

ALL PARTY PARLIAMENTARY GROUP ON POPULATION DEVELOPMENT AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH



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FUNDING

Tobin Tax

Tobin tax is a concept whereby a small levy on currency speculation is backed and the potential revenue in excess of \$50 billion each year is allocated to projects in developing countries to end global poverty.

Gordon Brown recommended that 'innovative ways' need to be found to finance development.

For more information attend TOBIN TAX DAY Wednesday, March 13th seminar 1245 - 1645 Diana PWMF, Westminster Bridge Road, SE1 and/or reception 1800 - 2000 MacMillan Room, Portcullis House, House of Commons. *RSVP* jgordon@waranwant.org

The French Parliament has already adopted Tobin Tax!

Denmark's ODA

The newly elected right wing government in Denmark made their pledge for ODA:

- Denmark used to donate 1.06% of GNP to ODA. It will be reduced to 1%
- Expenses for receiving refugees in Denmark will be covered by the ODA

Three of the 18 selected recipient countries for Danish bilateral ODA will no longer receive Danish funding, those being Eritrea, Malawi and Zimbabwe. Other bilateral recipient countries will have funding cuts namely: Kenya, Uganda, Burkina Faso, Egypt, Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan, Vietnam, and Nicaragua.

Funding to NGO's and UN agencies will be reduced. Cuts will be felt in the foreign ministry. Reduction of staff and closure of embassies is expected. There will be increased funding for the Global Health Fund, Afghanistan, International Trade, Women's Rights and improvement of Denmark's own welfare.

Denmark remains amongst the top 3 ODA contributors in the world as % of GNP.

US Funding to UNFPA

President Bush is still freezing US Congress grant of 34 Million US\$ to UNFPA! Have you signed EDM? No 728.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Reproductive Rights and violence against women (FGM and honour killing)

The UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women defines violence against women as any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in physical, sexual or mental harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life. Violence includes battering, sexual abuse of female child, marital rape, traditional practices harmful to women, sexual harassment and intimidation at work, trafficking in women and forced prostitution.

The Thirty-fifth session of the UN Economic and Social Council, Commission on Population and Development, will look at the follow up actions to the ICPD on the 1-5th April 2002, New York. The draft report states: *'Much progress has been made in establishing the basis for reproductive rights, but much remains to be accomplished in translating these rights into policies and programmes'*.

FGM and country legislation update

FGM was outlawed in Ghana in 1994. Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire and Senegal have followed suit.

Uganda adopted a constitution in 1995 stating: 'laws, cultures, customs or traditions which are against the dignity, welfare or interest of women or which undermine their status are prohibited' - FGM dropped by 36 % in Uganda in 1996!

Honour killing

This is an extreme form of gender-based violence, which is intended mainly to control women's sexuality mainly in Western and South Asia.

Women who are raped or who voluntarily engages in sex outside marriage is considered to have defiled the family name. It is considered shameful and dishonourable behaviour, the only way to 'cleanse' the family honour is for a male relative to kill the offending woman or girl.

Honour killing is permitted in Jordan and Syria.

In Pakistan hundreds of women are killed each year for such crimes as adultery, fornication, breaking an arranged marriage or attempting to obtain a divorce.

A study of female homicide in Egypt found that 47% of all women killed had been murdered by a relative after they had been raped. Honour killings are also reported in Lebanon and Yemen.

It is estimated that several hundred Asian women die every year as a result of honour killings. Since honour killings are considered a family concern, such deaths are rarely reported and do not appear in official statistics.

Canada has recognised fear of honour killing as grounds for asylum since 1997.

2 women from Pakistan were granted status in the UK in 1999 because of their fear of being killed by their families was deemed to constitute a well-founded fear of persecution.

POLICIES

Abortion

ICPD+5 called upon governments to 'take appropriate steps to help women to avoid abortion' and 'provide for the humane treatment and counselling, of women who have had recourse to abortion' and 'in circumstance where abortion is not against the law, health systems should train and equip health-service providers and should take other measure to ensure that such abortion is safe and accessible'.

Abortion law update

189 out of 193 countries permit abortions to be performed to save the pregnant woman's life. Four countries prohibit abortion namely: Chile, El Salvador (1997), Holy See and Malta.

