



ALL PARTY PARLIAMENTARY GROUP ON POPULATION DEVELOPMENT AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

February 2003
NEWSLETTER No 7

FUNDING

Europe Cash for Reproductive Health after US cut

European parliamentarians voted to plug the gap in funding reproductive health in developing countries after the US decided to cut its contribution over the issue of abortion.

Despite intense lobbying from EU and US anti-abortion groups, a majority of MEPs agreed the Union should boost spending on reproductive health programmes to €74 million from €60 million.

Member-states will **still** have to approve the increase.

(The anti-choice groups PRI, Care for Europe, Euro-FAM, Human Life International, Independent Tibet Network and SPUC are increasing their presence in European Parliaments. Propaganda of these anti-choice organisations is based on misinformation, faith and philosophy and has no substantiated scientific grounding).

US spending on HIV/AIDS

President Bush's new \$15 billion initiative to fight AIDS globally includes the largest amount ever devoted to treatment of those infected with the disease in the developing countries.

This 5-year initiative includes \$10 billion in new funds, starting with \$2 billion in the budget year that begins in October. *(Only \$1 billion will go to the Global Health Fund also over 5 years).*

- 1/2 will be spent on treatment
- 1/3 will be spent on prevention - including programmes that teach abstinence and **provide condoms**
- approximately 1/6 for care

The bulk of the new money will go to 14 countries (Botswana, Ivory Coast,

Ethiopia, Guyana, Haiti, Kenya, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Rwanda, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia), which represent 50% of the HIV/AIDS epidemic globally.

36 sub-Saharan African countries were excluded from the list, including 4 with some of the highest infection rates in the world: Zimbabwe, Lesotho, Swaziland, and Malawi.

US Secretary of Health and Human Services, Tommy G. Thompson is the new board chairman of the Global Fund!



HUMAN RIGHTS

Slovakia Gypsies forcibly sterilised

The Centre for Reproductive Rights has published a report saying that 110 Romani women have been sterilised in government-run health facilities against their wills in Slovakia since the fall of communism in 1989.

"The practice of forced sterilisation stems from a racist policy instituted under the communist regime that provided monetary incentives to women to undergo sterilisation -- a policy that targeted Romani women," the report said. Slovakian police are investigating the complaints.

Kenya's new Government

Kiraitu Murngi, the new Minister for Justice and Constitutional Affairs of

Kenya will set up a commission to handle various human rights violations that have been committed in Kenya since independence.

Amnesty International has urged the Kenyan Government to reform laws and practices on acts of violence against women. Violence against women include marital rape, battering, sexual exploitation and abuse of women refugees, rape as a weapon of war, traditional practices harmful for women (FGM & Honor Killings), sexual harassment and intimidation at work, trafficking in women, and forced prostitution.

Wife Beaters in India to get one year in Prison and Fine

Indian men who abuse their wives or other female relatives are to face a year in prison and a fine, according to a report on a proposed new bill on domestic violence in India.

Approximately 37% of the 135,000 crimes committed against women every year are cases of domestic violence in India. 50,000 women are abused by a family member each year. Thousands of cases go unreported. 1/5 women in India have been slapped by their husbands.

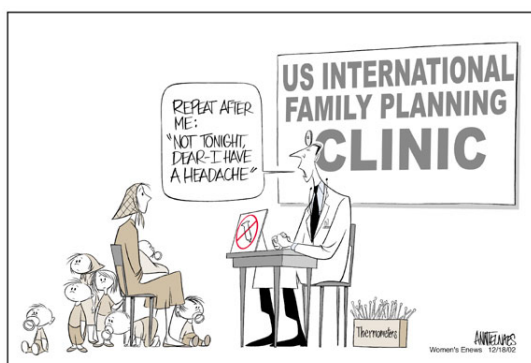
The bill proposes setting up a body of "protection officers" -- likely to be women -- to help victims get justice.

Existing laws in the Indian Penal Code do not recognise domestic violence and the only solution offered is divorce.

POLICIES

The Bush administration's War against Women

Bush's decisions are not solely about abortion but about women's rights!



