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On World Population Day, the international community should promote health, not abortion

The ICPD Program of Action says abortion policy should be left to individual nations

Today is World Population Day—a day created to highlight the importance of population issues. This year, the United Nations aims to draw attention to the “unfinished business” of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), which was held in Cairo, Egypt, 25 years ago.

“Many have sought to use ICPD to advance the idea that abortion is a right and that nations are obligated to legalize or promote abortion,” says Scott Fischbach, executive director of Minnesota Citizens Concerned for Life Global Outreach (MCCL GO). “But the ICPD supported no such thing.”

The ICPD adopted a Program of Action that calls for reducing maternal mortality and morbidity, among many other goals; it does not call for the legalization or expansion of abortion. On the contrary, it affirms the equal dignity and right to life of every human being (chapter II, principle 1). It also states that abortion should never be promoted as a method of family planning (paragraph 7.24) and that changes to abortion policy should be made at the local or national level (paragraph 8.25).

“The international community should follow its own agreement in the Program of Action—it should respect the right of nations to protect unborn children and their mothers from the violence of abortion,” says Fischbach. “It should also recognize that maternal health depends on the quality of maternal health care, not on the legal status or availability of abortion. The solution to continuing high levels of maternal and child mortality in some parts of the developing world is to focus on improving care and reaching healthy reproductive outcomes.”

MCCL GO is the U.N.- and OAS-accredited global outreach program of the Minnesota Citizens Concerned for Life Education Fund. Our goal is to protect as many human beings as possible from the destruction of abortion, infanticide, and euthanasia. Learn more at www.mccl-go.org.