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Statement submitted by Catholic Women's League Australia, MaterCare International and WOOMB International, non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.



Statement

Non-governmental organizations attending the Expert Group Meeting on Prevention of Violence against Women and Girls, held from 17 to 20 September 2012 in Bangkok, report that discussions concerning violence against women and girls centred largely on female genital mutilation, rape and assault. However, we would like to draw attention to more subtle forms of violence: negligence on the part of Governments and interest groups when it comes to providing education and “special care and assistance” to motherhood, meaning competent obstetrical and gynaecological care before, during and following birth, which is promised to mothers in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. This includes good instruction in a simple, natural, and therefore non-invasive, cost-free and effective way of regulating births, the Billings Ovulation Method.

Women’s bodies have been violated by contraceptive medication and devices for years, with costly side effects. Abortion is violence against women because it is harmful to their physical and mental health. The rate of abortion has not been reduced through contraceptive use; rather, it has increased when it is used as a back-up when contraception fails. Many “contraceptives” act as an abortifacient, weakening the endometrium so that it is unable to nurture the embryo. The effects are lasting and sometimes affect the “wanted” baby and a “miscarriage”, as it is now called, ensues. Pharmaceutical companies will not promote teaching women the Billings Ovulation Method™ because there is no profit in doing so. But it provides a harmless solution for women seeking to manage their fertility and infertility and is being used by millions of couples around the world (see www.thebillingsovulationmethod.org and www.woombinternational.org).

The authentic method is taught in China with the backing of the Government, and those on both sides of the abortion debate are pleased that the rate of abortion has plummeted in those areas where it is taught. The *Chinese Medical Journal* in 1998 published a huge study showing the efficacy of the method. The continuation rate is high, better than 90 per cent, and it is reported that men like the method and say, “It really works!”

Women in marriage benefit from use of this non-invasive method because it reduces spousal abuse. Husbands prone to alcoholism and violence often give up drinking when they see their wife enjoying more relaxed sexual intercourse during the many infertile days of her cycle. There is more communication between husband and wife. There is equal sharing in family planning responsibilities instead of the burden falling on either one or the other. This reduces resentment and keeps the marriage fresh. The status of the wife is raised in the eyes of her husband when he sees her confidence in knowing which day intercourse may lead to pregnancy and which day does not; the timing of conception often leads to the desired sex of the baby. The health of the woman is safeguarded, and with the marital bond strengthened there is less cause for extramarital sexual relations. Traditions often do not allow intercourse during two years of breastfeeding because of myths, and there are incidents of extramarital sexual relations. With this method, couples apply the four common-sense guidelines of the method during breastfeeding, and fidelity is enhanced. The risk of acquiring and transmitting HIV/AIDS is therefore reduced. The whole family benefits when the health and fertility of the mother/wife is safeguarded by keeping a daily Billings chart. This is because she is able to detect

obvious variations in what is normal in her cycle, resulting in early diagnosis of diseases such as cancer and diabetes 2, among others.

An example of how knowledge of this modern, natural method raises women to equal partnership in their marriages was demonstrated by Violet Kimani, an anthropologist at the University of Nairobi. In her study, entitled: “The role of natural family planning in enhancing marital relations in the overall context of their social interactions”, she found that being able to space children by using natural signs was the least important aspect of learning the Billings Ovulation Method. Women were raised to the level of equal partnership in their marriages, sharing decisions and responsibilities when previously all the decisions were made by men. It led to enhanced social interactions, and it may be concluded that when a man learns to respect his wife's body, he also respects her person.

Teenage girls benefit when they learn how to value their fertility and infertility through education acquired from parents or through such programmes as TeenSTAR (www.teenstarprogram.org). Doctors in the developed world insert invasive intrauterine devices (IUDs) and prescribe harmful steroidal contraceptive medication or give anti-human papilloma virus (HPV) injections to girls without offering this natural choice. Parents are often not involved. On the other hand, parents using the Billings Ovulation Method are involved up front when it comes to imparting knowledge of what it is normal to expect when developing into mature motherhood and fatherhood. The success in raising teenagers' self-empowerment, through knowledge of how their bodies work, in making informed choices concerning their sexuality is well proven in TeenSTAR. Resolve to remain a virgin is strengthened while those who are sexually active give up 50 per cent of the time.

When it comes to providing obstetrical care and preserving the gynaecological health of women, Dr. Robert Walley of MaterCare International, based in Canada, notes that 91 per cent of maternal deaths are preventable by making adequate care available. Owing to lack of effective care during pregnancy and childbirth, 333,000 women die annually during pregnancy and childbirth, with 99 per cent of those deaths occurring in developing countries, and in particular in sub-Saharan Africa. MaterCare is an organization dedicated to the care of mothers and babies, both born and unborn, by means of new initiatives in service, training, research and advocacy that are designed to reduce the tragically high rates of maternal mortality, morbidity and abortion (www.matercare.org).

“Gendercide”, the killing of girl babies in the womb, is silently occurring without due world attention. Census data from a 2011 study in India, published in *The Lancet*, found that between 4 and 12 million girls were aborted between 1980 and 2010 simply because they were female. Also, a study published in the *Canadian Medical Association Journal* in September 2011 showed that there are about 32 million more males than females under the age of 20 in China due to “gendercide” abortions. It concluded that men will be unable to find wives and be more prone to aggression, rape and violence.

In conclusion, we have suggested two proven solutions to prevent violence against women. MaterCare proposes that Government delegates support its strategy for reducing maternal mortality: the 91 per cent solution. Delegates have been hearing about maternal deaths, old sterilization equipment, lack of antibiotics, lack of training for doctors in the management of toxemia and repair of fistulas in Government-run hospitals in developing countries since the International

Conference on Population and Development, held in Cairo in 1994. Yet there is still negligence in this area. The 9 per cent abortion and “birth control” “reproductive service” solution is receiving all the funding when maternal deaths, according to the World Health Organization, usually occur just before or after birth due to bleeding, infection, preeclampsia and eclampsia.

The other way of preventing some of the violence against women is to turn political will and funding to the teaching and promotion of the non-invasive, natural way of regulating births, the Billings Ovulation Method (which is 98.8 per cent effective, according to a World Health Organization five-nation cross-cultural study in 1978). This would lead to a reduction in abortion and an increase in the safeguarding of women’s health and fertility. Delegates wanting to learn more might consider attending the upcoming Silver Jubilee conference on the Billings Ovulation Method being held at the end of April 2013 in Kuching, Malaysia. They might also visit the Facebook page (www.facebook.com/BillingsOvulationMethod?fref=ts), which has become so popular with young people.
