UNESCO Calls Abortion on Demand "Proper" Medical Procedure for Girls

, Nov 3, 2003 / 12:00 am (CNA)- A UNESCO document calls for international government reform to make abortion available to all women and adolescent girls without restriction.

"Unwanted Pregnancy and Unsafe Abortion" also suggests that governments should subsidize abortions and offer "redress" to women who have been "denied" access to abortions in countries where abortions are legal, reported C-FAM, the Catholic Family and Human Rights Institute, in the Oct. 31 edition of their "Friday Fax" newsletter.

"This information has not been reported anywhere before and it is vital that folks all over the world know," said C-FAM president Austin Ruse, whose organization broke the story.

UNESCO produced the document in 2002 but it only surfaced in October with the release of this year's UN Population Fund's State of the World Population report, in which the document is referenced.

The UNESCO document recommends that "governments should make abortion legal, safe, and affordable." It also recommends that governments remove legal restrictions to abortion and family planning services for adolescents and guarantee the adolescents' privacy, reported C-FAM.

It attacks laws that require parental permission for medical abortions, stating that they can deter teenage girls from seeking an abortion from a medical professional and "leave them to seek alternative, illegal and unsafe abortions elsewhere."

The document also seems to support ways to circumvent restrictive legislation to allow for easy access to abortion. It makes particular reference to the situation in Bangladesh, where abortion is illegal but "menstrual regulation services" are available. In menstrual regulation services, physicians can assist up to eight weeks after the last menstrual period.

"This is conveniently considered family planning and not abortion," says the document. "Furthermore, as the anti-abortion law requires proof of pregnancy, 'the use of menstrual regulation makes it virtually impossible to obtain the required proof.' Thus, in practice, early term abortion is available; it is just referred to as menstrual regulation."

The document also cites the situation in India, where "abortion strictly on demand is not allowed, abortion for economic or social reasons is, and a very lenient reading of 'mental health' of the woman effectively legalizes the procedure in all circumstances."

In another document, entitled "Review of International Standards for Rights of the Child and Adolescent Rights," UNESCO describes how to pressure individual nations to adopt less restrictive legislation regarding adolescent reproductive rights, saying that it is now possible "to hold countries accountable on the basis of human rights violations."

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Jay — You have quoted the article incorrectly. The article states, "Pope Francis has visited Benedict XVI and spoken to him on several occasions by phone." This is the first I have heard of any recent visit. Benedict is very ill, and it would be very irregular to visit on phone only.

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Mark Frances — This is a development which is not only unfortunate, it is dangerous. As a Catholic Navy vet, I do not think that this was an "accident". This is clearly government oppression of a religious minority.

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