

UNFPA, A Call to Action: Faith for Sexual and Reproductive Health in the Post 2015 Development Agenda, UN General Assembly, September 2014

Response to UNFPA White Paper on ‘Sexual And Reproductive Health And Reproductive Rights Religious and Cultural Contexts for Development Effectiveness Post 2015’

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1. Are the main religious and cultural "objections" to the specific issues mentioned, covered in the paper? If not, what is missing?

- Most issues are covered.
- Better discussion of sexuality education required.
- [Treatment of infertility and reproductive technologies not extensively addressed: IVF, AIH, AID]

2. Are some of the main religious and cultural interpretations and practices which support the human rights in question referenced? If not, what is missing which would add value to an intergovernmental process?

- **Catholic social teaching** shows strong correspondence with UN human rights discourse.
- Human dignity; human rights, social justice; gender equality and empowerment; non-discrimination.
- This would help to balance some of the more restrictive Catholic teachings on SRH.

***2. religious and cultural interpretations and practices
which support the human rights...***

- **Explicit and strongly authoritative RC teaching in support of women's rights and against violence against women.**
- This could be used to counter more recent attacks on 'gender ideology' in less authoritative documents and statements of the Holy See.

2. religious and cultural interpretations and practices which support the human rights...

- Family planning (child spacing etc) allowed by RC Church.
- But only using periodic abstinence - not by modern methods of contraception or withdrawal.
- RC Church allows emergency (hormonal) contraception after rape (provided abortifacient drugs are not used).
- Nuns at risk of sexual violence may use hormonal contraceptives to prevent pregnancy.
- Does Catholic teaching on contraception rule out use of condoms by couples to prevent HIV infection? Supporters of Church teaching cannot agree.
- Is this news to you? It is unknown by many Catholics.

3. What are your main impressions, as a person of faith active in this field, of the arguments made in the Paper, and in what ways would you be able to make use of this document?

- The document needs improving in many respects.
- It is not yet ready for public consumption.
- I will provide more detailed textual comments after the meeting.

Univision, 'Global Survey of Roman Catholics', February 2014

- 12,038 self-identified adult Roman Catholics in twelve countries (representative of 60% of the world's 1.1 billion Catholics).
- The countries: Brazil; Mexico; Philippines; United States of America; Italy; Colombia; France; Poland; Spain; Democratic Republic of Congo; Argentina; Uganda.
- The findings indicate wide disparities between the views of ordinary Catholics on the issues surveyed and Church teachings on these issues.
- A majority of Catholics expressed views on contraception and on abortion that are at odds with the teaching of the Church.
- 45 per cent favour the admission of women to the ministerial priesthood.
- Catholic support for contraception (and, to a lesser degree, abortion) is found in rich, poor, urban, rural, religious and secular contexts.

Univision findings: Contraception

- Catholics were asked: ‘Do you support or oppose the use of contraceptives?’.
- 78 per cent of respondents support the use of contraceptives; 19 per cent oppose their use.
- The degree of Catholic agreement with Church teaching is 19 per cent across all surveyed countries and ranges from 4 per cent in France to 54 percent in Uganda.
- Ten of the twelve countries registered large Catholic majorities in favour of contraception.
- DRC and Uganda recorded Catholic majorities against contraception.

Univision findings: Abortion

- Catholics were asked: ‘Do you think that abortions should be allowed in all cases, allowed in some cases, or should it not be allowed at all?’.
- 8 per cent of respondents answered that abortion should be allowed in all cases.
- 57 per cent of respondents answered that abortion should be allowed in some cases.
- 33 per cent of respondents agree with Catholic teaching that abortion should not be allowed at all.
- Nine nations registered large Catholic majorities in favour of abortion in some or all circumstances.
- The Philippines, DRC, and Uganda registered Catholic majorities against abortion in all circumstances.
- The degree of Catholic agreement with Church teaching ranges from 5 per cent in France to 73 percent in the Philippines.

Pew Research Center, 'Global Views on Morality', (Washington DC, 2013)

- How significant is the impact of RC teaching on contraception on the attainment of SRH & RR?
- The percentage of the adult population that regards contraception to be morally unacceptable ranges from 1 per cent in Germany to 65 per cent in Pakistan.
- Only five of forty nations surveyed had majorities morally opposed to contraception:
 - **Pakistan (96% Muslim)**
 - **Nigeria (49% Muslim, 49% Christian [14% RC])**
 - **Ghana (75% Christian [13% RC])**
 - **Malaysia (64% Muslim, 9% Christian)**
 - **Tunisia (99.5% Muslim)**

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