

# Understanding International Reproductive Rights... The UNFPA

## What is the UNFPA?

◆ The United Nations Population Fund provides assistance to developing countries, at their request, to improve access to and quality of reproductive health care, such as family planning, safe motherhood, and the prevention of sexually transmitted diseases including HIV/AIDS.

## So what's the big deal?

◆ Since 2002, President Bush has either blocked or redirected a total of \$112 million dollars in approved funding for the UNFPA.

- Bush's decision was based on false and unsubstantiated claims by anti-abortion extremists that the UNFPA supports forced abortions in China.
- Bush made this decision despite Secretary of State Colin Powell's earlier endorsement of the UNFPA's "invaluable work."
- A report from the Administration's own fact-finding team found no evidence that the UN organization "has knowingly supported or participated in the management of a program of coercive abortion or involuntary sterilization in China."

◆ As a result of Bush's choice to withhold funding, funding for UNFPA international family planning programs has been cut by 13% – leading to two million unintended pregnancies, 4,700 maternal deaths, 60,000 cases of maternal illnesses, and 77,000 cases of infant death each year.

◆ The UNFPA spent \$231 million dollars on projects in 1995, versus only \$172 million dollars in 2001 due to a lack of funding.

◆ Developing countries have contributed over 2/3 of what they promised at the Cairo conference, while developed countries have given less than half. The United States is far short of the \$17 to 22 billion dollars per year that they promised for international family planning.

## Why should we care?

◆ Women all over the world deserve the same high quality of care, including access to birth control and prenatal care, the freedom to determine whether and when to have children, and a full range of safe reproductive health care services and information.

◆ Restrictive policies against women are ideologies tested in other countries before potentially being brought back to the U.S.

◆ Throughout history, women have worked hard and suffered for the freedoms we enjoy today. Denying funding to UNFPA and international family planning services is backwards progress that must be avoided.

## REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS ARE HUMAN RIGHTS!

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