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For Immediate Release

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**National Expert On Women Business Owners To Serve On U.S. Delegation
To Women's Summit In Tunisia**

Mary Cantando Named As Envoy Of The State Department

Raleigh, NC – The Middle East Partnership Initiative will host a three-day forum in Tunis, Tunisia May 24-26, 2005 featuring practical business training for an expected 200 women entrepreneurs from 16 countries and territories in the Middle East and North Africa. Mary Cantando, President of WomanBusinessOwner.com and Author of *NINE LIVES: Stories of Women Business Owners Landing On Their Feet*, has been selected as an Envoy of the State Department to participate in the initiative. The U.S. delegation also includes Assistant Secretary of State for Education and Cultural Affairs, Patricia Harrison, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs, Elizabeth Cheney, and Vice Chair, Export-Import Bank, April Foley. American businesswomen will provide training under the auspices of WE, Inc., an American nonprofit business association advocating policy solutions that encourage business ownership by women, and that assist entrepreneurs at all stages of their business development. Cantando serves as the Business Growth Advisor for this organization.

The purpose of the forum is to build peer networks, learn from regional and American experts, and find new venture partners. As business owners and executives, attendees will recognize their leading role in economic reform through business expansion, entry into international trade, and dynamic joint ventures to take advantage of the opportunities offered by reformed economic systems and trade agreements.

"I am honored to serve on the US delegation for this summit of women business owners from around the world," said Cantando. "Conferences such as this are an essential part of our foreign policy and I feel humbled that women around the globe find my insights to be important."

About Mary Cantando:

Mary Cantando is a nationally recognized expert on women business owners. She sits on the National Board of the Women Presidents' Organization, serves as the "Business Growth Advisor" for Women Entrepreneurs, Inc, sits on the National Women's Forum, and is an Ambassador of the Women's Business Enterprise National Council. She is the author of *Nine Lives: Stories of Women Business Owners Landing on their Feet*. As a member of the National Speakers' Association, Cantando speaks to women who want to grow their businesses, as well as corporations seeking to attract the lucrative, fast-growth market of women business owners.

About WomanBusinessOwner.com:

WomanBusinessowner.com is a national advisory firm that works with successful women business owners as well as corporations seeking to sell to this lucrative, fast-growth market. For more information, call 919-841-0401 or visit the website at www.WomanBusinessOwner.com.

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