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**ICRW Awards Gala Honors Global Leaders for Advancing the
Well-Being and Economic Progress of Women and Girls**

Salud y Género, Standard Chartered Bank Honored
for Their Work to Improve Women's Lives

WASHINGTON, D.C., March 5, 2008 – On the eve of International Women's Day, the International Center for Research on Women (ICRW) has issued a challenge for U.S. and world leaders to take a stand, listen to the needs of women and girls, and use their influence to implement the "right solutions" to advance the progress and opportunities for women and girls in impoverished nations around the world.

"Bringing about change for the world's poor women will require leaders – champions for change – at all levels, including community leaders and politicians, activists and entrepreneurs," says ICRW President Geeta Rao Gupta.

These leaders must not be afraid "to speak up and take risks" and "to use their power to implement the changes needed to improve opportunities for poor women and girls," says Rao Gupta in an address to guests who attended ICRW's 2008 gala.

Speaking about ICRW's work over the past three decades, Rao Gupta says: "We have learned that to identify the right solutions requires careful listening – listening to what girls and women have to tell us about the constraints they face and the ways that they believe those constraints can be overcome."

The 2008 Champions for Change gala was held tonight at Union Station in Washington, D.C. The event featured dinner, an "Investing in Women" awards presentation and a live auction with former *Washington Post* columnist Bob Levey. Sarah Jones, Tony Award-winning playwright, actor and poet, performed a one-woman act portraying characters from around the globe. Nina Totenberg, NPR correspondent, served as Mistress of Ceremonies.

Distinguished guests from government, nongovernmental organizations, the diplomatic corps, academic and scientific communities, and the media attended the inspiring event to salute exemplary leaders and organizations that are working to promote the health, well-being and economic progress of women and girls through their policies, programs and partnerships.

ICRW presented the Innovation award to Salud y Género (“Health and Gender”), a Mexico-based nongovernmental organization, for its cutting-edge work with men and boys in Latin America to challenge assumptions about proper masculine roles, reduce violence against women and improve men’s support of women’s reproductive health.

The Vision award was given to Standard Chartered Bank for its work in Asia, Africa and the Middle East to promote health through generous investments in the prevention and mitigation of HIV and AIDS, its exceptional activities to build gender equity through an extensive program of microfinance, and its efforts to reduce poverty by building sustainable businesses and promoting responsible environmental practices.

“To all these leaders we say thank you. We are committed to working in partnership with you – our work is inspired by your courage. You feed our optimism that change is possible: that some day soon, women and men will share equally in the enjoyment of basic capabilities, economic assets, voice and freedom from fear and violence – that some day soon, women and men will share in the care of children and the sick, the responsibility for paid employment and the joys of leisure,” says Rao Gupta to the award recipients and other champions for change worldwide.

The awards gala was held prior to the annual observance of International Women’s Day; this year’s theme is “Shaping Progress.”

ABOUT ICRW: *The International Center for Research on Women (ICRW) is a leading Washington, D.C.-based international research organization with offices in India and Uganda that works to advance gender equality and human rights, fight poverty, and promote sustainable economic and social development for all. Learn more about ICRW and its work at www.icrw.org.*

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