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November 19, 1996 (4:03pm)
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**Annex to the Justification Memorandum
for the Presidential Determination**

I. Summary

This annex reviews evidence that a four-month delay in funding of the USAID population assistance program from March to July of 1997 will have a negative impact on the program's proper functioning. The four-month delay translates into a reduction of \$124 million in funds available during FY97. **By any reasonable standard, the funding delay will seriously undermine USAID's ability to support family planning services in the developing world, with immediate increases in unintended pregnancies and severe effects on the health and well-being of women and children.** Women and men who need family planning services cannot wait. The delay in funding will result in an estimated 1.3 million additional unintended pregnancies and over 500,000 abortions.

The impact of the FY97 funding delay is exacerbated by the 35 percent cut in population funding from FY95 to FY96, the delay in availability of FY96 funding until July 1996, and the requirement that FY96 and FY97 funding be made available only in small monthly apportionments ("metering").

Beyond the impact on individual women and families now using services, the longer-term systemic impact on worldwide efforts to stabilize population growth--at a time when family planning programs are more needed than ever before--is incalculable.

USAID's population program is an integral part of U.S. foreign assistance and is the technical leader in the field, a role not easily assumed by other donors. A funding delay for the second year in a row could damage this leadership role as well as U.S. credibility in the population and development arena.

II. FY97 Population Funding

For 30 years, U.S.-funded population assistance has enjoyed strong bipartisan political support. Budgets for population assistance have generally increased over time, allowing USAID's population program to keep up with both increases in the numbers

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of women needing services in the developing world and with inflation.

In keeping with the needs of developing countries, funding for USAID's population assistance program grew from under \$100 million annually in the 1960s to an average of \$523 million annually in the FY94-95 period. Over this time, USAID built up a comprehensive population assistance program that benefits families in over 60 countries with a combined population of 2.7 billion people. (See Annex Table 1 for a list of USAID-assisted countries.) USAID's program is built on principles of voluntarism and informed choice and supports access to a full range of safe, reliable family planning methods, including natural family planning. USAID assistance contributes to all of the essential interdependent elements of effective programs, including contraceptive supplies, training for medical and other personnel, information materials, strengthening management skills, policy support, and contraceptive and other research.

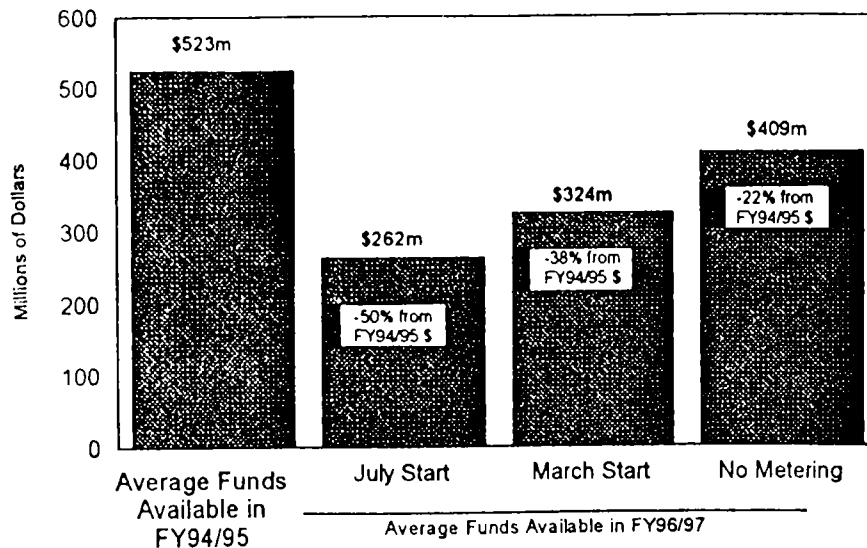
The funding situation changed dramatically in FY96, when the Congress reduced funding by 35 percent and took the unprecedented steps of delaying program access to funds until July 1996--nine months into the fiscal year--and restricting the funds available to \$24 million/month over 15 months. As a result of the FY96 funding situation, only a limited number of programs have been able to be funded each month, and many are left with very short pipelines. Faced with shorter pipelines, responsible managers of U.S.-based and host-country implementing organizations have substantially lowered their monthly spending rates, delaying and cutting back on services. (The average family, anticipating a lay-off or salary cut, would behave in a similar fashion, delaying purchases and even essential expenses.) With the FY97 appropriation, program managers again face a delay in access to funds until July at the earliest and continued metering.

III. Consequences of Delaying FY97 Population Funding Until July 1997

If no FY97 funds are received until July, the population program will have available \$124 million less in FY97 than if funds become available in March. A July start means that the average funding available for the FY96-97 period together is \$262 million, a 50 percent cut from the average level of \$523 million for the FY94-95 period. In contrast, a March start means that the funding level available for the FY96-97 period together is \$324 million, a 38 percent cut. (See Graph below) With cuts of this magnitude, drastic consequences are inevitable.

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March vs July Start to Metering
Funds Available in FY96/97 compared to FY94/95



During the period of March-July 1997, 72 programs have urgent funding needs that total \$184 million. Over the same period, a total of \$149 million will become available through metering-- \$118 million in FY96 funds and \$31 million in FY97 funds available in July. The resulting shortfall of \$35 million in the March-July period means that at least 28 programs will need to suspend, defer, or terminate service delivery and other important supporting activities, directly affecting millions of clients. In addition, other programs have important funding needs that must be met in the remaining two months of the fiscal year. These programs will also be jeopardized if some of the metered funds that become available in August-September have to be used to make up the shortfall in the preceding five months.

1. **Worldwide impact.** At the global level, the impact on the total number of unintended pregnancies and other health outcomes is proportionate to USAID's percentage of total funding (17%) for population programs. Approximately 19.8 million users currently rely on USAID-supported programs for their family planning services. The difference between a March and July start to metering is 12 percent less funding available over the FY96-97 period. This means that **2.4 million fewer couples will have access to family planning.** Based on research, we know that 40 percent of these couples will switch to traditional family planning methods and 60 percent will remain unprotected. As a result, 57 percent or **1.3 million more couples will experience an unintended pregnancy.** The World Health Organization estimates

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that 40% of unintended pregnancies end in abortion. Therefore, the four-month delay in access to FY97 funds will result in **536,000 more abortions and 630,000 more unintended births**. (The remaining pregnancies will end in miscarriage or stillbirth). Applying standard mortality ratios to the 630,000 unintended births results in **over 2,500 more maternal deaths and more than 45,000 infant deaths**.¹

2. Impact at the country level. A selection of reports from program managers in developing countries where USAID provides population assistance shows the devastating impact of the funding delay.

