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General Debate 3

(a) Actions for the further implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development at the global, regional and national levels

(b) Review and appraisal of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and its contribution to the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

Statement submitted by Campaign Life Coalition, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council²

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.

¹ E/CN.9/2019/1.

² The present statement is issued without formal editing.



Statement

Comments for the review of the Programme of Action

Campaign Life Coalition is a national, non-profit organization involved in political action and advocacy for legal and cultural change in Canada with respect to protecting human life and the natural family. It works in identifying and assisting pro-life and pro-family candidates to run for public office at all levels of government and promotes civic engagement at the grassroots level.

In review of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, we would like to affirm its continued rejection of the use of any forms of coercion in population policies, its prioritization of the advancement of women's status through education and improved access to basic health care services, as well as its recognition of the protection and support required by the family, founded on marriage, which is the basic cell of society. Furthermore, we would like to reaffirm the preamble's implication that the whole document, in its integrity, does not contain any affirmation of a new internationally recognized right to abortion. This implication remains consistent within the modern context given that there continues to exist no legal right to abortion, whether under international law or by treaty obligation. Member States remain poignantly divided on the issue.

The Programme of Action states that abortion should never be promoted as a method of family planning and that nations should endeavour to find alternatives to abortion. However, despite this claim, it goes on to describe abortion as a dimension of population policy and of primary health care.

For the sake of transparency and in a spirit of respect for the sovereignty of every nation, any term related to sexual and reproductive health and/or reproductive rights must not be understood to include a right to abortion or to impose a burden on governments to provide access to or to fund abortions or change their laws relating to abortion. The construction of comprehensive definitions for all terms relating to sexual health and reproductive rights, which excludes any and all references to abortion, would pave the way for a fresh influx of authentic consensus building as well as increase the opportunities for international cooperation.

Finally, we would like to highlight the importance of respect for individual state sovereignty, especially as it relates to the need for an increased acknowledgement of each nation's right to limit abortion. To this end, we call upon Member States at the Commission on Population and Development to defend, in word and deed, the right of each nation to limit abortion according to their deeply rooted cultural and traditional values, for the benefit of multilateralism as well as for the preservation of the cultural integrity of each nation.

Respect for the inherent right to sovereignty of every nation is key to maintenance of a reliable global democracy, as well as a future that is genuinely free of any coercive, neo-colonial tendencies. At present, there remains no universally acknowledged, legal right to abortion and to insist that other nations adopt a practice that in no way reflects their cultural heritage or identity, is to be regarded as ideological colonialism and a violation of not only the nation's right to sovereignty but the people's right to self-determination. In an era where the coercive enforcement of political ideologies has had a devastating impact on population sustainability and had a devastating effect on millions of lives, the imposition of abortion on any government cannot be tolerated.