

September 28, 2011

To: The Honourable Stephen Harper

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C.C. The Honourable Bev Oda

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Dear Mr. Harper,

On behalf of the national membership of the Catholic Civil Rights League, I would like to express our severe disappointment about reports that the Canadian International Development Agency approved \$6 million in new funding last week to International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF). Given IPPF's abortion services in developing countries, it seems to us that this funding is not in keeping with Canada's conditions on its portion of the G8 program for maternal and child health, which specifically stated that abortion would not be funded. We publicly expressed our support for that commitment.

The condition that the IPPF funds will be directed only to countries where abortion is illegal is of very limited value. IPPF will merely reallocate its resources to serve its interests. Moreover, funding to IPPF in these circumstances will not move that organization from its stated advocacy on promotion of family planning through abortion. Abortion advocacy is a key part of the organization's mandate, and any funds given to it will become part of that advocacy even if the condition is, in a strict sense, observed.

Women and families in the Third World need medicines and vaccinations, clean water, better clinics and other medical facilities, and better access to proper nutrition. Six million dollars spent on any of those things would have been money well invested. There are other NGOs that provide maternal and child health assistance without engaging in abortion or advocacy for it, and it is unacceptable that the funds were given instead to an organization known for opposing Canada's commitment to keeping abortion out of its foreign aid programs.

It appears that Ms. Oda has succumbed to pressure from groups which have been largely antithetical to your government. We are left with the impression that the stated policy announcements from the recent G-20 conferences have been subverted by these actions.

We will inform our members of our disappointment, and urge them to take appropriate action.

Yours truly,

Joanne McGarry

Executive director

Catholic Civil Rights League