

EC/developing countries: aid for population policies and programmes in developing countries

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Adopting the report by Mr Jean-Thomas NORDMANN, the committee pointed out that individual freedom of choice in reproductive matters for men and women was an important factor in progress and development and emphasized that the Community encouraged the right of individuals to choose the number and spacing of their children, and condemned any country or organization which abused human rights by the promotion of coerced abortion, forced sterilization, infanticide or the rejection, neglect and abuse of unwanted children as a means to control the growth of population. The rapporteur called for action by the Community to take account of all aspects of demography (birth rates, mortality rates, migration etc.) and for the population dimension to be incorporated over time into the various aspects of development policy. The Committee on Development and Cooperation adopted amendments calling in particular for this policy to: - enable women and men to make a free choice about the number and spacing of their children by preventing unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV /AIDS; - contribute to the creation of a socio-cultural, economic and educational environment, especially for women and girls; - comply strictly when the programme was implemented with the decision taken at the Cairo Conference that abortion should under no circumstances be encouraged as a family planning method; - support the establishment and development of reproductive health and family-planning services; - improve reproductive health care infrastructure, equipment, supplies or training (including safe motherhood, antenatal and postnatal care, family planning and the prevention and management of HIV /AIDS); - support the introduction of a family policy, including education and literacy programmes, incorporating information on reliable, legal methods of contraception; It also called for the programme to be conducted on the basis of dialogue with the national, regional and local authorities concerned, in such a way as to avoid imposing policies without consultation and to take account of the cultural, social and economic situation of the population groups involved, and stipulated that Community assistance should not be granted to countries or organizations which authorized or encouraged coerced abortion, forced sterilization or infanticide as methods for controlling population growth;