

The Honorable Mario Diaz-Balart  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs  
U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Appropriations  
374 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515-0926

Dear Chairman Diaz-Balart,

We congratulate you for assuming the chairmanship of the appropriations subcommittee for all foreign operations and look forward to working with your staff on continued efforts to support the world's most disadvantaged and vulnerable populations. We call on you to mitigate the damage done by the present Administration's ideologies and enact policies that affirm life and family. For years, the United States has invested billions of dollars towards norm-changing, violating nations' sovereignty. Now is the time to refocus efforts on development and humanitarian strategies that uphold the inherent dignity of every man, woman, and child served. To assist in these efforts, we make the following requests for the FY'24 appropriations bill.

- Request 1: Reduce funding by half for family planning and reproductive health, discontinue funding UNFPA, and redirect the \$300 million (requested in FY23) to maternal, newborn, and child health programs.
- Request 2: Withhold funding from UN Women and redirect to bilateral education programs that provide the infrastructure for girls to safely attend primary and secondary schools.
- Request 3: Mandate reporting requirements for all funding to United Nations agencies.
- Request 4: Discontinue funding to UNAIDS and redirect through PEPFAR.
- Request 4: Eliminate funding to the Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights
- Provide pro-life guardrails to funding for GBV programming (275M) and require annual mandatory reporting requirements to SFOPs subcommittee for all prime and subprime funding awards that includes program description and awardees. Additional safeguards may be needed to prevent the terminology of "GBV," as opposed to "violence against women and girls," from redirecting funds away from them and toward advancing gender ideological interests. At a minimum, funding toward GBV response and prevention should be framed in a way that would preclude abortion-promoting organizations from being eligible (Mexico City Policy/PLGHA language). This funding should also include helping victims receive justice and ending impunity for perpetrators.
- Place limits on funding to the World Health Organization (WHO), which received \$700 million from the U.S. last year,<sup>1</sup> and which continues to promote abortion, including by telemedicine and as a form of "self-help," including where it is legally restricted. Funding should be prohibited from going to the WHO-led, multi-agency Human Reproduction

Programme (HRP), which recently published a guidance on so-called “safe abortion” and called on nations to repeal their pro-life laws and make abortion widely available and publicly funded, while restricting the conscience rights of health institutions and individual providers. The HRP’s blatant pro-abortion lobbying should preclude U.S. funding under the standard set by the Siljander Amendment.

## **Requests for Fiscal Year 2024 Appropriations Bill**

Request 1: Reduce funding by half for family planning and reproductive health, discontinue funding UNFPA and redirect the \$300 million (Requested in FY23) to stand-alone maternal, newborn and child health programs.

UNFPA systematically promotes abortion in their reports and publications. In February 2020, UNFPA cites that “legal barriers to full and equal [sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights] access exist in a number of areas. Such barriers are most prevalent in the case of legal access to abortion, with an average of just 31 per cent achievement in this component.” This reference to “barriers” includes pro-life laws and gestational limits on abortion in a wide variety of countries. Despite a lack of consensus on abortion in UN bodies, UNFPA urges UN treaty bodies to impose “an obligation to ensure universal access to [...] safe abortion care.”<sup>2</sup> UNFPA also promotes the use of the Minimum Initial Service Package (MISP) in humanitarian settings, which explicitly includes “safe abortion,”<sup>3</sup> and promotes the acceptance of the term “sexual and reproductive health and rights” in international negotiations. This term has been rejected by global consensus, and, to the extent that it has been defined, includes abortion as a right.<sup>4</sup>

### **The fallacy of “unmet need”**

For decades, the central argument in favor of international family planning funding has been the existence of over 200 million women in developing countries with an “unmet need” for contraceptives. This “need,” often framed as an existing demand facing a lack of access, is highly misleading. The Guttmacher Institute, a leading proponent of family planning funding, admits that only about 5% of women with a purported “need” cite a lack of access as the reason they are not using a family planning method. Instead, most women cite concerns about health risks and side effects, religious or other opposition, perceived infertility, and other reasons for non-use or discontinuation.<sup>5</sup>

