



**CENTER
for
HEALTH
and
GENDER
EQUITY**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 23, 2009

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PRESS RELEASE

Center for Health and Gender Equity Applauds President Obama For Repealing Global Gag Rule

*Important first step to ensure the sexual and reproductive health and rights
of women and girls around the world*

(Washington, D.C.)- Today, the Center for Health and Gender Equity (CHANGE) praised President Barack Obama for his decision to repeal the Mexico City Policy, also known as the Global Gag Rule, and urged him to continue efforts toward smart, evidence-based policies that promote the health and rights of women and girls worldwide.

"President Obama's immediate repeal of the Global Gag Rule signals a new era in U.S. leadership supporting the health, safety and rights of women across the world," said Serra Sippel, Executive Director of the Center for Health and Gender Equity (CHANGE). "Many of the world's most underserved women will now have a greater chance to obtain much-needed family planning information and services, as well as safe and legal abortion services-all of which are critical in equipping women with the knowledge and tools to plan their pregnancies and lead healthy and productive lives."

The Mexico City Policy prohibits any foreign organization receiving U.S. family planning funding from using its own funds or funds from other donors to perform legal abortions; advocate for the liberalization or decriminalization of abortion in laws and policies; or provide information, make referrals, or counsel women about abortion. President Obama's decision to repeal the Mexico City Policy frees organizations receiving U.S. funding to help women make healthy decisions about their sexual and reproductive health, and allows some of the world's best family planning programs to again receive U.S. funding.

Around the world, more than 200 million women lack access to safe, effective contraception. The lack of access to contraception can lead to unsafe, often deadly abortions. According to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), some 74,000 women die each year from unsafe abortions. While the repeal of the Mexico City Policy is significant, increased funding for international family planning and other sexual and reproductive health services is also critical to ensuring effective U.S. foreign assistance.

"The repeal of this dangerous policy is one important step forward in restoring access to sexual and reproductive health services and promoting democracy abroad. However, U.S. investment in international family planning has declined by roughly 42% since 1995," Sippel added. "The United States should take the next step in advancing the health and well-being of the world's women and families by investing at least \$1 billion in international family planning this year."

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The Center for Health and Gender Equity (CHANGE) is a U.S.-based non-governmental organization that seeks to ensure that U.S. international policies and programs promote sexual and reproductive health and rights through effective, evidence-based approaches to prevention and treatment of critical reproductive and sexual health concerns, and through increased funding for critical international programs and institutions.

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