

STATEMENT TO THE 44TH CONFERENCE ON POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT

by
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on behalf of the
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(C.A.B.O.M.)
(10 eco-soc NGO organizations)

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Mr Chairman, ladies and gentlemen,

Thank you for allowing me to speak. Drs. John and Evelyn Billings of Australia developed a Method that has much relevance to the theme of this conference: Fertility, Reproductive Health and Development. It has been included within the choices of government family planning programmes of many countries including India and China. It has empowered millions of women and parents world wide to be in charge of their fertility simply, naturally and effectively without cost to governments and families. Young, poor, illiterate and even blind women use it successfully when taught by accredited teachers.

The Billings Ovulation Method™ enhances and safeguards the health of the mother. The chart that a woman is asked to keep on a daily basis, accurately reflects patterns of underlying hormones. This provides endocrinologists, obstetricians and gynaecologists with a wealth of information in the early diagnosis and treatment of infertility and disease and is cheaper and easier than lab tests. It helps couples labelled “low fertility” to conceive 80% of the time. A healthy functioning mother is essential to the health of her family, the basic unit of society. A healthy family unit is necessary in the development of a nation.

In 1978 the World Health Organisation found it to be 98.5% effective when used to avoid becoming pregnant in its five nation trial published in *Fertility and Sterility*, 1981. More recent studies validating its effectiveness have been published in *The Lancet*; *Chinese Medical Journal* (1998); *the Irish Medical Journal* and last year, Oxford's *Human Reproductive Update*. It is as effective as contraceptive devices and medical contraception without their costly side effects. Contraception often acts in an abortifacient manner and leads to abortion 54% of the time. (i) Abortion in the form of morning after pills has become the norm in Canada and Europe in ‘flagrant delit’ of the 1994 ICPD Cairo Report which stated that, “in no case should abortion be promoted as a method of family planning” (ii).

Why the UN Population Division has not included the Billings Ovulation Method™ within its population statistics this year is a mystery. One would have thought greater emphasis would be put upon a modern, natural Method that is culturally acceptable, environmentally friendly, safe, effective, cost-free to government and family budgets and helpful to couples seeking to achieve pregnancy as well as postpone pregnancy. Maybe political will will change when more governments report below population replacement levels and the merits of the Method become more obvious. No longer must this natural, trademarked Method be lumped under the heading of “traditional methods” or various “mucus, calendar or rhythm methods”. Each method must be judged on its own merits and assessed independently. I urge governments to fund and promote the spread of the Billings Ovulation Method™ in their own countries. Teacher training workshops are held bi-annually in Australia and it would be worthwhile sending health professionals to attend.

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(i) Guttmacher Institute

(ii) ICPD 8.25