Increasingly, family planning organizations, including the global abortion giants International Planned Parenthood Federation and MSI Reproductive Choices, have shifted their focus toward creating demand for their services, rather than meeting a “demand” that demonstrably does not exist. The rationale behind U.S. funding for family planning should therefore be revisited in line with women’s actual demands on the ground. Family planning funding supplements global abortion groups, allowing them to work in country and, while there, agitate to change pro-life laws.

Further, the United States continues to promote dangerous contraceptives that are falsely marketed as safe and effective. The injectable contraceptive Depo Provera is one of many

examples. Since 2000, USAID has spent over one quarter of a billion dollars on injectable contraceptives like Depo Provera - \$12.4 million in 2016 alone<sup>6</sup> - despite scientific evidence that women and young girls risk serious side effects that include a two-fold increased risk of breast cancer, bone density loss, and increased risk of cervical cancer as well as an increased risk of acquiring the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) by nearly fifty percent.<sup>7</sup> Concern over bone density loss caused by Depo Provera is so great that it carries a Black Box warning – the strictest warning given by the Food and Drug Administration.<sup>8</sup>

Reducing family planning and reproductive health funding will inevitably lead to an outcry from reproductive rights advocates, specifically fearmongering of global catastrophe should the U.S. withdraw funding from population control programs. History, however, has proven that is not the case. Following the Trump administration's expansion of the Mexico City Policy, the Dutch-lead *She Decides Initiative* established a fund to ensure money will continue to flow without interruption to abortion providers. To date, *She Decides* has raised \$560 million, with nearly 20% coming from Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. As founder of *She Decides*, Lilianne Ploumen announced at the annual Lancet Lecture at University College, London, "[I]f the US government is going to take away the 600 million dollars, we will need to find a way to find 600 million dollars somewhere else."<sup>9</sup> Similarly, when the U.S. defunded UNFPA under former President Donald Trump, a UNFPA spokesman boasted that "Some partners have pulled out of the reproductive health field, but UNFPA has more money than ever."<sup>10</sup>

We must resist the logic that the prevention of maternal mortality necessitates the prevention of pregnancy. Rather, U.S. and international efforts ought to support mothers and children to the greatest degree possible; this is a goal that notably shares global consensus in the United Nations. From 2000 to 2015, maternal mortality rates fell, yet since 2016, this progress has plateaued. Current maternal mortality remains at roughly 223 deaths per 100,000 live births and is at risk of rising further.<sup>11</sup> Increasing funding for contraceptives when the existing demand is largely saturated and promoting controversial "sexual rights" is not the way to help mothers and children. It does not create concrete healthcare facilities, infrastructure, education, or personnel; rather, tackling maternal mortality requires greater investment and prioritization of mothers and children and the societal structures that support them.

## Request 2: Eliminate funding to UN Women and redirect to formal education for girls.

### **UN Women promotes abortion**

UN Women has a mandate to promote the equality and empowerment of women and girls around the world. Unfortunately, UN Women believes access to abortion is necessary to achieve this.<sup>12</sup> When UN Women assessed progress toward achieving the Sustainable Development Goals through the lens of gender, they say that legal restrictions "including the criminalization of abortion, continue to compound the challenges women face in accessing safe sexual and reproductive health care."<sup>13</sup> In addition to promoting abortion as a human right, UN Women issued a report on the UN Security Council resolution 1325 on "Women, Peace, and Security" (2000) in which they argued that abortion is a humanitarian right as well: "Ensure that all global humanitarian and local health-care workers are trained in basic life-saving sexual and reproductive health care, in accordance with international human rights standards, as well as

emergency response for survivors of domestic and sexual violence, including emergency contraception and abortion/post-abortion services.”<sup>14</sup>