A chronology of events, which show George Bush's determination to strip women of their reproductive rights:

- 1st day in office in 2001 Bush restored the 'Global Gag Rule', which bars foreign organizations that are recipients of US health funds from providing abortion services, counselling or advocacy, even if they use non-US revenue for those activities
- May 2002 Bush representatives fought sexual education and opposed condoms for HIV/AIDS prevention at the UN Children's Summit;
- July 2002 Bush withheld \$ 34 million in funding for UNFPA;
- July 2002 Bush did an about-face on support of women's rights treaty -The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women CEDAW;
- August 2002 Bush delegation opposed the inclusion of basic human rights at the WSSD PoA, which opens the door to FGM, forced marriages, gang rapes and honour killings;
- Sept. 2002 The House passed the so-called 'Abortion Non-discrimination Act' - a platform to outlaw abortion;
- Oct. 2002 HHS announced 'abstinence-only' advocate to oversee nation's family planning programme;
- Oct. 2002 Bush administration removed medical accurate information on effectiveness of condoms from US health web sites;
- Nov. 2002 Bush administration reversed US position at the ESCAP meeting in support of the global 1994 ICPD PoA agreement, that affirms the right of couples and individuals to determine freely and responsibly the number and spacing of their children and to have the information and means to do so. US officials demanded the

deletion of 'consistent condom use' and universal access to 'reproductive health services'.

In Summary:

"Women's constitutional liberty is threatened, essential reproductive health care is denied or delayed, and women are needlessly dying".

(Please find attached Economist article analysing fundamental US - European differences in approaches to abortion and the way those differences resonate in politics and society).

"CONDOMS NO MORE CAUSE SEX THAN UMBRELLAS CAUSE RAIN"

The US is now donating only 300 million condoms annually, down from about 800 million at the end of the first President Bush's term.

The average man in Botswana gets less than one condom per year from international donors.

Condom distribution is astonishingly cost-effective, costing just \$3.50 per year of life saved. In contrast, antiretroviral therapy cost almost \$1,050.

COMPREHENSIVE SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH CARE SERVICES

Mozambique and Maternal to Child Transmission of HIV/AIDS

The Government of Mozambique will begin to provide AIDS drugs (nevirapine) in hospitals/clinics to pregnant women to prevent Maternal to Child Transmission of HIV/AIDS.

By giving one dose to the mother during labour and one to the infant soon after, health officials can halve the chances the baby will be born infected.

The German pharmaceutical company Boehringer Ingelheim has offered nevirapine free to developing countries for use in preventing mother-to-child transmission of HIV.

Mozambique Bishops statement on Condoms

"God clearly tells us that we must protect life at all costs. To not do so is committing a serious sin against God."

"A is for abstinences - many of you cannot live by this advice. Let us be realistic, few if any of you can abstain. Which brings us to B, be faithful - some of you are faithful...many of you are not. So that leaves us with C...condoms. Now many of you believe that condoms are a crime against God...that wasted semen is a sin and I am here today to tell you otherwise."

"You see, if you are HIV+ and you have unprotected sex and you infect someone, you have, in the eyes of God, committed murder. Or if you are HIV- and you have unprotected sex with someone who is infected, and they infect you, you have, in the eyes of God, committed suicide."

"So my Children, wear a condom is not a sin....not wearing one IS!"

Can't argue with that logic! Sunday church services will never be the same as now every Sunday, part of the Celebration is the blessing of the condoms. That's right, the BLESSING OF THE CONDOMS!

Interesting Points

New WHO Director General

S. Korean, Dr John Woo Lee will replace Gro Harlem Brundtland in July as the Director General of WHO.



Dr Lee has worked for 19 years in technical, managerial and policy positions, notable leading the fights against TB and vaccine preventable diseases in children.

For references and more information contact: APPG Population, Development and Reproductive Health Parliamentary and Policy Advisor Ann Mette Kjaerby, e-mail: kjaerbym@parliament.uk or

telephone: 0207 219 2492 ☺