

without losing their jobs, and to keep their health insurance when they change jobs. We have protected Medicaid coverage for 36 million Americans, including about 20 million children, and the Balanced Budget Act I recently signed into law will provide meaningful health care coverage to millions more uninsured children.

But there is still much to be accomplished if we are to ensure that America's children grow up to meet their fullest potential. Our next important goal must be to build upon our efforts and improve the quality and affordability of child care in our Nation. With more people in the work force, with more single-parent homes, and with more families in which both parents have to work to make ends meet, millions of American children are already in some form of day care, and the demand for affordable, quality child care is growing. Later this month, the First Lady and I will host the White House Conference on Child Care to work with and learn from other parents, child care providers and experts, business leaders, and economists. Together we will focus on the best means to increase the quality, availability, and affordability of child care in our Nation.

As we observe National Children's Day this year, let us recommit ourselves to creating a society where parents can raise healthy, happy children; where every newborn is cherished, where every child is encouraged to succeed, and where all our young people are free to pursue their dreams.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, WILLIAM J. CLINTON, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim October 12, 1997, as National Children's Day. I urge all Americans to express their love and appreciation for children on this day and on every day throughout the year. I invite Federal officials, State and local governments, and particularly all American families to join together in observing this day with appropriate ceremonies and activities to honor our Nation's children.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this tenth day of October, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-seven, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-second.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

Proclamation 7041 of October 15, 1997

International Rural Women's Day, 1997

*By the President of the United States of America
A Proclamation*

Our world has been continually uplifted and renewed by the contributions of women. Women of courage and conscience, women of strength and compassion, women of vision and talent have enriched every aspect of international society. In our own Nation, the names of such extraordinary individuals as Harriet Tubman, Susan B. Anthony, Jane Addams, Rosa Parks, Dolores Huerta, and so many more, are etched on our history and in our hearts. But there are millions of other women who live and work among

us whose names will never be known, but whose efforts and energy contribute profoundly to the quality of our lives. Rural women are numbered among these many quiet heroes.

Today rural women comprise more than one-quarter of the world's population, and they form the basis of much of the world's agricultural economy. In the United States, working on farms and ranches, they play a vital part in ensuring a healthy, safe, and abundant supply of food and fiber for our people. In developing countries, as small farmers, laborers, and entrepreneurs, rural women help produce most of the food, create many of the jobs, and manage most of their countries' natural resources. While millions of rural women worldwide live below the poverty level, struggling to survive with scarce resources and little training and education, they still manage to feed their families and contribute to their communities.

When the international community came together in Beijing in 1995 for the Fourth United Nations World Conference on Women, rural women made their voices heard by world leaders, and their hard work and sacrifice were at last recognized by people across the globe. Next year, when the United States hosts the Second World Conference on Women in Agriculture, we will continue to focus on the status of rural women and their contributions to our world.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, WILLIAM J. CLINTON, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim October 15, 1997, as International Rural Women's Day in the United States. I call upon the American people to observe this day with appropriate programs and activities in recognition of the extraordinary contributions rural women make to the quality of our lives, both in America and around the world.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this fifteenth day of October, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-seven, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-second.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

Proclamation 7042 of October 17, 1997

National Forest Products Week, 1997

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

America's forests are a precious resource, making numerous rich contributions not only to the natural splendor of our Nation, but also to the well-being of our people. Whether part of the vast acreages that make up our industrial, State, and National forests or rural woodlots and urban forests, they offer us clean water and air, priceless wildlife habitat and fisheries, welcome settings for recreation, and breathtaking beauty. Our forests also provide us with more tangible products essential to everyday living: wood and paper products for our homes, schools, and offices, and even medicines and food.