

Clearly, issues affecting women entrepreneurs have become a more prominent feature of public debate in the developed world. But as Jehan Sadat, our conference keynote speaker in 1997 noted: "In the most developed countries, businesswomen are off and running, while those in less developed ones are taking small steps or just learning how to walk. And there are those who do not yet realize that they too can enter the race." Today that description is still true, based on surveys that CIPE is conducting of women's business associations. Much work remains to be done, and that is why we are convening a second conference in June 2000 entitled "Women: the Emerging Economic Force." We need to bridge this gap to bring developing countries into the mainstream of thinking about women entrepreneurs in the modern world.



Here in the United States women business owners have already emerged as a force to be reckoned with. Our interview with US Chamber of Commerce President Tom Donohue illustrates more than the importance of women business owners to the US economy. It also shows how devising a strategy to attract women members makes good business sense.

There is growing momentum for women entrepreneurs to have a seat at the table in the emerging world economy. This is the spirit we want to capture in this issue of *Economic Reform Today* and in our conference next June. Phyllis Bonanno, conference chairman, describes our mission best as spearheading the integration of women-owned and managed businesses into the mainstream of the world economy.

There are some excellent examples of women's business associations that have taken this mission to heart and have begun shaping their strategies to achieve it. You can read about some of them in this issue. CIPE is seeking out organizations like the ones profiled here to participate in next year's conference. If your organization fits this profile, and you would like to attend the conference, we invite you to fill out our online survey at [www.cipe.org/survey.html](http://www.cipe.org/survey.html). We will be selecting groups on a competitive basis to attend. The meeting will be held June 14-16, 2000, in Washington, DC. Please see our Web site for more information.

We would also like to invite you to join the online discussion of themes important to women entrepreneurs now taking place on CIPE's electronic information service, the Forum on Economic Freedom. Through participation in this online discussion, you will have the opportunity to discuss the topics presented in this issue of *Economic Reform Today* and other important issues. You will also have the opportunity to interact over our network with other leaders of women's business associations around the world. To join the discussion, simply go to our Web site at <http://www.cipe.org> and search for the section Supporting Women Entrepreneurs. We look forward to including your experiences and viewpoints.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Willard A. Workman". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Willard A. Workman  
Vice President, CIPE & Vice President,  
International, US Chamber of Commerce