

# Issue Brief

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## National Sovereignty Prized Again as Defense Measure by Non-Western Nations

Powerful nations coerce developing nations to accept population control measures despite looming demographic crises

by Thomas W. Jacobson, M.A.

After the devastation of World War II, many leaders in European nations lost their belief in national sovereignty and their own ability to resolve national problems. Instead, they put their trust in regional and international governance, helping form the United Nations,<sup>1</sup> the Council of Europe,<sup>2</sup> and the European Economic Community<sup>3</sup> that eventually became the European Union.<sup>4</sup> Many EU nations, especially those who were former colonial powers, as well as the current United States Administration, believe strongly in international governance for the purpose of controlling leaders and policies in, and financial flows to, other nations. This was strikingly evident during the April 2011 United Nations' Commission on Population and Development. The Holy See and noble nations fought back. Here's the story.

### Population Control versus Demographic Crisis

A little background first. Between 1954 and 1994, there were five – one each decade – international conferences on population, primarily for the purpose of reducing fertility in developing countries and convincing them that doing so was in their best national and economic interest.<sup>5</sup> At the 1974 World Population Conference in Bucharest, Romania, 135 nations were represented, and formulated and approved the World Population Plan of Action to reduce fertility rates. That same year, Secretary of State Henry Kissinger issued National Security Study Memorandum 200 (NSSM 200), "Implications of Worldwide Population Growth for U.S. Security and Overseas Interests."<sup>6</sup> Secretary Kissinger, the Department of State, the National Security Council and the Agency for International Development (USAID) authored the 123-page memorandum asserting that the security of the United States and

other countries would be at risk if the population growth in developing (poor) countries were not reduced to replacement levels. USAID had already started population programs nearly a decade earlier, but this comprehensive plan would put population control as a high priority for U.S. relations with other nations, even at the Presidential level.

Today, decades of population control have been so successful that most developed nations now are below replacement level, facing an impending demographic crises, and most developing nations have dropped to replacement level. Hania Zlotnik, Director of the Population Division of the United Nations, informed the CPD on the first day that “fertility rates in developed countries averages a low 1.6 children per woman,” well below the 2.1 replacement level. She also stated: “Fertility has declined fastest among the group of developing countries” (not including least developed countries), dropping “from 5.8 children per woman in the early 1960s to 2.5 children per woman today,” which is replacement level for these countries because of higher death rates.<sup>7</sup>

## **Battle Lines Drawn First Day of Negotiations**

The 44th annual session of the Commission on Population and Development (CPD) was held at UN Headquarters in New York, 11-15 April 2011. The theme was “Fertility, Reproductive Health and Development.” The goal was to negotiate and produce a resolution on this topic that would guide national and international policies for years to come. As usual, the initial draft was prepared by the United Nations prior to the meeting, and formed the basis for starting the negotiations. Any of the 192 UN Member Nations may participate in the negotiations, but only the 47 nations<sup>8</sup> who are currently members of the CPD may vote or approve the final resolution.

On the first day of negotiations, in part because there was already harmful language in the document, pro-life/family delegations came out strong, making over 70 interventions to remove harmful language and insert good language. A panel briefing held just

prior to CPD, on 7 April 2011, helped inspire them to be so bold. Focus on the Family, Catholic Family and Human Rights Institute, and Concerned Women for America hosted the event, which was cosponsored by the Holy See Observer Mission, and the Malta and Honduras Missions to the United Nations. Tom Minnery (Focus) was MC, and Archbishop Francis A. Chullikatt delivered the opening remarks, followed by Yuri Mantilla, LLM (Focus), Dr. Susan Yoshihara (C-FAM), and Wendy Wright (CWA). The purpose was to show that intact marriages, keeping the gift of human sexuality within the covenant of marriage, and strong families are essential to producing strong communities and nations, as well as secure and sustainable human development.

Even so, opposing nations were aggressive, making 117 interventions the first day, either opposing good language introduced by pro-family delegations or peppering the document with bad language. Also, in the plenary meeting,<sup>9</sup> Margaret Pollack from the State Department delivered the official U.S. statement, focusing primarily on youth and women, saying, “for women and adolescents to realize their full potential, they must be able to control their own fertility ... (It is) the right of all ... individuals to decide freely and responsibly the number, spacing and timing of their children.”<sup>10</sup> Yet when a woman or girl becomes pregnant, an obvious way implied for her to “control (her) fertility” if the “the number, spacing and timing” of her children comes at an inconvenient time in her view, is for her to terminate the pregnancy – to abort her child.

