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Dear Friends and Colleagues,

Today marks six months into the Trump administration. This day presents us with an opportunity to take stock and develop strategies as we continue to resist constant assaults by this administration on innumerable cherished values, laws, and policies. As a human rights and social justice advocate, I am profoundly aware of the interconnectedness of the ideals and principles we are all fighting to uphold. As a Muslim-American feminist who is also an immigrant and an environmentalist, I am heartened by our resistance to those in power in Washington. Moreover, despite all the current dismaying regressivity, I remain invigorated by being a participant in this “golden era” of activism and political awareness.



Part of this new spirit of activism is an intense feeling of relatedness. That is why I am thrilled to participate in a resurgence of commitment not only to women’s rights and gender concerns, but to other equally important progressive issues. There is now a deeper understanding of intersectionality both within these issues and with numerous other challenges ranging from the environment to immigration and reproductive rights. Recently I have been privileged to publish and speak on these matters.

To commemorate International Women’s Day this year, I authored an [op-ed](#) focused on how promoting gender equality helps everyone. Ensuring the equality of half of the globe’s population is a moral and political imperative that delivers tangible benefits to all. Gender equality will reduce poverty and world hunger, improve employment opportunities for all, and contribute to higher rates of economic growth. I was also delighted to celebrate International Women’s Day by speaking at UC Berkeley’s Institute for South Asian Studies at the invitation of the Bangladesh Women’s Empowerment Network of California.

In addition, there continues to be inspired action in preventing climate change and advocating for environmentalism generally. In this HuffPo [blog](#), I share my perspective about how these issues could be addressed by taking a rights-based approach and promoting women’s rights. Because women are farmers and engaged in water collection, food preparation and cooking, their activities have profound environmental implications. In short, empowering women will help “save the planet.” I was able to advocate for these views in the profile that [Bustle.com](#) featured on me.

Health, too, has profound implications for human rights and social justice. My recent international travels exposed me to dengue fever, resulting in an [op-ed](#) and an [article](#) about how such Neglected “Tropical” Diseases are a symbol of profound global inequality. The World Health Organization defines Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs) as “a diverse group

of communicable diseases that prevail in tropical and subtropical conditions in 149 countries—[and that] affect more than one billion people and cost developing economies billions of dollars every year.” These diseases are considered “neglected” because they afflict the world’s poor. Moreover, marginalized communities, including women and children, are at higher risk of these diseases while in the tragic situation of having the least access to treatment.

I strongly believe that non-profits provide the most principled, bold, and innovative strategies for addressing global challenges. I thus continue serving as a consultant to non-profits and organizations to enhance their ability to deliver on their missions. I also welcome your input about appropriate professional opportunities for a seasoned leader like me.

I hope you have a wonderful summer, and I share with you these wonderful lines from the 13th-century Sufi poet, Jalaluddin Rumi, in his poem entitled “Only Breath”:

“Not Christian or Jew or Muslim, not Hindu
Buddhist, sufi, or zen.

Not any religion or cultural system.

I am not from the East
or the West,
not out of the ocean
or up from the ground,
not natural or ethereal,
not composed of elements at all. . .

I belong to the beloved,
have seen the two worlds as one
and that one call to and know,

first, last, outer, inner, only that
breath breathing human being.”

All the best,

Anika