Bolivia - With USAID funding, the Bolivian government and non-governmental organizations (NGO) greatly expanded their delivery of family planning services between 1989 and 1994, resulting in a 50 percent increase in use of family planning methods. A delay in funding until July 1997 will result in drastically reduced support for the public sector program; curtailing of support for two NGOs providing services in rural areas with high maternal mortality; and severe cut-backs in family planning services. Opportunities to maintain program momentum and increase its sustainability will be lost.²

Haiti - By May, the NGOs supported by the USAID population assistance program will need to start laying off staff, leaving thousands of poor Haitian women and men without services. The process of integrating family planning into CARE's child health and maternal care program and reorienting its well-established humanitarian relief program to sustainable development will be delayed and may be canceled.³

El Salvador - As a result of FY 96 delays and metering, the Salvadoran Demographic Association (SDA), a major USAID partner in reaching the poorest segments of the population, has had to reduce its family planning and maternal/child health services. Staff have been reduced, paid health promoters have been transformed into "volunteers," a full service clinic has been downgraded to a satellite clinic, and services such as Vitamin A distribution have been eliminated. Further funding delays in FY 97 will result in continuation in these cutbacks with concomitant effects on the health of the women and children served.⁴

Guatemala - Many USAID partners will have to reduce their family planning services, including the largest private provider. This provider will close down its rural health promotor program, greatly reducing access of rural,

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indigenous women and children with the greatest health problems, to a source of health care. In addition, USAID will not be able to fulfill its part of an agreement reached with the Guatemalan government to support its program to reduce maternal mortality by 50 percent. This is a key component of the accord to end a 36-year civil war.⁵

Dominican Republic - The FY96 funding delays forced USAID to reduce approved funding to four organizations that deliver the bulk of family planning services. The organizations have had to cut back a total of \$350,000 (10% of planned expenditures). Opportunities have been lost. Further cuts will be necessary unless FY97 funds arrive before July.⁶

Russia - Two of the largest organizations supporting training and introduction of modern contraceptive methods will run out of funds between March and June 1997, jeopardizing access by 1.7 million couples to modern family planning methods as an alternative to abortion. Historically, abortion has been the major means of restricting family size, with the average Russian woman having between two to three abortions in her lifetime.⁷

Ukraine - A delay in FY 97 funds will further slow the progress being made in reducing abortion rates through increased use of modern methods of contraception. From Odessa Oblast regional hospital, the program of training in clinical reproductive health, contraceptive counseling, and STD and HIV/AIDS prevention was to expand to other cities.⁸

Egypt - USAID's technical and financial support for Egypt's family planning program will come to a halt without access to funds before July 1997. This disruption will not only affect the thousands of women and men directly served, but will have longlasting effects on a program crucial to the future development and stability of Egypt.⁹

Jordan - The Government of Jordan recognizes the need to make family planning services available to contain one of the fastest population growth rates in the world. To this end, the Government entered into an agreement with USAID for support for expansion of family planning services. Now USAID finds that several important activities, including mass media information campaigns on the availability of family planning and the establishment of model family planning centers in the twelve governorates of the country, will run out of funding before June.¹⁰

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Turkey - Over four million couples in Turkey have an unmet need for family planning services. Johns Hopkins University is poised to expand its training of trainers for nurses and midwives both in schools and already working to greatly expand services and access to voluntary surgical contraception and other family planning methods. The delay in funding will mean that critical Turkish institutions will have less capacity to manage and provide needed training, and a delay in access to services to couples who need and want them. Maintaining the momentum of these training activities is critical to the sustainability of the Turkish family planning program, given that USAID is phasing out of Turkey in 1999.¹¹

Uganda - The funding delay will force suspension of an NGO program providing family planning and HIV/AIDS prevention to a population of almost 2 million; postponement and possibly cancellation of family planning training for 100 midwives capable of serving thousands of clients annually; and termination of training programs for hundreds of medical personnel in family planning, condom use, and HIV/AIDS prevention.¹²

The Philippines - Programs to be terminated as a result of the funding delay include training of government health personnel in natural family planning and technical assistance for voluntary female sterilization services at 200 sites across the country.¹³ In addition, agreements with three manufacturers providing oral contraceptives at reduced prices for social marketing are threatened.¹⁴

3. Impact across countries. The funding delay will force difficult choices for U.S.-based private voluntary organizations (PVOs), NGOs, universities, and commercial firms that provide technical support as well as funding and commodities to many different USAID-supported family planning programs.

Service delivery. Critical PVO and NGO service delivery programs will run out of funds if no FY97 funding is made to them until July or later. Activities in at least 15 countries across the regions where USAID provides population assistance are likely to be suspended or shut down.

USAID's natural family planning program will run out of funds before July. This program, initiated in 1983, is the only significant donor-funded program in support of natural family planning. Programs serving over 700,000 people annually would end, including those in Bolivia, the Philippines, and Ecuador.¹⁵

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Contraceptive supplies. The funding delay could produce serious contraceptive shortages across a number of countries in 1998--a gap of up to 50 million condoms, 4.8 million cycles of oral pills, and 500,000 intra-uterine devices (IUDs)--depending on the outcome of renegotiating contracts with U.S. manufacturers. USAID, as the largest bilateral donor of contraceptive methods, provided \$53.2 million worth of contraceptives to 80 countries in 1995.

Because USAID is a large-volume purchaser, it is able to purchase contraceptives at low prices, but procurements must be planned with producers well in advance. Delivery of products in a given calendar year depends on contracts funded in the previous fiscal year. Through careful management of metered funds in FY96, contracts have been funded to ensure adequate supplies of contraceptives in 1997. However, if FY97 funds are not available until July at the earliest, the funds available for manufacturing products to be delivered in 1998 will be very limited and contracts may have to be renegotiated--resulting in the shortages described above. Moreover, any interruption in the production process will substantially increase costs to the U.S. government.

Training. Training programs supported by USAID play an essential role in making services accessible, safe, and responsive to client needs. Reports have been received of many training activities to be indefinitely deferred or eliminated as a consequence of the funding delay, including training of over 4,500 service providers in Bolivia, Nicaragua, Brazil, Peru, Tanzania, Uganda, India, the Philippines, Turkey, and Central Asian Republics.¹⁵

Information and communications. Accurate and timely information is fundamental to the success of family planning efforts at all levels. Potential family planning users need to know how and where to obtain services. As a result of the delay in funding, however, information campaigns designed to reach millions of women in Bolivia, the Ukraine, and other countries will be slowed. In addition, over 700,000 providers, program managers, and family planning leaders will not receive technical materials essential to improving quality of care.¹⁷

Research. USAID is a key donor in contraceptive research and development (R&D) and the primary donor agency concerned about developing methods appropriate for use in developing country settings. The spin-off of such developments is new and improved methods available to women and men the U.S. USAID's support for contraceptive (R&D)

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in family planning plays a critical role in population and health programs worldwide. Contraceptive R&D is a long-term investment that relies on consistent and continual funding and long-term planning. A funding delay to July 1997 will have a dramatic effect on whether or not several of the current leads in the pipeline, including female controlled barrier methods that also provide protection against sexually transmitted diseases and HIV, will move forward expeditiously or will begin to languish.

4. The human consequences. For the clients of many service delivery programs supported by USAID, the consequences of the funding delay will be immediate. The burden will fall most heavily on women and men who rely on these services, often with no alternatives--women like Romola,¹⁸ a 32-year old mother of five who lives in a hilly district of Nepal and who walks a day every three months to meet a mobile health worker for a contraceptive injection, or Mavuto, a young mother in Zambia who travels 150 km to receive family planning services and immunizations for her children from a community program in the town of Kabwe.¹⁹ Many more people like these are served through the programs supported by USAID.

5. Lack of alternative remedies. As in FY96, USAID will make every effort to minimize the effect of this year's funding delay on family planning users. However, given that the program was also subject to delayed and metered access to funds last year, many programs have very limited pipelines and so are unable to weather a another delay in access to funds without disrupting ongoing activities. The metering of funds in FY97 adds further complications because the monthly allotments of \$32 million are inadequate to fund all programs every month. A July start to metering means that it will be October--the first month of FY98--before some programs get their first tranche of FY97 funds. Finally, there is little scope for addressing funding needs by increasing administrative economies. Those that can be made without diminishing program impact have already been undertaken (e.g., sharing office space, reducing travel expenses, etc.).

