



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media Contacts:

Rob Meloche
Opportunity International
630-242-4167
rmeloche@opportunity.org

Jennifer Anaya
iD8 Marketing/Opportunity International
714-335-5344
jennifer@id8marketing.com

Opportunity International Encourages Citizen Diplomacy and Economic Empowerment

Claudia Kennedy, Member of Opportunity's Board of Advisors and First Woman U.S. Army Lieutenant General, Encourages Individuals to Recognize their Power to Improve People's Lives Around the World

Washington D.C. Nov. 18, 2010 – In support of the [U.S. Summit and Initiative for Global Citizen Diplomacy](#) taking place in Washington D.C. this week, [Opportunity International](#) today called for a renewed focus on citizen diplomacy and economic empowerment. Opportunity Board of Advisors member and first woman U.S. Army Lieutenant General (Ret.), Claudia Kennedy, encourages individuals to recognize the power of diplomacy and development to improve living conditions and global security.

An advocate for diplomacy and development, Kennedy asserts that leading economic nations can fight poverty and hunger and promote global stability by creating mechanisms to empower people in developing countries, "Today, power is diffused across many nations and our approach to global security needs to include more than defense. It's critical that we include development as well as public and citizen diplomacy in our efforts to promote a safer and more just world."

"As global citizens, we need to realize that power is not a scarce resource –when you become empowered, so do I." Kennedy continues, "How powerful would it be if our collective focus was to create financial services for developing communities, eliminate hunger, create access to education and break the cycle of poverty in families at the subsistence level of life."

Kennedy encourages people to consider the difference it makes when women in developing countries are given the chance to learn, develop a business and lead in their communities. "Because women have not held economic and political parity with men, it is women who hold the strongest potential to become leaders and change agents. If we can dramatically impact the economic power and influence of women, I believe we can increase global stability and alleviate poverty. The payoff is not only peace, but prosperity and real human security."

During her military career, Gen. Kennedy was deputy chief of staff for Army intelligence. Kennedy joined Opportunity's Board of Advisors in 2003, serves as a commissioner for the White House Fellows Program, and is a member of the Board of Directors for the American Security Project. Her book, "*Generally Speaking*," was published in September 2001.



Opportunity International Encourages Citizen Diplomacy and Economic Empowerment//Page Two

The [U.S. Summit and Initiative for Global Citizen Diplomacy](#) is taking place Nov. 16-19 at the Grand Hyatt Hotel, 1000 H St NW, Washington, DC. It is a national meeting presented by the USCCD in partnership with the U.S. Department of State, Office of Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs. Opportunity is participating in two sessions during the conference. The first, entitled “U.S. Citizens Helping the Poor Lift Themselves out of Poverty” was chosen as a Top Program of the Development Assistance Task Force, and the second, “Change the World at Work” is a pilot to be discussed in connection with the Business Task Force.

About Opportunity International

Opportunity International provides small business loans, savings, insurance and training to over two million people working their way out of poverty in the developing world. Clients in more than 20 countries use these financial services to start or expand a business, provide for their families, create jobs for their neighbors and build a safety net for the future. For more information, visit www.opportunity.org.

###