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Statement on Mexico City Policy and Assistance for Voluntary Population Planning

January 24, 2009

It is clear that the provisions of the Mexico City Policy are unnecessarily broad and unwarranted under current law, and for the past eight years, they have undermined efforts to promote safe and effective voluntary family planning in developing countries. For these reasons, it is right for us to rescind this policy and restore critical efforts to protect and empower women and promote global economic development.

For too long, international family planning assistance has been used as a political wedge issue, the subject of a back-and-forth debate that has served only to divide us. I have no desire to continue this stale and fruitless debate.

It is time that we end the politicization of this issue. In the coming weeks, my administration will initiate a fresh conversation on family planning, working to find areas of common ground to best meet the needs of women and families at home and around the world.

I have directed my staff to reach out to those on all sides of this issue to achieve the goal of reducing unintended pregnancies. They will also work to promote safe motherhood, reduce maternal and infant mortality rates and increase educational and economic opportunities for women and girls.

In addition, I look forward to working with Congress to restore U.S. financial support for the U.N. Population Fund. By resuming funding to UNFPA, the U.S. will be joining 180 other donor nations working collaboratively to reduce poverty, improve the health of women and children, prevent HIV/AIDS, and provide family planning assistance to women in 154 countries.

Categories: Statements by the President : Mexico City Policy and Voluntary Population Planning assistance.

Subjects: Developing countries : U.S. assistance; Development, U.S. Agency for International : Mexico City Policy, rescission of; Development, U.S. Agency for International : Mexico City Policy, rescission of; State, Department of : Voluntary Population Planning, rescission of limits on assistance for; State, Department of : Voluntary Population Planning, rescission of limits on assistance for ; United Nations : Population Fund (UNFPA), U.S. financial support for.

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