IV. Advantages of Beginning FY97 Population Funding in March

Advancing the monthly disbursement of population funds from July to March would make an additional \$124 million available to the population program during FY97. Access to funds in March would have positive implications for program momentum and potential impact. A March start to metering would make adequate funds available to meet the urgent funding needs of 28 programs and allow all programs to begin to reduce the extent of contraction. In addition, earlier funding would enable managers to plan and make commitments to the partner organizations that

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implement programs in the field. The risk of abrupt terminations of services to clients or other key supporting activities would be significantly reduced. As noted previously, as many as 630,000 unintended births would be avoided.

V. Impact of Funding Delays on USAID's Program and Leadership

1. Impact on USAID's Program. USAID-supported programs have enabled millions of couples to choose the number and spacing of their children and helped to slow population growth worldwide:

- Since the start of USAID's population program in the 1960s, the average number of children per woman in the developing world has fallen from over 6 to 4. Modern contraceptive use in developing countries (excluding China) has risen from under 10% to 35% today.
- By reducing abortion and high-risk pregnancies, USAID-supported family planning programs have saved the lives of tens of thousands of women.
- There are close to 500 million fewer people in the world today--almost twice the population of the United States--than would be the case without organized family planning programs. (See Annex Figure 1.) As the largest bilateral donor of population assistance, USAID can take significant credit for this achievement.

The four months lost in addressing the global population problem due to the delay in funding from March to July 1997 can never be made up: countries will have to cope with the extra burden of an additional 630,000 people and their descendants for generations to come. Rapid population growth contributes to increased poverty and hinders sustainable development by impeding progress in related areas, such as health, education, economic growth, environment, and democracy. USAID's family planning program helps buy time for countries to address other development challenges and improve their citizens' standards of living.

2. Impact on USAID's Leadership. For 30 years, USAID has been the acknowledged leader in international population assistance. The Agency has in-house technical expertise, on-the-ground field staff, a network of cooperating agencies and implementing partners, and a comprehensive program of assistance that is unmatched by any other donor. In addition to its financial contribution, USAID has made significant contributions in a number of important areas:

- testing innovative service delivery modes, including engaging the private sector;

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- improving quality of care, including expanding the choice of contraceptive methods and setting international training standards;
- pioneering modern communication efforts;
- supporting policy development and strengthening management systems in host countries; and
- supporting contraceptive research and other program-related research, data collection, and evaluation.

Other donors cannot step in overnight to fill the gap left by the funding delay. Under normal circumstances, the process of phasing out USAID assistance in a given country is carefully planned and managed over a 2-5 year period. Further, in a number of key areas, such as procurement and management of contraceptive supplies, communications approaches, and biomedical and program-related research, USAID has capabilities that cannot easily be replicated by other donors.

Finally, a significant delay in funding for a second year in a row will damage the leadership role of the United States in the global population arena and its credibility as a development partner. For example, as a consequence of the FY96 metering, a negotiated disbursement to the government of Ethiopia had to be delayed and obligated in increments, calling into question the reliability of the U.S. as a development partner. In addition, USAID is hesitant to enter into a new population assistance agreement with government of Bolivia because of the uncertainties associated with the FY97 delay and metering of funds.

VI. Continued Need for Population Assistance

The average number of children per woman in the developing world (excluding China) has fallen from six to four over the last 30 years, in large part due to the efforts of organized family planning programs. The rest of the decline required to reach replacement level--2.1 children per woman--cannot be taken for granted. Even with all the progress that has been made, the need for population assistance continues to increase.

The challenge facing USAID and the population community is to catch up with current need and keep up with emerging need. The nature of population momentum makes it imperative to invest in family planning **now**. Momentum stems from previous decades of high fertility. It produces large increases in the number of women of reproductive age and raises the cost of not keeping up with demand by turning small differences in the pace of fertility

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decline today into large differences in the number of people and their quality of life later on.

- Although the population growth rate has declined, the starting point is higher each year and the yearly increments added are larger. Without continued declines in the growth rate, the population of the developing world (excluding China) will double in 32 years.
- Almost 150 million women in the developing world (excluding China) want to space or limit childbearing but are not using family planning.
- The number of women of reproductive age in the developing world (excluding China) is growing by 17 million women per year--roughly the population of New York State.
- Almost 600,000 women die annually of causes related to pregnancy and childbirth.
- More than 50 million of the 190 million pregnancies worldwide each year end in abortion.²⁰ Most of these abortions take place in the developing world in unsafe conditions.

USAID has the expertise and the experience to help meet the challenge just described. **The key missing ingredient is adequate and timely funding.**

Annex Tables and Graphs

Table 1. Recipients of USAID Population Assistance, FY96

Figure 1. Population Size of the Developing World, With and Without Family Planning

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Table 1
Recipients of USAID Population Assistance in FY96

Africa

Benin
Botswana
Cote d'Ivoire
Eritrea
Ethiopia
Ghana
Guinea
Guinea-Bissau
Kenya
Madagascar
Malawi
Mali
Mozambique
Niger
Nigeria
Senegal
South Africa
Tanzania
Uganda
Zambia
Zimbabwe
Population Subtotal:
426 million

Asia/Near East

Bangladesh
Cambodia
Egypt
India
Indonesia
Jordan
Morocco
Nepal
Oman
Philippines
Sri Lanka
Yemen
Population Subtotal:
1.508 billion

