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**U.S. Government Rejoins Worldwide Consensus on Reproductive Health
Health and Development Groups Applaud Clinton Speech; Call for Action**

January 8, 2010—A broad coalition of organizations representing millions of Americans applauded today’s statement by Secretary of State Hillary Clinton that the United States unequivocally supports the worldwide consensus that achieving universal access to reproductive health is critical for individual health, family well-being, broader economic development and a healthy planet.

In a speech today at the State Department, Secretary Clinton declared the U.S. government’s renewed support and dedication to reaching the health and development goals laid out in the International Conference on Population Development and other related UN agreements, including the Millennium Development Goals.

The Secretary said that, “women’s health is essential to the prosperity and health of all people,” and that the U.S. has rejoined with all governments to “make the access to reproductive healthcare a basic right.”

During the groundbreaking 1994 United Nations International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) held in Cairo, 179 nations laid out an ambitious plan of action to improve health and achieve sustainable development by focusing on individual health needs and human rights, especially for women and girls.

Countries agreed to achieve universal access to reproductive health services by the year 2015, a target reaffirmed in the Millennium Development Goals. Reproductive health services include voluntary contraception that is affordable and safe, sex education programs to prevent unintended pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases such as HIV/AIDS, and programs that improve maternal and child health.

“The United States was a major architect of the 1994 Cairo agreement, but U.S. funding for international family planning programs, a major component of reproductive health services, has fallen 23 percent in real dollars since its high in 1995,” said Suzanne Ehlers, Interim President of Population Action International. “Today’s statement by Secretary Clinton marks a return to U.S. leadership on international family planning.”

Investments in reproductive health programs have saved lives and delivered real results. In Mexico, the infant mortality rate fell by 70 percent between 1970 and 2005, as the use of modern contraceptives nearly doubled. Similar results have been seen in Bangladesh, Egypt, Thailand, and elsewhere.

Conversely, inadequate funding for reproductive health and family planning programs hold grave consequences for women and families. One woman dies needlessly in pregnancy or childbirth every minute of every day, and six million more suffer injury, illness or disability. Each year, between 70 and 80 million unintended pregnancies occur in the developing world.

To meet the unmet need for family planning and achieve the goal of achieving universal access to reproductive health, the coalition of non-profit organizations calls on the Obama Administration to:

- Ensure that the new Global Health Initiative retain a strong focus on interventions to prevent unintended pregnancy, promote women's health and save women's lives.
- Ensure that greater access to contraception and reproductive health care remains a high priority within any restructuring of the U.S. government's foreign assistance program so that women, men and youth can access a comprehensive range of reproductive health services no matter where they are accessing care.
- Work with the U. S. Congress to fund international family planning programs at \$1 billion, to reverse a decade of inadequate funding, and eliminate punitive legislative restrictions that continue to tie-up the U.S. contribution to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).

“Poll after poll has shown that a majority of Americans across the ideological divide support family planning programs and proven investments in women's health,” said Tamara Kreinin, Executive Director of Women and Population at the United Nations Foundation. “I hope that Secretary Clinton's speech is a signal to everyone that the U.S. government is done with political theater and instead will focus on the important work of saving lives.”

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RELEASED BY:

Advocates for Youth (www.advocatesforyouth.org)

Americans for UNFPA (www.americansforunfpa.org)

Association of Reproductive Health Professionals (www.arhp.org)

Catholics for Choice (www.catholicsforchoice.org)

Center for Environment and Population (www.cepnet.org)

Center for Health and Gender Equity (www.genderhealth.org)

Center for Reproductive Rights (www.reproductiverights.org)

The Centre for Development and Population Activities (www.cedpa.org)

EngenderHealth (www.engenderhealth.org)

Family Care International (www.familycareintl.org)

Global Health & Development at the Aspen Institute (www.aspeninstitute.org/policy-work/global-health-development)

Global Health Council (www.globalhealth.org)

International Center for Research on Women (www.icrw.org)

International Planned Parenthood Federation/Western Hemisphere Region (www.ippfwhr.org)
International Women's Health Coalition (www.iwhc.org)
Ipas (www.ipas.org)
JSI Research & Training Institute (www.jsi.com)
Marie Stopes International (www.mariestopes.org)
NARAL Pro-Choice America (www.ProChoiceAmerica.org)
National Council of Women's Organizations (www.womensorganizations.org)
Pathfinder International (www.pathfind.org)
Planned Parenthood Federation of America (www.plannedparenthood.org)
Population Action International (www.populationaction.org)
Population Connection (www.populationconnection.org)
Population Council (www.popcouncil.org)
Population Institute (www.populationinstitute.org)
Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice (www.rcrc.org)
The Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States - SIECUS
(www.siecus.org)
Sierra Club (www.sierraclub.org)
United Nations Foundation (www.unfoundation.org)
Women Thrive Worldwide (www.womenthrive.org)