### **UN Women is discriminatory**

UN Women has silenced opposing views by excluding pro-family/life organizations from obtaining space to hold events during the annual women’s conference in New York. In 2020, UN Women instituted new “virtual safety guidelines” to govern in-person and online presentations for NGO events during the Commission on the Status of Women. The guidelines dictate that participating organizations must acknowledge “sexism, racism, classism, heterosexism, transphobia, global North domination and other institutionalized forms of oppression,” and “value and revere an intersectional approach to feminism.” Pro-life and pro-family groups, many which prioritize women and are women-led, have been blocked from participating in UN Women parallel events in recent years because of the guidelines, despite claims to be “inclusive.” C-Fam and other groups were denied on the grounds that pro-life values are contrary to the Committee’s values.<sup>15</sup>

In 2021, the U.S. granted \$19.7 million to UN Women, ranking as one of the highest donor countries globally.<sup>16</sup>

### **Request 3: Mandate reporting requirements for all UN agency funding**

### **UNICEF and UNESCO promote abortion and sexual ideology**

In recent years, UNICEF has endorsed contentious interpretations of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. As Dr. Yoshihara reports, “UNICEF intervened with Nicaragua’s national assembly to keep abortion legal in that country, and to liberalize abortion in the Dominican Republic, it has advocated for the right of children to have confidential sexual health services without parental knowledge, advocated that children have genders outside the male-female binary, and has partnered with the world’s largest abortion providers and advocates to hold conferences which promote abortion of children in the womb.”<sup>17</sup>

In the report, *Digital Age Assurance, Age Verification Tools, and Children’s Rights Online across the Globe*, UNICEF claims that not all sexually explicit material ought to be categorized as pornography and that it is not harmful to children. While the report admits that evidence of access to pornography at a young age clearly shows negative effects on psycho-social behavior and wellbeing, UNICEF claims, “children’s exposure to a certain degree of risk...helps them to build resilience and to prepare for the adult world,” and that pornography can be beneficial for learning sexual information.<sup>18</sup>

Concerning global education, UNICEF’s Education Cannot Wait (ECW) initiative promotes access to abortion and contraception to young people in its Gender Strategy documents.<sup>19</sup> In their Grantees Budget Template, ECW requires that funds be used to expand comprehensive sexuality curriculums, defined by the UN to include the promotion of masturbation and normalization of homosexuality, and mandates that education to all recipients be “gender responsive.”<sup>20</sup> Similarly, UNESCO continues to promote vulgar and radical gender ideologies contrary to many domestic lawmakers and American families. In September 2022, a U.S.

delegation participated in UNESCO's Transforming Education Summit, created to institute a global curriculum comprised of comprehensive sexuality education and strategies to uproot "harmful" cultural norms. Leaders of global organizations urged policymakers to begin sexuality education at the age of 2, to foster "children's ideas of what's possible for them beyond the binary."<sup>21</sup>

The U.S. has donated \$30 million in 2022 to ECW alone, and having received hundreds of millions in U.S. funds, UNICEF is asking congress for \$175 million for FY24 - we are gravely concerned that they continue to receive US funds and freely spend those funds with virtually no oversight. Other agencies are similarly opaque as to the specific nature of their spending. Therefore, all UN agencies must undergo intense scrutiny and are mandated to report annual expenditures.

#### Request 4: Eliminate funding to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

#### **The OHCHR unlawfully lobbies against and criticizes the U.S. and other pro-life countries**

The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) includes the principal human rights official in the United Nations and the treaty monitoring bodies, which publish comments and interpretations of UN treaties yet have no binding authority whatsoever. The OHCHR and Treaty monitoring bodies have been increasingly overstepping their mandates and promoting ideological claims on abortion and gender, outside of international consensus; the OHCHR claims that abortion is a human right and ought to be enforced in every UN member state, citing the unauthoritative "treaty body jurisprudence" which claims that restrictions to abortion are violations of the right to health, privacy, and freedom from cruel and inhumane treatment.<sup>22</sup>