Europe/Newly Independent States

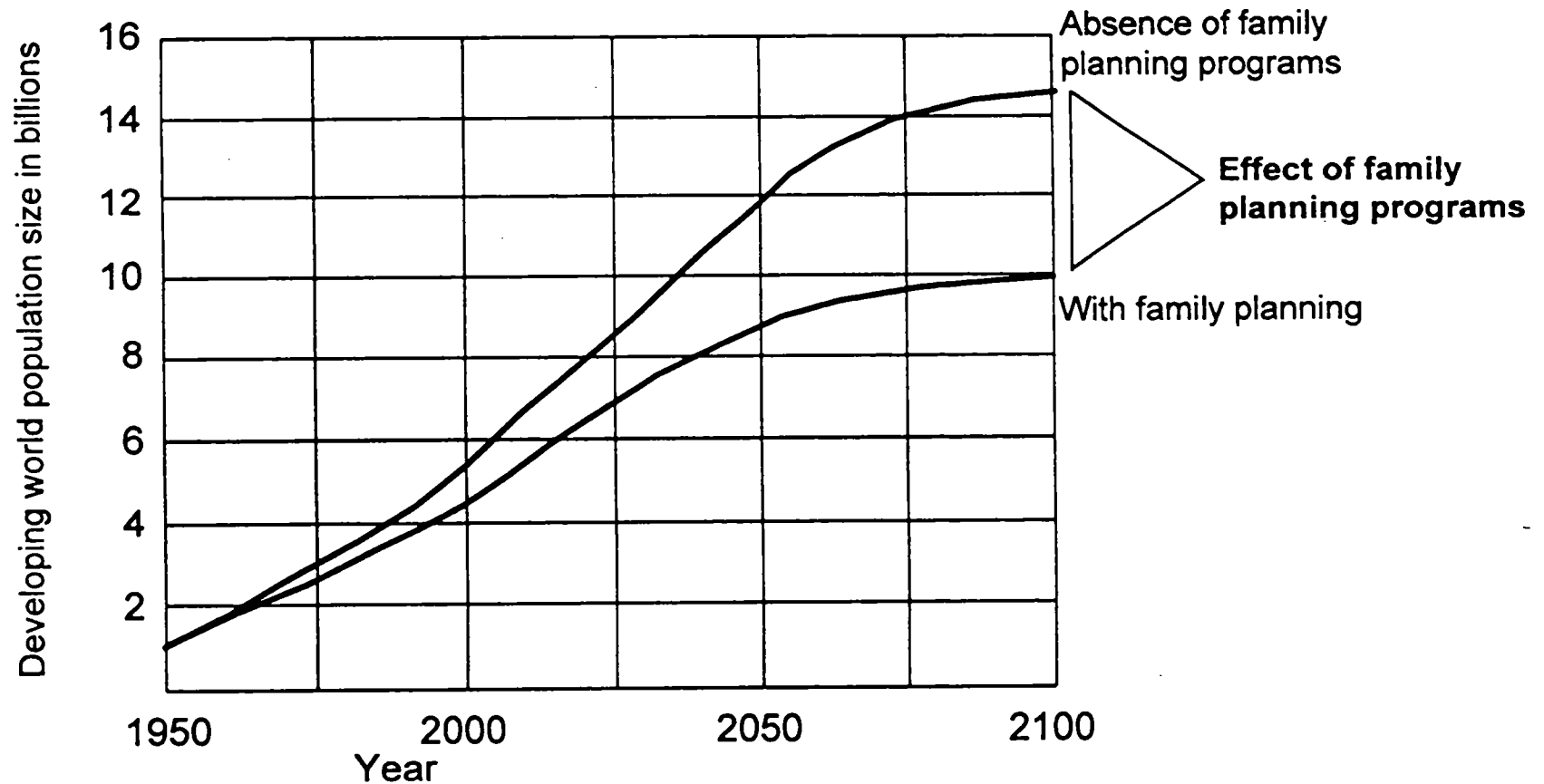
Albania
Belarus
Central Asian Republics:
 Kazakhstan
 Kyrgyzstan
 Tajikistan
 Turkmenistan
 Uzbekistan
Caucasus
Moldova
Poland
Romania
Russia
Slovakia
Turkey
Ukraine
Population Subtotal:
419 million

Latin America & Caribbean

Bolivia
Brazil
Colombia
Dominican Republic
Ecuador
El Salvador
Guatemala
Haiti
Honduras
Jamaica
Mexico
Nicaragua
Paraguay
Peru
Population Subtotal:
386 million

Total Population Size in
Countries Receiving USAID
Population Assistance:
2.739 billion

Slowing Population Growth by Meeting Family Planning Needs, 1950-2100



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End Notes

1. Numbers rounded. Calculations are based on expert estimates prepared by The Futures Group International, the Alan Guttmacher Institute, Population Action International, and the Population Reference Bureau, in consultation with the Population Council. The original estimates and complete methodology are contained in Alan Guttmacher Institute, Memorandum to Interested Parties, Washington, D.C., March 6, 1996. The figures used in the current analysis have been confirmed by the University of North Carolina using multivariate regression techniques.
2. Mission e-mail, October 29, 1996.
3. Mission e-mail, October 31, 1996.
4. Mission e-mail, November 6, 1996.
5. Mission e-mail, November 5, 1996.
6. Mission e-mail, November 5, 1996.
7. Mission e-mail, October 30, 1996.
8. ENI Regional Bureau e-mail, November 7, 1996.
9. Memorandum from the mission, October 29, 1996.
10. Mission e-mail, November 4, 1996.
11. Mission e-mail, November 4, 1996.
12. Memorandum from SEATS Project, November 1, 1996; Memorandum from Pathfinder International, November 1, 1996; Memorandum from CARE, November 4, 1996; Memorandum from PRIME Training Project, November 1, 1996.
13. Georgetown University Institute for Reproductive Health, e-mail, October 29, 1996; AVSC International, memorandum, November 1, 1996.
14. SOMARC (Social Marketing) Project, memorandum, October, 1996.
15. Georgetown University Institute for Reproductive Health, e-mails, October 29 and November 4, 1996.
16. Memoranda from JHPIEGO (November 1, 1996); Pathfinder International (November 1, 1996); University of North Carolina PRIME Project (November 1, 1996); and Georgetown University Institute for Reproductive Health (November 4, 1996).
17. Johns Hopkins University Population Communications Services memorandum of November 1, 1996, and Johns Hopkins University Population Information Program memorandum of November 1, 1996.

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18. Centre for Development and Population Activities, e-mail, November 1, 1996.

19. Mission e-mail, October 31, 1996.

20. The Alan Guttmacher Institute, *Hopes and Realities: Closing the Gap Between Women's Aspirations and Their Reproductive Experiences*, 1995, pp. 25-26.



International Family Planning

U.S. funding for international family planning provides millions of women and families access to reproductive health care and information to help plan and space births. Planning and spacing births reduces the incidence of maternal and infant mortality and improves the overall health of families worldwide. International family planning efforts also help to foster self-sufficiency, promote preventive health care, and educate people on how to protect themselves and their families from the spread of sexually transmitted diseases. The American Association of University Women (AAUW) supports international family planning and is deeply concerned about the devastating consequences of the FY 96 and FY 97 funding cuts.

International family planning funds were drastically cut in both FY 96 and FY 97. In FY 96, Congress imposed severe restrictions on how the money could be spent, including a nine-month delay in making the funds available, effectively cutting international family planning funds by 85 percent.

Disproportionate cuts and funding conditions were repeated in the FY 97 bill, with an additional requirement that Congress must vote by February 28, 1997, whether or not the program will receive funding on March 1, 1997, instead of July 1. This upcoming vote will not allocate any new money to family planning overseas, but simply release funds which have already been appropriated. AAUW supports the release of funds on March 1.

Why International Family Planning Funding Is Important

Women are the primary caretakers and household managers throughout much of the developing world, and their health and well-being determines how their children will fare in life. Enabling women to have the number of children they want, when they want them, is central to the quality of their lives and the well-being of their families.

- **There Is a Worldwide Need for Effective, Modern Contraceptive Methods.** The use of effective contraceptive methods has increased rapidly over the past 30 years throughout the developing world. Yet nearly 230 million women worldwide--roughly one in six women of reproductive age--are still in need of modern contraceptive methods to postpone or avoid future childbearing.
- **Improving Women's Health.** According to a 1996 report from the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), almost 600,000 women die

385
123
by delay.

during pregnancy and childbirth each year; 75,000 of these women die attempting to abort an unwanted pregnancy themselves or with the help of an untrained and unsafe provider. Providing quality family planning and reproductive health services to all who want them in the developing world is one of the most effective strategies for improving the health and status of women, and that of their children as well.

- **Family Planning Improves Child Survival Rates.** Family planning overseas allows women to time and space births, which reduces the incidence of low birthweight and improves overall child health.
- **Family Planning Funds Are Not Used for Abortion.** The use of U.S. funds for abortion has been prohibited by Congress since 1973. No U.S. dollars are used to provide abortion services either in the U.S. or abroad. Access to family planning services reduces the number of unplanned pregnancies and therefore reduces the incidence of abortion.
- **Less Than One Percent of the Federal Budget is Earmarked for International Aid** and only a small portion of that goes to family planning overseas.

