



Mister Chairman, Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen:

Alliance Defending Freedom, is a non-profit international legal alliance of over 2,300 lawyers dedicated to the protection of fundamental human rights. . It has been involved in over 500 cases before national and international forums, including the Supreme Courts of the United States of America, Argentina, Honduras, Mexico, Peru, India and the Inter American Court of Human Rights and the European Court of Human Rights. It also has provided expert testimony before several European parliaments, as well as the European Parliament and the United States Congress. It has accreditation with the Economic and Social Council of the UN, as well as the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the European Union.

Mujer para la Mujer is a non-governmental organization that works to promote the fundamental human rights of women, with a focus on improving the lives of rural women of the various indigenous communities in Mexico. **Construye** is a Mexican non-governmental organization that highlights the value of women in the professional, social and family spheres through the compilation of information, the exchange of better practices, and promotion of men and women's development. **Asociación Gilberto** is a Mexican non-governmental organization that seeks to provide help, support, and livelihood to the most disadvantaged within the population, providing quality services according to the needs of the communities that they serve, including education and skills training to improve quality of life. **Red Mujeres, Justicia y Paz A.C.** works in 28 states in Mexico and serves to empower women through trainings in business and finance to more effectively contribute to their families, communities, and country.

On the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the International Conference on Population and Development, ICPD, we urge Member States to reaffirm our immutable human rights with a particular focus on authentic solutions to development that prioritize the needs of the person. ICPD established what we have always known, that for sustainable development to manifest itself we must tackle the root causes of underdevelopment, which include known obstacles in the way of growth like poverty, corruption and scarcity. With this in mind Member States achieved consensus on four qualitative and quantitative goals: universal education, reduction of infant and child mortality, reduction of maternal mortality and access to reproductive health.

Much has changed since 1994. We are currently facing a demographic time bomb that we find fitting to address. Demographic statistics state that we have an increasingly ageing population with less young people who are uniquely equipped to drive development. In the interest of lasting growth, we must shift the focus away from policies that present a negative view of the person, including those that promote smaller family sizes and access to abortion.

We call upon Member States to focus on the first 1,000 days of life: from conception to age two. The peer-reviewed medical journal “*The Lancet*” published a series of articles¹ indicating that maternal and child nutrition are quintessential to sustainable development. Both maternal malnutrition and obesity were studied in pregnant women and girls, which both resulted in child

¹ <http://www.thelancet.com/series/maternal-and-child-nutrition>



mortality, and impaired physical and cognitive development with lasting detrimental effects to the economic health of countries. Investing in education and healthcare for the first 1,000 days of life can save the lives of both mothers and their children, helping countries thrive.

We urge member states to promote to the fullest extent the needs of children and young people, in accordance with ICDP. Education is an essential solution to the problem of poverty. Scientific evidence proves that children reach their highest potential if they have the benefit of a stable family. In fact, the best indication of a student's success is not income or social status, but the extent to which the student's mother and father are involved in their education. This care leads to higher academic achievements and emotional stability - basic yet essential needs of children and youths who are then better equipped to capitalize on available economic opportunities and contribute to the flourishing of our society.

We urge Member States to rely on evidence-based medical facts on maternal mortality. The "*Global Burden of Disease Study*"² researched and concluded that almost 23% of maternal deaths were due to postpartum haemorrhage, almost 15% of them were due to maternal hypertension, almost 9% were due to sepsis, and the rest were due to a mix of reasons that included obstructed labour, HIV/AIDS, cardiovascular disease, malaria and anaemia. A 50-year meta-analysis study of maternal health in Chile demonstrated that it was a woman's education level that led to an exponential reduction in maternal mortality, not the legalization of abortion.³ In order to improve maternal health we call on the UN to implement five measures: 1) promote higher education levels for women, 2) ensure prenatal, antenatal and postnatal care, 3) ensure women in labour are cared for by skilled birth attendants, 4) ensure emergency obstetric care, and 5) provide access to water and sanitation.

We'd like to end this statement by bringing to mind the second principle of the ICPD Program of Action, which states "People are the most important valuable resource of any nation." Thank you very much for your attention.

²http://www.healthmetricsandevaluation.org/sites/default/files/policy_report/2011/GBD_Generating%20Evidence_Guiding%20Policy%20FINAL.pdf

³<http://www.plosone.org/article/info%3Adoi%2F10.1371%2Fjournal.pone.0036613>