The Office has also criticized the U.S. Dobbs decision to return abortion jurisdiction to states, denouncing the case as "shocking and dangerous" and "without sound legal reasoning,"<sup>23</sup> despite the case not being a matter of global human rights and the UN, nor is it a violation to any treaties the US has signed. The U.S. financed OHCHR with \$27.7 million in 2022<sup>24</sup>; in accordance with the Siljander and Helms amendments, the United States should not continue to fund an agency determined to establish abortion as a global right. In addition to pressuring the United States, the OHCHR is also pressuring other pro-life countries into repealing their laws. Eliminating U.S. funding to OHCHR is not an affront to human rights, rather, it would remove support of the American people from a commission that actively criticizes American policy with no right to do so. The U.S. is greatly invested in promoting human rights around the world, and withholding funds from entities that promote a distorted and nonconsensual understanding of human rights is an important way the U.S. can use its influence abroad for the greater good of all.

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<sup>1</sup> WHO, "The United States of American and the World Health Organization: Partners in Global Health." *World Health Organization*, web: <https://www.who.int/about/funding/contributors/usa>

<sup>2</sup> IAWG, "Safe Abortion Care in the Minimum Initial Service Package (MISP) for Sexual and Reproductive Health in Humanitarian Settings." *Inter-Agency Working Group on Reproductive Health in Crises*, web:

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<https://iawg.net/resources/safe-abortion-care-in-the-minimum-initial-service-package-misp-for-sexual-and-reproductive-health-in-humanitarian-settings>.

<sup>3</sup> IAWG, Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Starrs AM, Ezeh AC, Barker G, Basu A, Bertrand JT, Blum R, Coll-Seck AM, Grover A, Laski L, Roa M, Sathar ZA, Say L, Serour GI, Singh S, Stenberg K, Temmerman M, Biddlecom A, Popinchalk A, Summers C, Ashford LS. Accelerate progress-sexual and reproductive health and rights for all: report of the Guttmacher-Lancet Commission. *Lancet*. 2018 Jun 30;391(10140):2642-2692. doi: 10.1016/S0140-6736(18)30293-9.

<sup>5</sup> Sedgh G et al., *Unmet Need for Contraception in Developing Countries: Examining Women's Reasons for Not Using a Method*, New York: *Guttmacher Institute*, 2016

<sup>6</sup> UNFPA Procurement Services, "Global Quantity Survey, United Nations Population Fund (2017), web: [www.unfpaprocurement.org/](http://www.unfpaprocurement.org/)

<sup>7</sup> CWPE, "Depo Provera Fact Sheet," Committee on Women, Population, and the Environment (2007), web: <http://temp-cwpe.gaiahost.net/node/185>

<sup>8</sup> For more information, see the package insert by following:

[https://www.accessdata.fda.gov/drugsatfda\\_docs/label/2010/020246s0361bl.pdf](https://www.accessdata.fda.gov/drugsatfda_docs/label/2010/020246s0361bl.pdf).

<sup>9</sup> Rebecca Oas, Ph.D., "Lecture on 'She Decides' Fund Reveals Effectiveness of U.S. Mexico City Policy," *Friday Fax*, 22 November 2017.

<sup>10</sup> Oas, Rebecca, "UN Spokesman Dismisses the Need for UN Agreement on Abortion," *Friday Fax*, 4 April 2019, web: [https://c-fam.org/friday\\_fax/un-spokesman-dismisses-need-un-agreement-abortion/](https://c-fam.org/friday_fax/un-spokesman-dismisses-need-un-agreement-abortion/)

<sup>11</sup> WHO, "Trends in maternal mortality 2000 to 2020: estimates by WHO, UNICEF, UNFPA, World Bank Group and UNDESA/Population Division," World Health Organization, web: <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240068759>

<sup>12</sup> Rebecca Oas, Ph.D., "Un Women Ramps up Abortion Advocacy," *Friday Fax*, 23 June 2017, web: [https://c-fam.org/friday\\_fax/un-women-ramps-abortion-advocacy/](https://c-fam.org/friday_fax/un-women-ramps-abortion-advocacy/).