Contact: Nancy Zirkin, Director of Government Relations, 202/785-7720
Cindy Brown, Senior Legislative Associate, 202/785-7730

Program and Policy Department
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PRESIDENT WILLIAM J. CLINTON
STATE-OF-THE-UNION ADDRESS
UNITED STATES CAPITOL
FEBRUARY 4, 1997

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Vice-President, Members of the 105th Congress, distinguished guests:

I come before you tonight to put forward a plan of action to prepare our people for the challenges of the next century.

We have much to be thankful for. With four years of solid growth, we have won back the strength of our economy, With crime, welfare rolls, teen pregnancy all falling, we are winning back our optimism, our faith that we can master our most difficult social challenges. America won the Cold War, and now we are helping to bring peace and prosperity unrivaled in history throughout the world.

It would be easy to be complacent, to rest at this moment. But we must not rest. We must not win these struggles only to lose this moment of opportunity.

Though we face no enemy bent on destroying us, ~~the enemy of our time is inaction.~~ The global economy, the Information Age, new careers, life-enhancing technology are ours to seize for our people. But if we do not take action, these opportunities could slip from our grasp or even be turned to our disadvantage in this vigorous new world of competition.

Our moment of opportunity is fleeting. A child born tonight will have almost no memory

of the 20th Century. Everything she is likely to know firsthand about the progress of America, she will know because of the work we do now to help build the new century. We must focus on our responsibilities to help her and all our children build for the future.

My fellow Americans, the State of our Union is strong, but the opportunity before us is even stronger. So tonight, I issue a call to action -- action by this Congress, action by our states, action by all our people to prepare America for the 21st Century. To answer this call, we must have a new government for a new century, one that gives all our people the means and the power to make the most of their own lives; we must have a new sense of responsibility among all individuals, and we must have a new spirit of community across our nation.

This call to action summons us to work for stronger education and harness the forces of technology and science; to build stronger families and stronger communities; to keep America the world's strongest force for peace, freedom and prosperity. And above all, to build a stronger, more perfect union here at home.

As we prepare for these challenges, we must move quickly to finish the unfinished business before us: balancing our budget, finishing welfare reform, restoring our democracy.

Over the last four years, we have made our economy grow, by investing in our people, expanding exports and cutting our deficit so it is now the smallest in the industrialized world. Now we must continue to keep our economy growing and interest rates low. We must finish the

job of balancing the budget.

In two days, I will propose a detailed plan to balance the budget by 2002.

My plan provides targeted tax relief to pay for education -- to raise a child -- and to buy and sell a new home. The middle class deserves tax relief, and we must give it to them.

+ workable

My plan proves we can meet all our obligations: lifting the burden of debt from our children and investing in education, training and other things to help them make the most of their lives. It proves we can build on the Vice President's work to modernize and reinvent government so it works better, even as it costs less.

We should not wait years for a constitutional amendment that could cripple our country in time of crisis; we should not wait another year for an agreement. Let this Congress finally balance the budget, and let it happen now -- not later, but now.

When we balance the budget, our job will not be done. In the near future, we must come together, in a bipartisan process, to preserve Social Security, and to reform Medicare to preserve its quality and choice. We must make sure these core programs are as strong for our children as they are for our parents.

There is a second piece of unfinished business for us here: We must make the permanent

underclass a thing of the past, and finish the job of welfare reform.

We must build on last year's landmark welfare reform legislation, taking seriously our responsibility to make sure all people who should work, have the opportunity to work.

Our goal is to lift one million people from welfare to work by the Year 2000. Here is my plan: Tax credits to businesses that hire people off welfare. Incentives for companies and job placement firms that create jobs for welfare recipients. Transportation to help people get to work.

*child care
training*

Beyond what we do here, I challenge every state: turn welfare checks into private sector paychecks. I challenge every religious congregation: hire someone off welfare. I am pleased that, since last autumn, a growing number of businesses have met my challenge to hire someone off welfare. And I am very pleased to announce tonight that [x] and [x] have agreed to lead a national mobilization of businesses to move people from welfare to work.

To everyone here, whether you supported this law or opposed it -- but especially those of us who supported it -- I say: We have a moral obligation to make sure people who now must work can work.

And, we must join together to do what Republican and Democratic governors have asked, to restore help for legal immigrants who work hard, pay taxes, and obey the law.

A third piece of unfinished business continues to strain our democracy. Tonight, before the eyes of America, we should commit to passing bipartisan campaign finance reform.

We have just come through an election in which more money was raised and spent on races for Congress and the Presidency than ever before. This system is badly broken. Every one involved in it -- every one of us here -- must take responsibility for this system, and for fixing it.

Senators McCain and Feingold, Representatives Shays and Meehan, have reached across party lines to craft reform. It would curb spending, reduce the role of special interests, create a level playing field between challengers and incumbents and ban the large soft money contributions both parties receive. [And it does something we should have done a long time ago: It bans contributions from people who are not citizens.]

You know and I know: delay will mean the death of reform. We must work together to enact campaign finance reform, and we should do it by the day we celebrate the birth of our democracy, by July 4.

If we balance the budget, finish welfare reform, and enact campaign finance reform, we will have cleared the path to prepare America for the new century ahead.

Then, the most important thing we can do -- and my number one priority as President for the next four years -- is to work together to meet these goals: Every 8 year

old will be able to read, every 12 year old will be able to log on to the Internet, every 18 year old will be able to go to college -- and American children must have the best education in the world.

My balanced budget makes an unprecedented commitment to stronger education ^{Check} \$42 billion next year. We are going to do our part here in Washington. But when it comes to education, that is nowhere near enough.

I have a plan we all must work on, a Plan for America's Schools, based on four principles, to which we must commit ourselves tonight. [hold up booklet]

First, we must set the highest national standards for education, and help our children reach them. Fourth graders must be able to read, and read well. Eighth graders must be able to do algebra. Twelfth graders must master a rigorous high school curriculum.

Over the next two years, we will develop a national fourth grade reading test and a national 8th grade math test, based on widely accepted, world-class standards. Tonight, I issue a national challenge: By 1999, every state should require these national tests of basic skills. And to help make sure a high school diploma means something, we should provide the Third International Math and Science Survey -- the TIMSS test -- to every school district that wants it. Children all over the world have taken this test. We should give more of our high school students the chance to test themselves against students around the world.

Raising standards will not be easy. Some of our children will not be able to meet them at first. But the point is, this is how we will lift them up. These tests will help show us who needs extra help, and which schools need improvement. And these tests will help us end social promotion in America, so children move from grade to grade only when they are ready.

To help all our children read, I want a citizen army of one million volunteers to tutor those who need extra help. My balanced budget invests \$2.75 billion for this. *work before* Tonight, I am proud to announce that 60 college presidents have pledged tens of thousands of work study students to work one year as reading tutors.

These tests are far more than just tests of our children. This entire endeavor is a test of our nation, of our ability to step up to the challenges of the global economy and the Information Age. We must make American education, like America itself, the envy of the world.

