to speak freely -- and the right to be heard.

Women must enjoy the rights to participate fully in the social and political lives of their countries, if we want freedom and democracy to thrive and endure. It is indefensible that many women in nongovernmental organizations who wished to participate in this conference have not been able to attend -- or have been prohibited from fully taking part.

Let me be clear. Freedom means the right of people to assemble, organize, and debate openly. It means respecting the views of those who may disagree with the views of their governments. It means not taking citizens away from their loved ones and jailing them, mistreating them, or denying them their freedom or dignity because of the peaceful expression of their ideas and opinions.

In my country, we recently celebrated the 75th anniversary of Women's Suffrage. It took 150 years after the signing of our Declaration of Independence for women to win the right to vote. It took 72 years of organized struggle, before that happened, on the part of many courageous women and men. It was one of America's most divisive philosophical wars. But it was a bloodless war. Suffrage was achieved without a shot being fired.

But we have also been reminded, in V-J Day observances last weekend, of the good that comes when men and women join together to combat the forces of tyranny and to build a better world. We have seen peace prevail in most places for a half century. We have avoided another world war. But we have not solved older, deeply-rooted problems that continue to diminish the potential of half the world's population.

Now it is the time to act on behalf of women everywhere. If we take bold steps to better the lives of women, we will be taking bold steps to better the lives of children and families too. Families rely on mothers and wives for emotional support and care. Families rely on women for labor in the home. And increasingly, everywhere, families rely on women for income needed to raise healthy children and care for other relatives.

As long as discrimination and inequities remain so commonplace everywhere in the world, as long as girls and women are valued less, fed less, fed last, overworked, underpaid, not schooled, subjected to violence in and outside their homes -- the potential of the human family to create a peaceful, prosperous world will not be realized.

Let -- Let this conference be our -- and the world's -- call to action. Let us heed that call so we can create a world in which every woman is treated with respect and dignity, every boy and girl is loved and cared for equally, and every family has the hope of a strong and stable future. That is the work before you. That is the work before all of us who have a vision of the world we want to see -- for our children and our grandchildren.

The time is now. We must move beyond rhetoric. We must move beyond recognition of problems to working together, to have the common efforts to build that common ground we hope to see.

God's blessing on you, your work, and all who will benefit from it.

Godspeed and thank you very much.

Quelle: <http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/hillaryclintonbeijingspeech.htm>

Analysis of the speech

Clinton starts her speech with a short introduction, during which she first expresses her thanks for Gertrude Mongella for her accomplishments. Since September of 2004, Mongella is the first female president of the Panafrican Parliament in the African Union.²

After this, Clinton thanks the Secretary General for being invited to the conference and goes on to emphasise the importance of the conference by saying that it is “truly a celebration” (l. 4). Thus, in her view, the conference does not merely have a serious reason, but at the same time it shows that women’s accomplishments are being noticed, valued and appreciated.

As Clinton goes on in her introduction, she states that this conference is a meeting of women that is somewhat similar to the way that women meet everyday (l. 8). She gives a number of everyday-examples of situations in which women meet (“in fields and factories, ..., in living rooms and board rooms.” ll. 9/10). The important point this listing leads up to is that women almost always end up talking about family and children, which shows clearly that all women always have a common basis, and what is more: a “common future” (l. 14). Clinton concludes her introduction by making clear the important point of her speech, namely that it is important to strengthen women in order to strengthen families (“...we may help bring new dignity and respect to women and girls all over the world, and in so doing bring new strength and stability to families as well.” ll. 15/16).

In the first sentence of the main part of her speech, Clinton lists the most important issues in the fight for women’s equality, namely issues “that matter most in our lives” (l. 17), such as education and the job situation. This formulation makes clear that Clinton considers these issues as very basic, things that everyone has to deal with. In this way, Clinton makes her audience realise that the basic things she lists are not banal and go without saying, but that in fact many women lack “health care, jobs and credit” (l. 18) and that it is important to fight for these things. They are the basis from which women can “participate fully in the political life of our countries” (l. 20).

During the next part of her speech, Clinton makes use of repetition in order to emphasise a very important point. She acknowledges that “There are some who” (l. 21 and 22) have doubts about the significance of the conference. This is the first part of the repeated structure, the following sentence is started by the second part: “Let them listen...” (l. 21). By repeating this structure, Clinton focuses the attention of the audience on these important points and thus invalidates the arguments of the conference’s opponents in a way that no one can miss, especially not anyone who might have doubts. Also, Clinton captures the audience’s attention, because now everyone will be even more interested in hearing why Clinton considers the conference important: the sheer number of women who gather everywhere each day and who have now gathered for the conference is reason enough to fight for these women’s rights. Their mass lends strength to women (“It is conferences like this that compel governments and peoples everywhere to listen, look, and face the world’s most pressing problems.” ll. 26/27).

During the next short paragraph, Clinton names some of the gatherings that she has attended and will attend during the course of the conference (ll. 30-25). This might seem banal, but serves to show her deep interest in what can be done for women and also shows some of the specific topics that the participants of the conference deal with. This makes clear that the conference is not only talk, but also the participants implement plans.

² http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gertrude_Mongella (23.11.2008)



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