These inequalities, Mr. Speaker, begin early in life. Young girls are less likely to be informed about the risks and dangers of HIV/AIDS and also far more likely than boys to be coerced or even raped. Even when they are taught about prevention, they are often unable to avoid unsafe sexual practices because of their lack of social influence.

Mr. Speaker, many of us may ask, what can we in this country do to change the status of women in sub-Saharan Africa? Well, there are many things that we can do. There are many things that we can and must do right now.

Right now, Mr. Speaker, we must focus national and international policies toward the eradication of poverty in order to empower women. Right now, Mr. Speaker, we must affirm the human rights of girls and women to equal access to education, skills training and employment opportunities. Right now, Mr. Speaker, we must intensify efforts to determine the best policies and programs to prevent women and young girls from becoming infected with HIV/AIDS.

Mr. Speaker, there is a lot we can do and we must do it right now.

DEVELOPING A COMMONSENSE, COMPREHENSIVE NATIONAL ENERGY POLICY

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. KIRK). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Utah (Mr. MATHESON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. MATHESON. Mr. Speaker, this week there will be a number of different energy policy proposals that will be introduced, a number of events that will attract a lot of attention, attract a lot of press; and we are at the outset of a time when Congress will be asked to take on the very difficult task of trying to develop a commonsense, comprehensive national energy policy.

This is a complicated issue, and we really should not take a simplistic approach. In that context, we should not take a simplistic partisan approach. Energy should not be a partisan issue. We should find a common ground within this body to tackle such a complicated issue.

We are going to hear concerns about this issue, where we talk about some short-term issues and some long-term issues, and it is important to consider both of those time frames in terms of making good public policy decisions.

The short-term is the set of issues that we can all relate to the most, because we are all consumers in this country and we have all felt the pain of the gas pump. We have all seen our electric bills come in at higher prices. We have all seen our gas bills come in at higher prices.

The short-term issue is the more tangible issue. Although it is the more tangible issue, it is also one that is very complicated to solve, because there are not too many options we have right now. But we should recognize that consumers are feeling the pinch.

We should promote policies that encourage any potential incremental production that we can accelerate quickly to bring to market, and we also need to encourage policies that are going to encourage efficiency and better use of our energy supplies.

That is really the best weapon we have got in terms of short-term solutions to our energy supply problems, because if you really want to take a step back and talk about the problem, as I said, it is very complicated in nature. It comes down to where we have a supply and demand imbalance. And in the short-term, supply is going to be very hard to affect so we really need to take a look at the demand side and see what we can do.

There are a lot of technologies out there right now. This is not something where we have to come up with something new. These technologies exist today, they are proven, and we have to be smart about how we use energy in our country.

But let me shift to the long-term issues, which get to be a broader range of issues we need to talk about. We need to talk about ways to enhance our supplies; there is no question about it. We need to do this in a comprehensive, balanced way. We need to rely on technology to give us the best available options for creating additional energy supplies.

From a public policy perspective here in Congress, we need to try to create a more predictable policy environment. I used to work in the energy business. I know how complicated it can be when you want to site a power plant and you are trying to figure out, what are the rules? I have to play by the rules, but I do not know what they are.

We need to create a situation where we have more transparent rules, a more transparent situation, so people can make informed decision, because we are talking about investments of hundreds of millions of dollars in an individual energy facility. If we are going to make those types of investment decisions, we have to have a predictable future about what the marketplace is going to look like and what the rules of the game are going to.

So I call on Congress to make sure that as we make these policy decisions, we do not make the situation more complicated. We need to pursue something where we are clear and predictable in the policy environment.

Energy should not be characterized as a partisan issue. Our constituents expect more of us. Our constituents recognize how difficult energy policy can be. They are also feeling the pinch today. I think as we sit here at the outset, it is important for us to take a step back and make a commitment to take a good balanced comprehensive approach, looking at both supply and demand, and address this in as comprehensive a manner as possible.

EXCHANGE OF SPECIAL ORDER TIME

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to reclaim the time of the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO) in order to present my 5-minute special order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Ohio?

There was no objection.

REPORT OF CHURCH LEADER DELEGATION TO MEXICO WITH REGARD TO EFFECTS OF NAFTA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, I wish to extend my sincere appreciation to the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. DUNCAN) for allowing me to precede him here this evening. He is always very gracious and accommodating to other Members.

Mr. Speaker, this evening I begin what will be a series of 5-minute speeches to place in the RECORD information about a very important trip on our continent that was taken by religious leaders of Canada to Mexico in a fact-finding trip subsequent to the passage of the North American Free Trade Agreement, NAFTA.

They traveled there in late March and early April, and in fact have produced probably one of the finest documents I have had the opportunity to read regarding what has happened in the last 7 years post-NAFTA. The delegation included representatives of the Presbyterian Church, the Roman Catholic Church, the Anglican Church, the United Church of Canada, the Canadian Religious Conference, and the Inter-Church Committee on Human Rights in Latin America. They traveled throughout Mexico to all different regions, and this evening I will only talk about a few of the areas that they visited.

The compelling report that they have produced tells all of us who are going to be faced very shortly with a vote on fast-track extension, to move NAFTA to expand its concepts to all of Latin America, to think twice about what we are doing and to go back and redress some of the horrendous conditions that the original NAFTA agreement has created in our own country and in the other two major nations on this continent, Canada and Mexico.

The group first visited the Sierra Tarahumara, which is in the central part of the country in the region of Chihuahua, and I will only read parts of their written report. They begin saying, ''In the once densely forested mountains of the Tarahumara Sierra, we met with the indigenous communities of San Alonso, who gave us a letter for our government, signed with their thumbprints that pleads for 'an end to the impoverishment of our people.' ''