

Beijing + 15: A Planned Parenthood Planet

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A clock is ticking. As the UNFPA checks the hour, every second is to them a woman without contraception, every minute an abortion unperformed. And 2015, the deadline for the Beijing Platform for Action and Millennium Development Goals, is just five years around the corner.

In the upcoming two weeks, government leaders, women's rights activists, and noted population control organizations, such as the UNFPA, UNIFEM, UNICEF, and WHO, will gather in New York City for the 54th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW). They have one main objective: to double the current spending "on family planning and maternal health programmes in developing nations."

If you have any doubt about their agenda, allow me to explain. At present, the international community spends around 12 billion a year on contraceptives, condoms, sterilizations and abortions that aim to cull the already diminishing populations of developing countries. Now, during a time of widespread economic collapse and grave government deficits, the CSW is asking to double that "current spending to \$24.6 billion" so that they can step up the implementation of the Beijing agenda.

We will not let them have their way and your taxpayer money just for the asking. Carlos Polo, the director of PRI's Latin American office and our lawyer Janet Ramos are leading delegates from the Latin American countries to attend the CSW 54 and spearhead opposition to this UN effort for a Planned Parenthood planet.

This 2010 battleground session marks the 15th anniversary of the original Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, which in 1995 laid out 12 “critical areas of concern” and “strategic objectives” for the “global agenda for women’s human rights, gender equality and the empowerment of women.” Five years later, 8 Millennium Development Goals were added to accelerate the Beijing Platform for Action, chief of which was MDG 5, “to improve maternal health.”

Not surprisingly, one of the two targets for MDG 5 is to “achieve, by, 2015, universal access to reproductive health.” Among the indicators of progress are the rate of “contraceptive prevalence,” cutting the “adolescent birth rate” (paraphrase: abortion), and the level of “unmet need for family planning” (paraphrase, any woman with children spaced less than 2 years apart, planned or unplanned). Keep in mind; these targets are their highest priorities, as CSW preliminary documents insist, “with the target dates for the MDGs fast approaching, there is increased urgency to consider concrete ways for shaping a gender perspective towards the full realization of the MDGS.”

But these same preparatory documents for the 54th session show gaping holes that can be used to undercut the anti-life agenda. For instance, of chief concern in the documents is the negligible reduction in maternal mortality effected since the Beijing Declaration. One document explains that “complications of abortion account for most maternal deaths.” It then admits: “Research has shown that around 80 percent of maternal deaths could be averted if women had access to essential maternity and basic healthcare services” (paraphrase: primary health care, not including abortion, otherwise it would have been explicit). Despite this clear indicator that primary health care averts maternal death while abortion causes it, reproductive health and family planning programmes (i.e. abortion) are always included as essential to reducing maternal mortality.

When a machine proves ineffective at its job, the manufacturer designs a new machine, he doesn’t ask the board for double the money so that he can manufacture more ineffective ones. When the CSW documents complain about the negligible progress their family planning programs have made improving of women’s health and human rights in the past 15 years, why do governments listen to their pleas for double the funding for these ineffective family planning programs?

In the upcoming sessions of the CSW 54 Beijing + 15, PRI will be working with Latin American delegates, the Holy See, and other friendly governments to redesign their ineffective machine, because we do care about maternal health and women’s rights,

especially the right to safe and healthy birth.

In the next weeks, we will be reporting on the Beijing + 15 negotiations from New York City; stay tuned.

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