However the breath of conditions under which abortion may legally be performed greatly varies:

- woman's choice to end a pregnancy (elective termination)
- woman's health (physical, mental, social) is endangered by pregnancy (therapeutic abortion)
- an abnormality in the developing fetus (birth defect, genetic abnormality)

26 million legal abortions and 20 million unsafe abortions were estimated to have been performed worldwide in 1995. At present only 45 countries report numbers of legal abortions! Latest data reported legal abortions total around 15 million annually.

80% of legal abortions are performed in four countries: China, (7.4 million), Russia (2 million), USA and Vietnam (both 1.2 million).

Since 1990, 29 countries have modified their laws or regulations concerning abortion. In 23 countries changes consisted in repealing restricted provisions.

Recent changes in abortion laws

Health impact of illegal abortion has prompted certain countries to include abortion on request namely:

Eastern Europe: Albania, Bulgaria and Romania

Latin America: Cuba and Guyana.

Africa: Cape Verde, South Africa and Tunisia.

Asia: 16 countries.

Two European countries have passed more restrictive abortion legislation namely Poland and Germany.

In USA in March 2001, 41 states introduced reservations of minors to obtain abortions at the state level.

It is estimated that 10-50% of all women undergoing unsafe abortion need medical care for complications. WHO estimated in 1998 that unsafe abortions result in 78,000 maternal deaths and hundred of thousands of disabilities.

Unsafe abortion is high in countries where family planning information, service and contraception are unavailable or largely inadequate.

Interventions aimed at reducing abortions and abortion-related morbidity and mortality lies in making family planning accessible and abortion safer.

Abortion < 12 weeks is legal again for Afghan women if their health is at risk!

Medial abortions with Mifepristone have been allowed in 18 countries and clinical trials have started in another 6 countries.

More information on population monitoring, 2002: reproductive rights and reproductive health with special Reference to HIV/AIDS can be found at:

www.un.org/esa/population/cpd/comm2002.htm

COMPREHENSIVE SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH CARE SERVICES

Maternal to Child Transmission of HIV/AIDS (MTCT)

5.1 million children are infected with HIV/AIDS, almost all through MTCT.

MTCT can occur during pregnancy, during labour or after delivery through breast milk.
MTCT rate is 15-30% without interventions.

Our global commitment states: 'By 2005, reduce the proportion of infants infected with HIV by 20% and by 50% by 2010'.

How can we reduce/prevent MTCT?

- Protect women from HIV
- Involve fathers
- Promote safer sex - CONDOMS
- Prevent, test for and treat infections especially STI's, TB and Malaria
- Promote a well-balanced diet
- Encourage rest
- Discourage smoking and the use of alcohol and other drugs
- Avoid invasive medical procedures
- Avoid blood transfusions
- Provide voluntary counselling and testing for HIV and thereafter offer if possible/appropriate: Lower Segment Caesarean Section, Vaginal Lavage, and ARV

Do you know?

- Just one tablet for the HIV positive mother while she is in labour and a spoonful of syrup for her baby within 72 hours of birth reduce MTCT by 44%-48%!
- Mixed feeding a baby carry the highest risk of MTCT. Women with access to clean water and utensils are advised to bottle-feed. Women with no access to clean water and utensils are advised to exclusively breastfeed their babies, exclusive means ONLY breastmilk for the first 4-6 months.

The joint EC Parliamentary Assembly adopted a resolution in November 2001 on HIV/AIDS that calls for:

- AZT treatment for infected women and their new-born infants
- EU member states to cancel their world dept for countries willing to invest in their health and education budgets
- EU member states to express clear support for developing countries to make use of the safeguard clauses of the TRIPS agreement when protecting public health

African countries have negotiated with Thailand to Produce Generic HIV drugs locally:
www.aegis.org/news/ap/2001/APO11217.html

Interesting points and websites

Department of Health Annual Report on Teenage Pregnancy in UK is available:
www.teenagepregnancyunit.gov.uk

The International Development Select Committee has released report on Humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan and surrounding region:
www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm/cmintdev.htm

DFID and MRC launched a collaboration to develop an effective microbicide as part of the global effort to help women protect themselves from HIV infection on 19th February 2002!

Human Rights Watch - human rights practices around the world:
www.humanrightswatch.org/wr2k2/

The French government now allows Free Emergency Contraception for Adolescents from a pharmacy without parental consent!

India's Health Minister has launched a project to study penis sizes to make stronger condoms, stung by the high failure rate of condoms in India! 'Note that it is common knowledge that the reason for condom damage and slippage is not the size of the condom but methodology'!

Turkish Civil Code gives women equal rights in marriage now.

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