<sup>13</sup> UN Women, "Progress on the Sustainable Development Goals: The Gender Snapshot 2022," *UN Women – Headquarters*, web: <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2022/09/progress-on-the-sustainable-development-goals-the-gender-snapshot-2022>.

<sup>14</sup> UNSC, "Preventing Conflict Transforming Justice Securing The Peace," *UN Security Council*, web: [https://wps.unwomen.org/pdf/en/globalstudy\\_en\\_web.pdf](https://wps.unwomen.org/pdf/en/globalstudy_en_web.pdf)

<sup>15</sup> Craig-Austin Rose, "UN Committee Rejects Matt Walsh Documentary on Women," *Friday Fax*, 20 January 2023, web: [https://c-fam.org/friday\\_fax/un-committee-rejects-matt-walsh-documentary-on-women/](https://c-fam.org/friday_fax/un-committee-rejects-matt-walsh-documentary-on-women/)

<sup>16</sup> UN Women, "Top government partners," UN Women (accessed February 2023), web: [www.unwomen.org/en/partnerships/](http://www.unwomen.org/en/partnerships/)

<sup>17</sup> Susan Yoshihara, "New UNICEF Chief Raises Hopes, Questions about Pro-life Stance," *Friday Fax* 21, 4 January 2018, web: [https://c-fam.org/friday\\_fax/new-unicef-chief-raises-hopes-questions-pro-life-stance/](https://c-fam.org/friday_fax/new-unicef-chief-raises-hopes-questions-pro-life-stance/)

<sup>18</sup> UNICEF, "Digital Age Assurance, Age Verification Tools, and Children's Rights Online across the Globe," (accessed March 2023), web: <http://c-fam.org/wp-content/uploads/Digital-Age-Assurance-Tools-and-Childrens-Rights-Online-across-the-Globe.pdf>

For more information: [https://c-fam.org/friday\\_fax/unicef-takes-down-controversial-report/](https://c-fam.org/friday_fax/unicef-takes-down-controversial-report/)

<sup>19</sup> ECW, "ECW Gender Strategy 2018-2021," *Education Cannot Wait* (accessed January 2023), web: <https://www.educationcannotwait.org/resource-library/ecw-gender-strategy-2018-2021>

<sup>20</sup> ECW, "Budget Template for Grantees Gender Guidance," *Education Cannot Wait*, (accessed January 2023), web: <https://www.educationcannotwait.org/resource-library/guidance-note-gender-in-grantees-budget-template>

<sup>21</sup> Craig-Austin Rose, "UN Education Summit Wants to Stamp Out Traditional Values," *Friday Fax*, 22 September 2022, web: [https://c-fam.org/friday\\_fax/un-education-summit-wants-to-stamp-out-traditional-values/](https://c-fam.org/friday_fax/un-education-summit-wants-to-stamp-out-traditional-values/)

<sup>22</sup> OHCHR, "Abortion Factsheet," *Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights*, 2020, web: [https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Issues/Women/WRGS/SexualHealth/INFO\\_Abortion\\_WEB.pdf](https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Issues/Women/WRGS/SexualHealth/INFO_Abortion_WEB.pdf)

<sup>23</sup> OHCHR, "Joint Web Statement by UN Human Rights Experts on Supreme Court Decision to Strike down Roe v. Wade," *Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights*, 24 June 2022, web: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/statements/2022/06/joint-web-statement-un-human-rights-experts-supreme-court-decision-strike-down>.

<sup>24</sup> OHCHR, "Voluntary contributions to OHCHR in 2022," *Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights*, 2022, web: <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/2022-02/VoluntaryContributions2022.pdf>