Respect for Human Life

- Language . . .
  - . . . which generally refers to the protection of human life
  - . . . which could be interpreted to include abortion
  - . . . including modifying words, which could be interpreted to exclude abortion
  - . . . which respects the right of individual nations to make decisions regarding abortion
- Examples:
  - Right to life
  - Legal protection before birth
  - Dignity and worth
  - A healthy infant
  - Special care for mothers
  - Abortion not to be promoted as a method of family planning
  - Abortion
  - Abortion as a means of genocide
  - Abortion of females
  - Safe motherhood and abortion
  - ?Unsafe Abortion?
  - Female Infanticide

When each human life is valued, there is greater peace in the world. All actions by international, national, and local governments, and their various health and education agencies, should be centered on a recognition and respect for the dignity of all human life -- before as well as after birth.

Language which generally refers to the protection of human life

"inherent dignity of all human beings"

"dignity and worth of the human person"

"prenatal care"

"postnatal care"

"right to life"

Language which could be interpreted to include abortion

"reproductive health services"

"sexual and reproductive health rights"

"primary heath care" (*e.g.* Cairo +5, 57-d: "in the context of primary health care, ensuring the availability of and access to reproductive health services")

"terminating an unwanted pregnancy" (*e.g.* Beijing footnote 16: "unsafe abortion" identified as a procedure for terminating an unwanted pregnancy)

"safe motherhood" (*compare* ICPD footnote 21and Beijing footnote 16: "safe motherhood' includes the reduction of maternal mortality and morbidity *with* ICPD, 8.26: "reproductive health services" should be used to reduce maternal morbidity and mortality)

"regulation of fertility" (*e.g.* Beijing 94: "reproductive health" includes "methods of family planning of their choice, as well as other methods of their choice for regulation of fertility which are not against the law." The methods "other" than family planning could include abortion.)

"emergency obstetric care" (*e.g.* Beijing 97: "effective family planning methods and emergency obstetric care")

"prenatal sex selection" (*see* ICPD 4.15)

Language, including modifying words, which could be interpreted to exclude abortion

"in no case should abortion be promoted as a method of family planning"

"enable women to go safely through pregnancy and childbirth"

"provide couples with the best chance of having a healthy infant"

"with respect for cultural, religious and social aspects, in keeping with freedom, dignity and personally held values and taking into account ethical and cultural considerations"

"fully respects various religions, ethical values and cultural backgrounds"

"respecting their cultural values and religious beliefs"

Language which respects the right of individual nations to make decisions regarding abortion

"determined at the national or local level according to the national legislative process" (*e.g.* Cairo +5: 63-i and Beijing +5: 72-o)

Representative examples:

Right to life

"Everyone has the **right to life**, liberty and security of person." Universal Declaration, Article 3

"Every human being has the **inherent right to life.** This right shall be protected by law. No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his life."ICCPR, Article 6-1

"States Parties recognize that every child has the **inherent right to life**." CRC, Article 6-1

"States Parties shall ensure to the maximum extent possible the **survival and development of the child**." CRC, Article 6-2

"Everyone has the right to **life, liberty and security of person**." ICPD, II 1

"We also recognize that **persons, as they age, should enjoy a life of fulfillment, health, security** and active participation in the economic, social, cultural and political life of their societies." Ageing, Article 5

"... ensure that persons everywhere are **able to age with security and dignity**..." Ageing, 10

"By 2030, provide **legal identity for all**, including birth registration" "2030 Agenda, target 16.9

Legal protection before birth

Bearing in mind that, as indicated in the Declaration of the Rights of the Child, "the child, by reason of his physical and mental immaturity, needs special safeguards and care, including appropriate legal protection, **before as well as after birth.** . . ." CRC, Preamble

Dignity and worth

"to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the **dignity and worth of the human person**, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small" Charter of the United Nations, Preamble

"Whereas the peoples of the United Nations have in the Charter reaffirmed their faith in fundamental human rights, in the **dignity and worth of the human person**. . . ." Universal Declaration, Preamble

"Recognizing that these rights derive from the inherent **dignity of the human person** . . . ." ICESCR, Preamble

