Commission on the Status of Women
Fifty-fourth session
1-12 March 2010
Item 3 (a) of the provisional agenda*
Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and
to the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly,
entitled “Women 2000: gender equality, development and
peace for the twenty-first century”: implementation of
strategic objectives and action in critical areas of concern
and further actions and initiatives: review of the implementation
of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the
outcomes of the twenty-third special session and its
contribution to shaping a gender perspective in the realization
of the Millennium Development Goals

Statement by Americans for UNFPA, a non-governmental
organization in consultative status with the Economic and
Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being
circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council
resolution 1996/31.

Statement

1. On behalf of the Board of Directors and staff of Americans for UNFPA, I am pleased to extend our support for the fifty-fourth session of the Commission on the Status of Women. Americans for UNFPA builds moral, political and financial support within the United States of America for the work of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).

2. The fifty-fourth session of the Commission brings us together to assess progress towards meeting essential health goals set 15 years ago at the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing and at the International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo. The Platform for Action developed at those forums affirmed the right of women to enjoy lives of dignity, equality, and health, including sexual and reproductive health.

3. Fifteen years later, with only five years remaining to meet the health goals, progress is lagging. Governments globally have not fulfilled their commitments to improving women’s health. Between 1995 and 2004, donor assistance to international family planning dropped by almost $300 million worldwide.

4. It is with disappointment that I acknowledge that the United States contributed to this decline. From 2001 to 2008, the United States withheld funds from UNFPA. During that time, members of Congress allocated a total of $244 million to support UNFPA’s lifesaving work; however, for political reasons, those funds were not released to UNFPA.

5. Despite these setbacks, Americans for UNFPA continued to fight for United States funding for UNFPA. We rallied Americans to engage in political advocacy; raise public awareness about the global needs of women; and contribute what they could to support UNFPA’s work.

6. Today, the Obama Administration, particularly Secretary of State Clinton, has signalled a commitment to improving the status of women globally. These leaders view the promotion of women’s health and dignity worldwide as integral to strong foreign policy. On his third day in office, President Obama announced that the United States would restore support for UNFPA. Shortly thereafter, $50 million was released to UNFPA.

7. Still, our work is far from done. The global needs of women are urgent and life-threatening. Every minute, a woman dies in pregnancy or childbirth, from largely preventable causes. On behalf of women everywhere, and with supporters hailing from every corner of the United States, Americans for UNFPA will continue to advocate for increased support for UNFPA.

8. As we promote UNFPA’s efforts to end maternal death, ensure access to contraception and improve women’s lives, I am hopeful that leaders worldwide will also invest more in women. Together we must use the Commission on the Status of Women as an opportunity to call on our leaders to meet the commitments agreed upon 15 years ago. We must hold our leaders accountable, to ensure that women’s rights are guaranteed as human rights.