

**ECE REGIONAL PREPARATORY MEETING FOR THE TEN-YEAR
REVIEW OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE
BEIJING PLATFORM FOR ACTION (BEIJING+10)**

December 14-15, 2004; Geneva

U.S. EXPLANATION OF POSITION

- Thank you, Madame Chair. We are joining consensus on the Chairperson's Conclusions, and wish to give our Explanation of Position.

- The United States is firmly committed to the empowerment of women and the need to promote women's fullest enjoyment of universal human rights and fundamental freedoms.

- We reaffirm the goals, objectives, and commitments of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

- The United States wishes to note in joining consensus that it is essential to recognize the rights, duties, and responsibilities of parents and other persons legally responsible for adolescents to provide, in a manner consistent with the evolving capacities of the adolescent, appropriate direction and guidance on sexual and reproductive matters, education, and other aspects of children's lives for which parents have the primary responsibility.

- The United States strongly supports a balanced approach to the prevention and treatment of HIV/AIDS, such as the ABC Model: Abstinence, Be Faithful, and correctly and consistently use Condoms when appropriate. The ABC approach can target and balance A, B, and C interventions according to the needs of different at-risk populations and the specific circumstances of a particular country confronting the epidemic.

- The promotion of behavior change -- encouraging abstinence and fidelity -- is integral to our fight against HIV/AIDS. Working with parents, we must encourage our youth to make safe and healthy choices. Equally important, we recognize that empowering and protecting women, and encouraging responsible behavior

by men, are both critical components of efforts to stop the spread of this disease. The status of women -- and the influence of cultural norms, property rights, and economic opportunity on their lives -- are all critical factors in reducing the risk of HIV infection.

- The United States understands that none of the Beijing or Beijing+5 language constitutes support, endorsement, or promotion of abortion or the use of abortifacients. The United States does, however, support the treatment of women who suffer injuries or illnesses caused by legal or illegal abortion, including for example post-abortion care, and does not place such treatment among abortion-related services.
- The United States fully supports the principle of voluntary choice in family planning. We have stated clearly and on many occasions, consistent with the ICPD, that we do not recognize abortion as a method of family planning. The United States does not promote abortion. We understand that the terms "reproductive rights" and "reproductive health services" do not constitute support, endorsement, or promotion of abortion or the use of abortifacients. It is our understanding that there is international consensus on this point.

The term "sexual rights" has no definition in the international community. For this reason, the United States reserves its position on the term "sexual rights."

- The United States understands that joining consensus in no way constitutes a reaffirmation of language in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the outcome of the 23rd Special Session of the General Assembly, or documents referenced therein that could be used to suggest the creation of new human rights.
- We also understand that these documents are not intended to and do not create legally binding obligations on States under international law, nor do they indicate a change in the U.S. position regarding treaties we have not ratified.
- The United States does not support quotas. The best way to guarantee women's involvement in the political process is through legal and policy reforms that end

discrimination against women and promote equality of opportunity. A disadvantage of quotas is that they can promote a perception that a woman gained a decision-making position solely because of gender and regardless of merit.

- Thank you.

ECE,Beijing+10,EOP.doc ("ECE"); 12/10/2004

Revised 12/15/2004