"Noting that the Charter of the United Nations reaffirms faith in fundamental human rights, in the **dignity and worth of the human person** . . . ." CEDAW, Preamble

"Recognizing and affirming that all human rights derive from the **dignity and worth inherent in the human person.** . . ." Vienna Declaration, Preamble

"by respecting the **dignity and worth of the human person**" Beijing, 33

"Support research and develop comprehensive strategies at the national, regional and local levels to meet, where appropriate, the challenges of population ageing . . . in particular older women; affordable, accessible and appropriate health-care services; the human rights and **dignity of older persons** and the productive and useful roles that they can play in society." Cairo +5, 21-c

"We are determined to enhance the recognition of the **dignity of older persons** and to eliminate all forms of neglect, abuse and violence." Ageing, Article 5

"The aim of the International Plan of Action is to ensure that persons everywhere are able to **age with security and dignity** and to continue to participate in their societies as citizens with full rights." Ageing, 10

"Combating discrimination based on age and **promoting the dignity of older persons** is fundamental to ensuring the respect that older persons deserve." Ageing, 13

"Older persons should be **treated fairly and with dignity**, regardless of disability or other status, and should be valued independently of their economic contribution…" Ageing, 21-g

"Take account of the needs of older persons and **respect the right to live in dignity** at all stages of life…" Ageing, 21-h

"Images of older persons as attractive, diverse and creative individuals making vital contributions should compete for the public's attention." Ageing, 112

"…cognizant of the need for **human dignity for all**…" Earth Summit +10, 2

"the **indivisibility of human dignity**…" Earth Summit +10, 18

"…to adversely affect their economic and social development and are incompatible with the **dignity and worth of the human person**and must be combated…" Earth Summit +10, 103

"We acknowledge the importance of ethics for the Information Society, which should foster justice, and **the dignity and worth of the human person**..." Information Summit, 57

"... Recognizing that the **dignity of the human person is fundamental**, we wish to see the Goals and targets met for all nations and people and for all segments of society." 2030 Agenda, 4

A healthy infant

"The provision for the reduction of the stillbirth rate and of infant mortality and for the **healthy development of the child.** . . ." ICESCR, Article 12-2

"We will work for a solid effort of national and international action to enhance children's health, to **promote pre-natal care** and to lower infant and child mortality in all countries and among all peoples. . . ." Children Summit Decl., 20-2

"**Pre-natal care**, clean delivery, access to referral facilities in complicated cases, tetanus toxoid vaccination and prevention of anemia and other nutritional deficiencies during pregnancy are other important interventions to ensure safe motherhood and a **healthy start in life for the newborn**. . . ." Children Summit, Plan of action, 17

"Programmes should focus on providing comprehensive health care, including **pre-natal care**, education and information on health . . . ." Agenda 21, 3.8-j; Agenda 21, 5.51; Agenda 21, 24.3-e

"Particular attention should be given to the provision of **pre-natal care to ensure healthy babies**." Agenda 21, 6.21

"the right of access to appropriate health-care services that will enable women to go safely through pregnancy and childbirth and **provide couples with the best chance of having a healthy infant**" ICPD, 7.2

"In the basic reproductive health services component - information and routine services for **prenatal, normal and safe delivery and post-natal care** . . . ." ICPD, 13.14-b

"the right of access to appropriate health-care services that will enable women to go safely through pregnancy and childbirth and provide couples with **the best chance of having a healthy infant**" Beijing +5, 72-i;

". . . provide couples with the **best chance of having a healthy infant**. . . . " Beijing, 94

Beijing, 97

"**Deliver basic health services for all** and reduce environmental health threats, taking into account the special needs of children and the linkages between poverty, health and environment…" Earth Summit +10, 7-f

"By 2030, **end preventable deaths of newborns and children** under 5 years of age,..." 2030 Agenda, target 3.2

Special care for mothers

"Motherhood and childhood are entitled to **special care and assistance**. All children, whether born in or out of wedlock, shall enjoy the same social protection." Universal Declaration, Article 25-2

"Special protection should be accorded to mothers during a reasonable period **before and after childbirth.** . . ." ICESCR, Article 10-2

"We will work for a solid effort of national and international action to enhance children's health, to **promote pre-natal care** and to lower infant and child mortality in all countries and among all peoples. We will promote the provision of clean water in all communities for all their children, as well as universal access to sanitation . . . ." Children Summit, 20-2