We know our kids can learn. They can do this. But we have to make it possible for them to succeed. This is a challenge to every governor, every teacher, every educator, every parent, every business person in America. We know we can make this work, because we see examples of what works all across this country. Tonight, I am very pleased to have with us two students who scored among the best in the country on the TIMSS test, and their teacher. [Intro TIMSS]

[Teacher] reminds us why the second part of my plan is so important. My budget will help more than 100,000 teachers get national certification as master teachers. We must reward

good teachers, and find ways to quickly and fairly remove those few who don't measure up. Now we have to do more to challenge the best of our young people to look at teaching as a career.

The second part of my plan calls on every state to let parents choose the right public school for their children. Innovation and competition will make our public schools better. We must do more to encourage teachers and parents to start public charter schools that set and meet the highest standards. My balanced budget doubles the funding set aside to help start charter schools, so by the Year 2000, there will be 3,000.

We cannot raise our children up in schools that are literally falling down. My budget includes \$5 billion to spur \$20 billion in school construction and modernization over the next four years.

Finally, we must press forward to make sure character education is a part of every curriculum. We cannot raise standards on every other subject if we fail to teach our children how to be good citizens. We should continue to promote order and discipline, supporting communities that introduce school uniforms, impose curfews, enforce truancy laws, and get disruptive kids out of the classroom.

We must do our part, but the responsibility for success belongs to every American. Tonight, I pledge to take this plan to the country, to enlist America's support in this crusade for

tomorrow's children. *[mention of Governors who might be present; legislature speeches?]*

To prepare our people for the 21st Century, we must make the 13th and 14th years of education -- at least two years of college -- as universal in America as high school is today.

My balanced budget does more than ever before to give college scholarships to deserving students, with the largest Pell Grant increase in 20 years.

And, to open the doors to college, we should cut taxes. My balanced budget includes America's HOPE scholarship, a \$1,500 tax credit for college tuition, enough to pay for the typical community college; a \$10,000 deduction for all education after high school; a tax-free IRA so families can save for college.

No working family need ever pay a nickel of taxes on money they save for college -- and I ask you to pass this so every American who works hard can go to college.

All our people must have the chance to learn new skills throughout their lives. The G.I. Bill for Workers will transform the confusing tangle of federal training programs into a single, simple skill grant that will go directly to workers. For too long, this bill has sat before you without action. Our worker training system does not work. It is time to fix it.

We should help parents teach their children in their earliest years. My balanced budget

expands Head Start by one million children by 2002. I am pleased to announce we will convene a White House Conference on Early Learning and the Brain and the Vice President's Family Conference this spring, to apply the newest scientific insights toward understanding how young children learn. It is never too early to learn, and we can never do too much to help them.

To prepare America for the 21st century, we must harness these powerful forces of knowledge, science and technology to the service of all Americans.

This is the first State of the Union to be carried live over the Internet. But we have only scratched the surface of the computer revolution.

Last year, I challenged our nation to connect every classroom and library to the Internet by the Year 2000, bringing for the first time the same universe of knowledge to an isolated rural schoolhouse, an inner city high school, or a magnet school in a well-off suburb. My plan increases our Technology Literacy Fund by \$225 million. Last year, Vice-President Gore and I joined 20,000 volunteers to connect thousands of schools in California at the first of [tk] Net Days across America. This year, I challenge every state to have a Net Day. And I challenge every computer company, communications company, and computer lover in America to join up.

We must build the second generation Internet. My balanced budget includes [\$100 million] to connect 100 universities and national labs with an Internet up to 1,000 times faster than today's -- powerful enough to connect patients in rural hospitals to America's best doctors

and cutting edge medical equipment. We must work with the private sector to connect every children's hospital to the Internet as well, so a child in bed can stay in school. We should open the rich world of America's heritage and culture to even more of our people. Tonight, I am pleased to announce that we will be working with the private sector to put 10 million objects in the Smithsonian collection online.

In the last few years, medical breakthroughs have brought new hope to people suffering

from spina bifida, AIDS, and cancer. My balanced budget includes a [tk]% increase in funding for our medical laboratories. *Expected breakthroughs by 2000 to come from NIH* 13.1 Billion

As we do all these things to harness the forces of science in our lives, we will press forward to explore the heavens. Through the Mars probes, the international space station, the project to explore the origins of life, we are inspiring our children to join the quest for new knowledge in the 21st Century, even as we discover practical applications that make life better here on Earth.

To prepare America for the 21st Century, we must build stronger families.

In the new century, with new pressures on people in the way they work and live, we must help parents raise strong families and pass on their values to their children.

Every parent must uphold their most sacred responsibility. We should make it a felony

for any parent to cross state lines in an attempt to flee from his or her obligation to pay child support. And to America's fathers, let me say: child support is no substitute for the love and discipline your children need from you. You must be there for them.

For four years, the Family and Medical Leave Law has helped millions of our people. Now we should expand Family Leave so parents can take time off for parent teacher conferences or a child's routine checkup. We should pass flextime so workers can choose to be paid for overtime not only in income, but also with time off to be with their families.

*So that more
American workers
can benefit
from it.*

For our families to be strong, we must continue, step-by-step, to give them access to affordable, quality health care. My balanced budget will extend health coverage to five million children -- cutting in half the number of uninsured children in America. It will help all people between jobs pay their premiums for up to six months. No child should be without a doctor just because a parent is without a job.

And we must never abandon our efforts to find ways to cover the 40 million Americans who still lack health insurance.

[Last year, we ended "drive-through deliveries," requiring that new mothers and their babies get at least 48 hours of hospital care. This year, we must enact the bipartisan legislation before you to end the dangerous and demeaning practice of drive-through mastectomies.]

We must continue our efforts to protect the health of our children -- and that means fighting to enforce our new rules to stop tobacco advertising aimed at children.

Beyond stronger education, beyond stronger families, to prepare America for the 21st Century, we must build stronger communities.

We must protect our environment and preserve our natural heritage for the 21st century. My balanced budget provides the resources to clean up over 500 toxic waste sites -- 2/3 of all those in America -- by the Year 2000. Our children should grow up next to parks, not poison.

Over the past four years, we saved Yellowstone from mining, established the largest national park south of Alaska in California's Mojave Desert; protected Utah's magnificent Grand Escalante Staircase; and we are working to save the Florida Everglades. Tonight, I am announcing a new category of protected national treasures -- the American Heritage Rivers. We protect our forests. We protect our deserts. We must also protect our cherished rivers -- and we will do it, starting now.

As we restore our communities, we must make sure taxpayers never again pay to clean up polluters' mess. I urge you to pass my proposal to make polluters live by this simple rule: if you pollute our environment, you clean it up.

Some of the worst pollution is in the heart of our cities. Our approach to renewing those

neighborhoods, and poor communities across America, is to bring the full force of the private economy to bear -- to create jobs, spur investment by businesses and loans by banks, and restore hope. I urge you to pass the brownfields initiative, restoring contaminated properties to productive use, and to pass a new round of Empowerment Zones to spread economic growth to our poorest inner cities and rural communities.

And we, together, must pledge tonight that we will use these approaches -- including private sector tax incentives -- to renew this great capital city, so it is once again the proud face America shows the world.

In the fight for strong communities, nothing is more important than the fight against crime and violence. Serious crime has dropped five years in a row -- the longest decline in decades. The key has been community policing -- and we must finish the job of putting 100,000 police officers on the street. We should pass a Victims' Rights Amendment to the Constitution.