## **Harmful Policies Pushed by Western Nations & Allies**

In this context, let me define “bad” as policy language that promotes “universal access to sexual and reproductive health care services and information,” which includes contraception, “male and female condoms,” “family planning services,” and which may

include “emergency contraception” (abortifacient Morning-After Pill) and abortion – *and all without reference to marriage, age or gender.*

The most aggressive proponents of these harmful policies – with the number of interventions they made during the first four days of negotiations – were:

- 18 European nations led by Sweden (66), Denmark (59), Netherlands (56), Switzerland (52), Great Britain (50), Norway (49), Finland (43), Hungary (41), and Spain (40), who formed the “Like-Minded Group”;
- 9 “Latin American Group” nations led by Brazil (52), Uruguay (49), Argentina (37), Dominican Republic (33), and Mexico (25);
- Several African nations, but primarily South Africa (25) and Zambia (21);
- United States (18); and
- New Zealand (19).<sup>11</sup>

By the end of the fourth day, there were 10 phrases or statements promoting abortion; 64 asserting sexual and reproductive “rights” that include contraception and could include abortion; and 6 encouraging full or comprehensive sex education for boys and girls.<sup>12</sup>

## Good Policies Promoted by the Holy See and Noble Nations

“Good” language is here defined as promoting policies that would encourage “abstinence and fidelity”; improve maternal and child health and reduce their mortality; increase prenatal and postnatal care; affirm parental rights; recognize the problems of declining fertility rates and “demographic transition” with aging populations; oppose female infanticide, abortion, “abortion ... as a method of family planning,” and human trafficking; and declare “full respect for religious and ethical values” and national sovereignty

The most diligent delegations promoting good policies – with the number of interventions (5 or more) during the first four days – were (some will surprise you):

- Holy See delegation (72);
- From Europe, Malta (51) and Poland (24);
- From the “Arab Group” of nations (47);
- From individual Arab nations, Iran (40) and Pakistan 9;
- Russian Federation (19);
- From Africa, Benin (9) and Swaziland (5); and
- Saint Lucia (6).<sup>13</sup>

After four days, these pro-family delegations registered opposition to bad language, and had numerous statements and paragraphs with the above good language.

## No Compromises, so Chairman’s Text

Normally during such commission meetings at the United Nations, delegations keep negotiating until they reach agreement, and any language not agreed to is eliminated from the resolution in order to produce a “consensus” document. Not too many years ago, if a few delegations were opposed to certain language and could not be persuaded to change their position, that language was removed from the document to reach consensus. However, the division between policy views of nations has become more striking in recent years, and this is the third year in a row that a “Chairman’s Text” was the final outcome of CPD because neither side would compromise. When no compromise can be reached on the policy issues, the chairman of the negotiations may draft an alternative version, incorporating parts of the draft resolution. If approved by the delegations, then it becomes the “Resolution adopted” by the Commission.

The draft Chairman’s Text retained most of the “good” language, but about half of the “bad” language. Promotion of abortion was reduced to two times; sexual and reproductive “rights” to 30 (instead of 64)

times; and full sex education to two paragraphs.

## National Sovereignty Compromise

A group of European nations, in collaboration with the United States' Obama Administration, Brazil and a few other nations are absolutely determined to force pro-family, developing and Arab nations to adopt immoral sexual and reproductive "rights" policies that would be harmful to their peoples. But when European nations and the United States – who together contribute over 62 percent of the United Nations' budgets and the vast majority of development aide – stand together against developing nations, it is extraordinarily difficult for the latter to hold their position without risking enormous financial consequences.

Furthermore, the diplomats on every delegation are under tremendous pressure to succeed in producing a document from the Commission. Not achieving that objective would be a failure, embarrassing to their nation, and possibly harmful to their diplomatic careers. Therefore, the Arab and developing nations proposed adding the following language:

*Reaffirms* the sovereign right of each country to implement recommendations of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development or other proposals in this resolution, consistent with national laws and development priorities, with full respect for the various religious and ethical values and cultural backgrounds of its people, and in conformity with universally recognized international human rights.

The USA and European nations were highly resistant to inclusion of this language because it would take away, at least theoretically, their power to coerce other nations to implement the bad social policies they put into the resolution. This is tragic because the United Nations was created "based on the principle of the sovereign equality of all its Members," and the principle of non-interference "in matters which are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of any"

nation.<sup>14</sup>

About 8 p.m. on Friday night, after hours of consideration and final negotiations, the paragraph above affirming national sovereignty and respect for "religious and ethical values" in the implementation of the resolution was agreed to, followed by approval of the Resolution<sup>15</sup> without a recorded vote.

## Delegations Respond Defending Life and Sovereignty

As soon as Malawi Ambassador Brian Bowler, Chairman of the 44th session of CPD, declared that the Resolution was approved, the response of the delegations was amazing! The Pakistan delegate said, "The one component that secured the deal was the respect for national sovereignty and cultural and religious beliefs."<sup>16</sup> As the session was concluding, I spoke with Honduran Deputy Ambassador Marco Suazo, a veteran diplomat. While he recognized the problematic language in the Resolution, he told of the great struggle his and other developing nations have had to gain respect for their sovereign right to govern themselves. To him, the concession by European nations and the Obama Administration, was one of the greatest victories in his 16-year tenure representing his nation at the United Nations.