"Reproductive health programmes and services, should, as appropriate, be developed and enhanced to **reduce maternal and infant mortality** from all causes . . . ." Agenda 21, 5.49

". . .f ocus on providing comprehensive health care, **including pre-natal care**, education and information on health . . . to **reduce the risk of maternal and child mortality** and sickness." Agenda 21, 5.51; Agenda 21, 6.26; Agenda 21, 24.3-e

" . . . **prenatal care that is focused and effective**, maternal nutrition programmes, adequate delivery assistance that avoids excessive recourse to caesarean sections and provides for obstetric emergencies; referral services for pregnancy, childbirth and abortion complications; post-natal care and family planning. All births should be assisted by trained persons, preferably nurses and midwives, but at least by trained birth attendants. . . ." ICPD, 8.22

"In the basic reproductive health services component - information and routine services for **prenatal, normal and safe delivery** and postnatal care . . . ." ICPD, 13.14-b

"Ensure that . . . women have ready access to **essential obstetric care**, well-equipped and adequately staffed maternal health-care . . . ."Cairo +5: 62b; Social Summit +5: 85

"emphasize **improved prenatal care** and nutrition . . . and strengthening maternal health services . . ." Cairo +5: 18a

"equal access to appropriate and adequate food and nutrition, clean water, safe sanitation, shelter, education, social and health services, including reproductive health care and **maternity care**" Beijing +5: 15

“Ensure that the reduction of maternal and neonatal morbidity and mortality is a health sector priority and that women, in particular adolescent expectant mothers, have ready and affordable access to **essential obstetric care**, well-equipped and adequately staffed maternal health-care services, skilled attendance at delivery, emergency obstetric care, effective referral and transport to higher levels of care when necessary, post-partum care…” Children Summit +10: 37-1

“**Improve the nutrition of mothers and children**, including adolescents, through household food security, access to basic social services and adequate caring practices.” Children Summit +10: 37-13

“…in particular women and children, that hinders their well-being or that creates obstacles…” Earth Summit +10, 102

"By 2030, end all forms of malnutrition, including achieving,... and address the nutritional needs of adolescent girls, **pregnant and lactating women** and older person" 2030 Agenda, target 2.2

Abortion not to be promoted as a method of family planning

"Governments should take appropriate steps to help women avoid **abortion, which in no case should be promoted as a method of family planning** , and in all cases provide for the humane treatment and counselling" ICPD, 7.24

"**In no case should abortion be promoted as a method of family planning**. All Governments and relevant intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations are urged to strengthen their commitment to women's health . . ." ICPD, 8.25

"Reproductive health care in the context of primary health care should, inter alia, include: . . . **abortion as specified in paragraph 8.25**, including prevention of abortion and the management of the consequences of abortion; . . ." ICPD, 7.6

"prenatal, normal and safe delivery and post-natal care; **abortion** (as specified in paragraph 8.25)" ICPD, 13.14

"Recognize and deal with the health impact of unsafe abortion as a major public health concern, **as agreed in paragraph 8.25** of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development . . . ." Beijing, 106-j

"In the light of paragraph 8.25 of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, which states: '**In no case should abortion be promoted as a method of family planning**' . . ." Beijing, 106-k

"In the light of paragraph 8.25 of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, which states: â€˜**In no case should abortion be promoted as a method of family planning**'." Beijing +5, 72-o

"**In no case should abortion be promoted as a method of family planning** . . . . Any measures or changes related to abortion within the health system can only be determined at the national or local level according to the national legislative process . . . ." Cairo +5: 63-i

"Governments should take appropriate steps to help women **avoid abortion, which in no case should be promoted as a method of family planning** . . . ." Cairo +5: 63-ii

". . . While some measures have been taken in some countries, the actions contained in paragraphs 106j and **106k of the Platform for Action** regarding the health impact of unsafe abortion and the need to reduce the recourse to abortion have not been fully implemented. . . ." Beijing +5, 12

Abortion

"To address adolescent sexual and reproductive health issues, including unwanted pregnancy, **unsafe abortion** and sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV/AIDS . . . ." ICPD, 7.44-a