We should set a goal to deport a record 100,000 criminals and other illegal aliens this year. *Check.*
separate this concept *immigrants*

And, for the next four years, our goal must be to mount a full scale assault on juvenile crime. I will submit comprehensive legislation that declares war on criminal gangs, with new prosecutors and tougher penalties; gives judges more power to crack down on gang members who intimidate witnesses; extends the Brady Bill so a minor who commits a violent crime will never be given the right to own a handgun; requires trigger safety locks to prevent unauthorized use; and provides resources to keep schools open late, on weekends, and in the summer, so

*family
domestic
violence
ordinance*

take guns out of the hands of people who are
abusive.
young people have someplace to go and something to say yes to.

Helping young people through service is exactly why President Bush, General Colin Powell, and former Housing Secretary Henry Cisneros joined Vice President Gore and me at the White House to announce the Presidents's Summit of Service, to be held in Philadelphia in April. Out of that summit, we want to mobilize millions of Americans to serve our young people in thousands of ways. Already, AmeriCorps, our national service program, has helped 50,000 young people to work their way through college as they serve America. Citizen service belongs to no party or ideology. It is an American responsibility which all Americans should embrace in their daily lives. And I hope many more of our young people will take up that responsibility as well.

Our young people should never forget that their first responsibility is to take care of themselves.

My balanced budget includes the largest anti-drug effort ever: to stop drugs at their source, punish those who push them, and steer young people away.

Let me say a word directly to you, our children: As we work to build a strong future for you, you have to think about what kind of future you want to have for yourself. Nothing your parents do, nothing anyone can do, will keep drugs out of your hands if you set out to find them. Drugs are deadly. They will ruin your life. Don't let them. It's up to you.

And to prepare America for the 21st Century, we must master the forces of global change and keep American leadership strong in this new time.

Almost exactly fifty years ago -- on March 17, 1947 -- President Harry Truman stood before Congress and called for a national commitment to make America the free world's indispensable nation. We launched the Marshall Plan to rebuild our allies and former adversaries. We created the institutions and provided the resources that brought the West security and prosperity -- and victory in the Cold War. Because of those commitments, more people than ever before share the ideals that define America and the interests we defend.

Now, we face another time of change and moment of choice. We dismantled many of the blocs and barriers that divided the world for our parents. But we still must finish creating the new institutions and understandings that will make the world work for our children. We must commit ourselves anew to taking the steps that will keep America the indispensable nation for the entire world.

Our first task must be to build, for the very first time, an undivided, peaceful and democratic Europe. When Europe is stable, America is more secure. When Europe prospers, so does America.

Nearly half a century ago, NATO strengthened struggling democracies and paved the way

for prosperity in Europe's west. Now, we can do the same for Europe's east by opening NATO's doors to new democracies and building a strong NATO-Russia partnership. This summer, I will go to Madrid for a special NATO summit. Together, we, here, should commit our country to an expanded NATO by 1999, in which countries that were once our enemies become our allies to keep Europe united and at peace.

Second, in a global economy with global security challenges, America must look to the East no less than the West -- and build a true community of nations in the Asia Pacific. Our security demands it: Americans have fought three wars in Asia in living memory. Our prosperity requires it: more than 2 million American jobs depend on trade with Asia.

As we tear down trade barriers and build up our alliances, that Pacific community is taking shape. But we must not let our progress mask the peril that remains. We must dismantle North Korea's frozen nuclear program, as North Korea has agreed. I call on you to fund America's contribution to this effort. And we must advance peace talks between South Korea and North Korea to bridge the final divide of the Cold War.

We must pursue a deeper dialogue with China. An isolated, inward looking China is not in our interest. Instead, we must work together on common problems like weapons proliferation and deal with fundamental differences like human rights. As contacts grow . . . as markets expand and information flows . . . as China plays its rightful role in the world... a more open society can gain strength. I look forward to exchanging state visits with President Jiang -- not

because we agree on everything, but because a constructive U.S.-China relationship matters to the world.

Third, the American people will only know true security if they have the opportunity to prosper in the global economy. These past four years, we made it our mission to open markets abroad and create good jobs at home. More than two hundred trade agreements later, America is once again the world's number one exporter and most competitive nation.

Now, we must build on that momentum throughout Asia and Latin America -- and to place the United States at the hub of the two most dynamic regions on earth. I am pleased to announce tonight that I will travel to Mexico in April, then to [tk] in May, to advance that goal. And I will work with Congress to make -- and enforce -- trade agreements that are good for America.

Fourth, we must continue to be an unrelenting force for peace -- from the Middle East to Northern Ireland to Africa. Considered risks for peace lessen the likelihood of more costly conflicts. It encourages other nations to focus on their people, not their arsenals. It helps build a community willing to tackle shared problems together.

In Bosnia, with American leadership, the killing has stopped -- but the habits of peace are slow to take hold. That is why I agreed for our troops to take part in a smaller follow-on force that should complete its mission by June 1998. The force will help prevent hostilities from

resuming so economic reconstruction and political reconciliation can accelerate -- and Bosnia's peace can become self-sustaining. Tonight, I ask Congress to continue its strong support for our troops. They are doing a remarkable job for America -- America must do right by them.

Fifth, we must move strongly against new threats to our security that respect no borders: weapons of mass destruction... terrorism... international crime and drug trafficking. The American people are more secure -- and should be proud -- because we have dramatically reduced the threat of weapons of mass destruction. We reached an historic accord to end nuclear testing for all time. We extended the treaty to halt the spread of nuclear weapons. With Russia, we made deep cuts in our nuclear arsenals and agreed to stop targeting each other's citizens. We are working to prevent nuclear materials from falling into the wrong hands and to rid the world of landmines.

But the American people will have no cause for pride if we fail the test of leadership that lies ahead: ratifying the Chemical Weapons Convention. The Convention will make our troops safer from chemical attack. It will help us fight terrorism and isolate rogue states. That is why the Reagan Administration negotiated the Convention... the Bush Administration signed it... and XX nations have approved it. Together, let us make the Chemical Weapons Convention law -- and begin to banish poison gas from this earth.

Preparing America for the 21st century cannot be done on the cheap; the price of neglect would be far greater. We must maintain a strong and ready military -- and we will, by

increasing weapons modernization funding 40 percent by the Year 2000. Our men and women in uniform have preserved our freedom in the past. They must have the equipment and training to preserve it in the future.

by nearly 30%.

and by filling supporting their readiness mission

We must renew our commitment to America's diplomacy. Every dollar we devote to diplomacy and to the international financial institutions brings a sure return in security and savings. Yet international affairs spending totals just one percent of the federal budget -- versus sixteen percent when Harry Truman asked America to choose engagement over escapism. We have to do better.

The United Nations can help us spread the risks and the costs of leadership -- saving children's lives, sheltering refugees, giving peace a chance to take hold. Its new Secretary General is committed to reform. As the UN cuts waste and streamlines staff, the United States should pay our debts and our dues.

At the key points of the second half of this century, Republicans and Democrats have disagreed on specific policies. But we have always agreed on the need for American leadership. That bipartisan support has fortified our strength.

Before this month is out, I will ask the leadership of both houses and both parties to meet with me to work on America's foreign policy agenda. The actions we take, much like the actions we took 50 years ago, will shape the lives of every American for decades to come.

Finally, perhaps our most important leadership of the world grows out of the power of our example -- and our ability to remain strong as One America.

People all over the world are splitting apart because of conflicts of race or religion or ethnicity. And this division is fueling the fanaticism of terror. We are the world's most diverse democracy. And the world looks to us to show it is possible to live and learn together across all differences.