Nine delegations also made pro-life statements – possibly the most since the reaction to the Beijing World Conference on Women document in 1995. Dr. Rev. Philip Bené, delivering the Holy See statement, declared, "abortion is harmful for both the mother and unborn child ... there is no such thing as a 'safe abortion.'"<sup>17</sup> Poland asserted, "any references to 'sexual and reproductive health and rights' ... do not constitute abortion on request." Chile Ambassador Octavio Errázuriz, affirmed, "According to our Constitution we protect the life from conception to death. Accordingly, nothing in this resolution can be construed as a reference to abortion." Malta

Ambassador Saviour Borg, expressed his country's "reservations on 'sexual and reproductive health and rights' ... (and) on references to abortion." Saint Lucia Deputy Ambassador Mrs. Sarah Flood Beaubrun, clarified, "(The terms) 'reproductive rights' and 'reproductive health services' do not include abortion." Honduras Deputy Ambassador Marco Suazo, proclaimed, "Our Constitution protects life from conception so this resolution can in no way include abortion." Benin, Costa Rica and Guatemala made similar statements.<sup>18</sup>

Let us hope and pray that noble nations and their delegations will increase in strength and boldness, defending their sovereign right to govern themselves, and protecting the lives of their own people and posterity.

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1. The United Nations was founded in 1945 by 51 nations: *4 from Africa*: Egypt, Ethiopia, Liberia, South Africa; *22 from Americas & Caribbean*: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, United States, Uruguay, Venezuela; *5 from Asia*: Belarus, China, India, Russian Federation, Ukraine; *11 from Europe*: Belgium, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, France, Greece, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, United Kingdom, Yugoslavia; *6 from the Middle East*: Iran, Iraq, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Turkey; *3 from the Pacific & Island Nations*: Australia, New Zealand, Philippines. Source: Basic Facts About the United Nations (New York: United Nations, 2000), pg. 295.
2. The Council of Europe was formed in 1947, and has 47 Member Nations. [www.coe.int](http://www.coe.int)
3. The European Economic Community was formed in 1957. [www.coe.int](http://www.coe.int)
4. The European Union replaced the European Community in 1992, and currently has 27 Member Nations. [europa.eu/abc/history](http://europa.eu/abc/history)
5. See list under "Outcomes on Population": (1) World Population Conference, Rome, 1954; (2) World Population Conference, Belgrade, 1965; (3) World Population Conference, Bucharest, Hungary, 1974; (4) International Conference on Population, Mexico City, 1984; and (5) International Conference on Population and Development [ICPD or "Cairo"], Cairo, Egypt, 1994. [www.un.org/en/development/devagenda/population](http://www.un.org/en/development/devagenda/population)
6. To read the declassified NSSM200: [pdf.usaid.gov/pdf\\_docs/PCAAB500.pdf](http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PCAAB500.pdf)
7. Statement by Hania Zlotnik, Director, Population Division, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, to the 44th Session of the Commission on Population and Development, New York, 11 April 2011. See under "Official documentation and introductory statements": [www.un.org/esa/population/cpd/cpd2011/cpd44.htm](http://www.un.org/esa/population/cpd/cpd2011/cpd44.htm)
8. For a list of the current Member Nations of CPD, click on "44th Session" on the "About the Commission" web site page at: [www.un.org/esa/population/cpd/aboutcom.htm](http://www.un.org/esa/population/cpd/aboutcom.htm)
9. The plenary meeting continued throughout the week, at which countries and UN officials made their formal statements. The negotiations were held separately and concurrently behind closed doors.
10. "Statement by the United States at the UN Commission on Population and Development," Margaret Pollack, Director for Multilateral Coordination and External Relations and Senior Advisor on Population Issues; Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration; U.S. Department of State. New York City. April 11, 2011. [www.state.gov/g/prm/rls/rmks/2011/160559.htm](http://www.state.gov/g/prm/rls/rmks/2011/160559.htm)
11. Author was present at the United Nations during the negotiations, and has draft versions of the negotiated documents in hand, that record which delegations introduced, supported or opposed specific language or paragraphs.
12. Ibid., tabulation based on careful review of above documents.
13. Ibid.
14. United Nations Charter, Article 2, pars. 1, 7.
15. "Resolution on Fertility, Reproductive Health and Development," Commission on Population and Development, Forty-fourth session (11-15 April 2011), Population Division, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. [www.un.org/esa/population/cpd/cpd2011/cpd44.htm](http://www.un.org/esa/population/cpd/cpd2011/cpd44.htm)
16. Statement recorded by author who was present.
17. Author has full Holy See statement in hand, provided by Rev. Bené.
18. Statements recorded by author who was present.