"At present, approximately 90 per cent of the countries of the world, representing 96 per cent of the world population, have policies that permit **abortion under varying legal conditions to save the life of a woman. . . .**" ICPD, 8.19

"**methods of their choice for regulation of fertility which are not against the law**, and the right of access to appropriate health-care services that will enable women to go safely through pregnancy and childbirth and provide couples with the best chance of having a healthy infant. . . ." Beijing, 97

Unsafe abortion is defined as a **procedure for terminating an unwanted pregnancy** either by persons lacking the necessary skills or in an environment lacking the minimal medical standards or both (based on World Health Organization Report of a Technical Working Group, Geneva, April 1992 (WHO/MSM/92.5)). Beijing, footnote 16

"Any measures or changes **related to abortion within the health system** can only be determined at the national or local level according to the national legislative process. . . ." Beijing +5, 72-o

Abortion as a means of genocide

"For the purpose of this Statute, 'genocide' means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such: Imposing **measures intended to prevent births within the group** . . . ." Rome ICC, Article 6,d

Abortion of females

"Since in all societies discrimination on the basis of sex often starts at the earliest stages of life . . . [t]his is often compounded by the increasing use of technologies to determine foetal sex, resulting in **abortion of female foetuses**. Investments made in the girl child's health, nutrition and education, from infancy through adolescence, are critical." ICPD, 4.15

"To eliminate all forms of discrimination against the girl child and the root causes of son preference, which results in harmful and unethical practices regarding female infanticide and **prenatal sex selection** . . . ." ICPD, 4.16-a

"Governments are urged to take the necessary measures to prevent infanticide, **prenatal sex selection,** trafficking in girl children and use of girls in prostitution and pornography." ICPD, 4.23

"Acts of violence against women also include forced sterilization and forced abortion, coercive/forced use of contraceptives, female infanticide and **prenatal sex selection**." Beijing, 115

"Enact and enforce legislation against the perpetrators of practices and acts of violence against women, such as female genital mutilation, female infanticide, **prenatal sex selection** and dowryrelated violence . . . ." Beijing, 124-i

? Unsafe Abortion ?

Opposition to "unsafe abortion" is often used as a catalyst to promote "safe" abortion. However, ***no abortion is "safe" for the unborn child****. The following paragraphs, in both ICPD and Beijing documents, provides a definition for "unsafe abortion."*

20/ Unsafe abortion is defined as a **procedure for terminating an unwanted pregnancy either by persons lacking the necessary skills or in an environment lacking the minimal medical standards or both** (based on World Health Organization, The Prevention and Management of Unsafe Abortion, Report of a Technical Working Group, Geneva, April 1992 (WHO/MSM/92.5)). ICPD, footnote 20

16/ Unsafe abortion is defined as a **procedure for terminating an unwanted pregnancy either by persons lacking the necessary skills or in an environment lacking the minimal medical standards or both** (based on World Health Organization Report of a Technical Working Group, Geneva, April 1992 (WHO/MSM/92.5)). Beijing footnote 16

"To address adolescent sexual and reproductive health issues, including unwanted pregnancy, **unsafe abortion** 20/ and sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV/AIDS, through the promotion of responsible and healthy reproductive and sexual behaviour, **including voluntary abstinence** and the provision of appropriate services and counselling specifically suitable for that age group;" ICPD, 7.44(a)

"...On the basis of a commitment to women's health and well-being, to **reduce greatly the number of deaths and morbidity from unsafe abortion**;" ICPD, 8.20

"...deal with the health impact of **unsafe abortion as a major public health concern** and to reduce the recourse to abortion through expanded and improved family-planning services..." ICPD 8.25

"...the health impact of unsafe abortion and **the need to reduce the recourse to abortion have not been fully implemented**..." Beijing +5, 12

Safe motherhood and abortion (these paragraphs show that "safe motherhood" can be considered to include abortion)

"within the framework of primary health care, extend integrated *reproductive health-care* and child-health *services*, [including **safe motherhood**, /21] child-survival programmes and family-planning services" ICPD, 8.17

