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OPINION

## *Abortion Extremists Hijack the U.N.*

Organizers of the Nairobi Summit attempt to undo the careful consensus forged at Cairo a quarter-century ago.

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By

Chris Smith

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Protesters demonstrate against the International Conference on Population and Development in Nairobi, Kenya, Nov. 11. PHOTO: DANIEL IRUNGU/SHUTTERSTOCK

The governments of Kenya and Denmark and the United Nations Population Fund are attempting to hijack the U.N.'s global population and development work to support an extreme pro-abortion agenda. On Tuesday UNFPA opens the three-day Nairobi Summit, 25 years after the International Conference on Population Development in Cairo.

As a member of Congress I attended the ICPD, where 179 governments and 11,000 participants developed an international consensus. Participants rejected a global right to abortion—pushed by the Clinton administration, among others—and agreed that “governments should take

appropriate steps to help women avoid abortion, which in no case should be promoted as a method of family planning.”

They respected national sovereignty, stating that “measures or changes related to abortion within the health system can only be determined at the national or local level according to the national legislative process.” They urged “full respect for the various religious and ethical values, cultural backgrounds and philosophical convictions” of diverse countries while respecting universally recognized human rights.

In contrast, conveners of the Nairobi Summit have blocked attendance by conservative organizations and excluded countries and stakeholders that disagree with their agenda from offering input on the substance and planning of the conference. This includes the U.S., which under President Trump has stated its objection at the U.N. to the use of ambiguous terms and expressions, such as “sexual health” and “reproductive rights,” on the grounds that such terms promote practices like abortion “in circumstances that do not enjoy international consensus and which can be misinterpreted by U.N. agencies.”

The Nairobi planners include the International Planned Parenthood Federation, Women Deliver, the U.N. Foundation and the Dutch pro-abortion fund She Decides. They have already drafted a series of “commitments” intended to generate pledges from governments and civic organizations.

The first commitment is to “achieve universal access to sexual and reproductive health” as a part of universal health coverage. Defining abortion as health care is a goal of the pro-abortion organizations attending the summit. The nonbinding summit statement, “ICPD25: Accelerating the Promise,” also includes access to abortion as a component of “a comprehensive package of sexual and reproductive health interventions” to be recognized as part of universal health coverage.

The UNFPA has little effect on U.S. public opinion and or policy. But in the least developed countries its unrelenting pressure to allow access to abortion has an outside impact. Any unwillingness to conform—even when it violates local religious and cultural norms—could mean the loss or reduction of foreign aid for unrelated humanitarian initiatives especially from the U.K., the Netherlands and Nordic countries, as well as nongovernmental organizations and multilateral organizations.

The Nairobi Summit is supposed “to mobilize the political will and financial commitments we urgently need to finally and fully implement the ICPD Programme of Action.” But key elements of the Cairo program are missing from the Nairobi Summit agenda. The ICPD recognized the harmful practice of sex-selection abortion, which “is often compounded by the increasing use of technologies to determine foetal sex, resulting in abortion of female foetuses” and urged governments “to take the necessary measures to prevent infanticide [and] prenatal sex selection.” It also called on governments to prevent “trafficking in girl children and use of girls in prostitution and pornography.”

The Nairobi Summit isn’t a true reflection of ICPD but a gathering of like-minded individuals and organizations departing from the Cairo consensus as they promote a pro-abortion agenda while attempting to exploit Cairo’s name and reputation.

*Mr. Smith, a Republican, represents New Jersey’s Fourth Congressional District.*