We do this, not only for the world, but for our children. The global economy requires us to cooperate with, for the first time, on billions of people around the world who are different from us. Our diversity in this new era is not a weakness -- it is our greatest strength.

Despite this, we see evidence all around us that our work is not yet done. We have seen it in the awful resurgence of church burnings. We see it every day in the sullen, hopeless faces worn by too many of our youth. And too often, we see it in our corridors of business and halls of government. Too many people still spend their time trying to drive wedges between us -- *assaults on f. planning health centers*
and further planning
racist/out
 black against white, haves against have nots, old immigrants against new.

people of justice?
 But we also see signs of hope. Two men of faith are with us tonight who reflect the light of reconciliation that must shine in all our lives. Rev. Terrence Mackey is pastor of Mt. Zion AME Church in Greelyville, South Carolina. When his church was one of those destroyed by arson last year, Rev. Mackey refused to give in to bitterness. He and his neighbors -- people of

different races and faiths -- joined together to rebuild that church. And I hope no one forgets the words he told his daughter when she asked him how anyone could set fire to their church. He told her, "They didn't burn down the church. They burned down the building in which we hold church. The church is inside all of us."

The second man is one of America's best known pastors, Rev. Robert Schuller. A few days before my second inauguration, Rev. Schuller suggested that I look at Isaiah 58:12, and it was on that verse that I placed my hand when I took the oath of office. It says: "Thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations, and thou shalt be called, the repairer of the breach, the restorer of paths to dwell in." Rev. Mackey and Rev. Schuller teach us that no matter what our differences -- in our faiths, in our backgrounds, in our politics -- we all must be repairers of the breach. We may not all share a common past, but surely we share a common future. Those two men are sitting with my wife Hillary; I'd like them both to stand.

to Christian

[Over two centuries ago, at the very end of the Constitutional Convention, one of the drafters posed this question: "Can you imagine that this vast country, [spreading across the continent], will 150 years [from now] remain one nation?" That is still the central question for America. Through all the changes we faced as a nation, we did stay together. And now we must imagine that we can do it again, that we can indeed form a more perfect union, despite all the forces of change swirling about us at this remarkable moment. *Cutable*]

This is hard work. But there is nothing more important we can do. Our unity is our greatest strength. It is the "foundation of many generations," the foundation of every other



strength we must build for the 21st century.

We don't have a moment to waste. Tomorrow morning, there will be barely 1,000 days until the Year 2000. 1,000 days to prepare our people. 1,000 days to work together. 1,000 days to fulfill our promise. My fellow Americans, we must answer our call to action. Our obligation is clear. We have work to do.

Thank you, God bless you, and God bless America.

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

January 22, 1997

REMARKS BY THE FIRST LADY
AT NATIONAL ABORTION RIGHTS
ACTION LEAGUE LUNCHEON

MRS. CLINTON: I am pleased to be here with all of you. And I know that it took a little longer to get into the room than usual, but let me reassure you about the events of this morning. We do not know what the facts are, but law enforcement, as the President said this morning, is working hard to get the bottom of it, and it does not, at least so far as we know at this time, appear to be anything serious that should concern us.

I am very pleased to be here for a number of reasons. One is to join all of you in honoring Robin Chandler Duke. We will hear more about her as the program goes on. But I wanted to thank her publicly for her tireless work on behalf of family planning here at home and particularly internationally, on her advocacy of safe motherhood and other issues critical to women, children and families. She has always understood that these are not marginal concerns. They relate to political and economic progress, human rights, and peace and prosperity here in our country and around the world.

So I wanted to raise my voice with all of yours in commending her for all of her work in raising awareness about family planning and her many other contributions that she has already made and that I know she will continue to make into the future. (Applause.)

I also wanted to come and recognize and thank my friend, Nancy Rubin, for her energy, her wisdom and all of her efforts on behalf of causes relating to women and families. She is a clear and articulate voice for women's rights around the world and has worked to strengthen education, economic opportunities, legal protections and political rights, and has helped from one corner of the world to the next to bring women's issues to the forefront of international and national concerns. (Applause.)

And I know that I speak for all of us and for many others who are not here in thanking Kate Michelman for over a decade of service leading this organization and doing so much to promote and protect a women's right to choose. It has not been an easy mission. And she has

continued to speak up and speak out even in difficult times. And, Kate, we want to thank you for that. (Applause).

I'm delighted that the Vice President and Tipper Gore will be here shortly, representing the administration, and that both of them will address you. I literally am dropping in, wanting to be here today, but I have a previous engagement and have to be New York this evening, I think -- I lose track of where I am and where I'm going and where I'll be. (Laughter.)

But I wanted to lend my voice to the Vice President's and Tipper's and to all of yours in thanking you for your work. And particularly, I wanted to thank the members of Congress who are here and other elected officials for remaining steadfast in their support of a woman's right to choose.

This is never an easy issue, and anyone who thinks they have the ultimate truth on it is always going to be wrong. This is a very hard issue. And in the next years, I hope that we will be able to find ways of increasing dialogue, in working together with people of good faith who do not share extremism as their rallying cry, to try to understand how we can continue the progress that has been made in the last four years in decreasing the number of abortions, decreasing teen pregnancy, in working to give women opportunities to make the choices that are best for them and their families.

And I have no illusions about the difficulty of that. But I also have no illusions that there is any other route to take. This is an issue that will be with us because of the strong feelings. And I think that my husband's formulation of it years ago is still the right one, that abortion should be legal, safe and rare. We have worked hard in the last -- (applause) -- in the last four years to maintain legality and safety and to begin to put into place attitudes and values and policies that are beginning to work to make abortion rare.

But that will mean we also must speak out on behalf of family planning here and around the world -- (applause) -- on behalf of educational opportunities for young women and young men so they know they have better choices and that they should postpone childbearing or even confronting the issue of abortion. It means that we have to have good, comprehensive health care services available to all people in our country so that they have access to the same information that those of us who are fortunate do. (Applause.)

I was reminded on my way over here of several of the experiences that I have had in the last four years traveling on behalf of our country. I was in Brazil, a maternal hospital -- I wrote about it in my book and I talked about it. It stays in my mind because half the admissions were for the joy of giving birth, and half the admissions were for complications resulting from self-induced or back-alley abortions. And the Minister of Health in a public meeting with me said, we want to give poor women the same information and access to family planning that well-to-do women have always had in our country. (Applause.) That should be our goal not only here but also in our foreign policy.

I also had the rather unique experience within a year of traveling to China and speaking

out against policies of forced abortion and sterilization where the government made the choice for women, and traveling to Romania that under the previous communist regime had a policy of enforcing birth -- five children per woman. And I spoke with women who told me of every month being taken as part of their work units to local hospitals where they were forcefully examined to determine whether or not they were pregnant so they could then be monitored by the secret police to be sure they had the child.

Two extremes -- government, on the one hand, saying you cannot have children; government, on the other hand, saying you must have children. What we have tried to do in promoting choice is to say that this most difficult of all intimate choices for women and men must be made by the individual in the privacy of her consultation with her conscience, her God, her family, her physician -- (applause.)

Thank you for continuing to try to get that message across. Please join in helping us make these difficult decisions rarer. Help us support women in all their needs. Help us support families.

And I appreciate greatly the devotion and dedication that so many of you have given to this over the years, and look forward to working with you into the future. Thank you very much. (Applause.)

END