"To promote women's health and *safe motherhood*; to achieve a rapid and substantial reduction in maternal morbidity and mortality and reduce the differences observed between developing and developed countries and within countries. On the basis of a commitment to women's health and well-being, to **reduce greatly the number of deaths and morbidity from unsafe abortion** . . . ." ICPD, 8.20-a

"All countries, with the support of all sections of the international community, must expand the provision of maternal health services in the context of primary health care. These services, based on the concept of informed choice, should include **education on safe motherhood**, prenatal care that is focused and effective, maternal nutrition programmes, adequate delivery assistance that avoids excessive recourse to caesarean sections and provides for obstetric emergencies; referral services for pregnancy, childbirth and **abortion complications;** post-natal care and family planning. All births should be assisted by trained persons, preferably nurses and midwives, but at least by trained birth attendants. **The underlying causes of maternal morbidity and mortality should be identified**, and attention should be given to the development of strategies to overcome them and for adequate evaluation and monitoring mechanisms to assess the progress being made in reducing maternal mortality and morbidity and to enhance the effectiveness of ongoing programmes. Programmes and education to engage men's support for maternal health and safe motherhood should be developed." ICPD, 8.22

[*See following paragraph which combines "reproductive health services" as part of reducing maternal morbidity and mortality. The words "reproductive health services" are commonly used to refer to abortion in UN documents.*]

"Programmes to reduce maternal morbidity and mortality should include information and **reproductive health services**, including family-planning services. In order to reduce high-risk pregnancies, maternal health and safe motherhood programmes should include counselling and family- planning information." ICPD, 8.26

"Safe motherhood aims at attaining **optimal maternal and newborn health**. It implies reduction of maternal mortality and morbidity and **enhancement of the health of newborn infants**through equitable access to primary health care, including family planning, **prenatal**, delivery and post-natal care for the mother and infant, and access to essential obstetric and neonatal care (World Health Organization, Health Population and Development, WHO Position Paper, Geneva, 1994 (WHO/FHE/94.1))." Beijing, footnote 16; ICPD, footnote 21

"Information, education and communication efforts should raise awareness through public education campaigns on such priority issues as: **safe motherhood, reproductive health and rights**, maternal and child health and family planning, discrimination against and valorization of the girl child and persons with disabilities; child abuse; violence against women; male responsibility; gender equality; sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV/AIDS; responsible sexual behaviour; teenage pregnancy; racism and xenophobia; ageing populations; and unsustainable consumption and production patterns . . . ." ICPD, 11.16

"Promoting cooperation . . . to develop a comprehensive national strategy for improving reproductive health care and child health-care services and ensuring that people living in poverty have full access to those services, including, inter alia, education and services on family planning, **safe motherhood and prenatal and postnatal care** . . . ." Social Summit, 37-e

"Ensure that the reduction of maternal morbidity and mortality is a health sector priority and that women have ready access to essential obstetric care, well-equipped and adequately staffed maternal health-care services, skilled attendants at delivery, emergency obstetric care, effective referral and transport to higher levels of care, when necessary, post-partum care and family planning, in order to, inter alia, **promote safe motherhood,**and give priority attention to measures to prevent, detect and treat breast, cervical and ovarian cancer and osteoporosis, and sexually transmitted infections, including HIV/AIDS." Social Summit +5, 85; Beijing +5, 72-b

"By 2030, **reduce the global maternal mortality** ratio to less than 70 per 100,000 live births" 2030 Agenda, target 3.1

Female Infanticide

"Effective measures are required against **female infanticide**, harmful child labour, sale of children and organs, child prostitution, child pronography, as well as other forms of sexual abuse." Vienna, 48

"To eliminate all forms of discrimination against the girl child and the root causes of son preference, which results in harmful and unethical practices regarding **female infanticide and prenatal sex selection**," ICPD, 4.16-a

"...emphasize the elimination of harmful attitudes and practices, including female gential mutilation, son preference (which results in **female infanticide and prenatal sex selection**),..." Beijing, 107-a

"increase...protective and preventive measures aimed at the elimination of violence against women and girls, especially all forms of commercial sexual exploitation, as well as economic exploitation, including inter alia, trafficking in women and children, **female infanticide**, crimes committed in the name of honour, crimes committed in the name of passion..." Beijing +5, 96-a

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