

Standing with UNFPA Against the Ideological War on Women's Health and Rights

Women Deliver

Yesterday, the U.S. Administration decided to cut its annual support of approximately \$70 million USD to United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), a UN agency that works in more than 150 countries to ensure every pregnancy is wanted, every childbirth is safe, and human rights atrocities like child marriage and female genital cutting are things of the past.

“The U.S. defunding of UNFPA is senseless and shortsighted. It will cost lives and money, while contributing to a more unequal and unstable world,” said Katja Iversen, President/CEO of Women Deliver.

The Trump administration based its defunding decision on the misleading assumption that the UN agency is involved in coercive abortion and involuntary sterilization in China, which U.S. Congress investigations have already disproven.

“This appears to be an ideological war on women's health and rights,” said Katja Iversen. “The truth doesn't seem to matter here and neither do data on the grave consequences of the cut.”

It is estimated that the funding cut – which represents almost 10% of UNFPA's total budget – will prevent UNFPA from providing life-saving services to some 10.5 million people (mainly women, girls, and youth), deny 9 million people in humanitarian settings and refugee camps the sexual and reproductive health services they need, and eliminate support to more than 750 mobile clinics in emergency settings.

In addition, the U.S. cuts will impair UNFPA's overall work. With U.S. funding in 2016 alone, UNFPA estimates that it was able to:

- Save the lives of 2,340 women from dying during pregnancy and childbirth
- Prevent 947,000 unintended pregnancies
- Ensure 1,251 fistula surgeries
- Prevent 295,000 unsafe abortions
- Help 3 million couples prevent unwanted pregnancy

As a fierce advocate for girls and women everywhere, Women Deliver will continue to speak out against harmful policies and programs, stand in solidarity with partners who champion sound evidence, and encourage solutions that improve lives and promote gender equality. Evidence shows that when women can make their own fertility choices, families, communities, and nations thrive – socially as well as economically.

“Today is a deeply disappointing day. Progress and basic human rights are threatened by the U.S. cuts to UNFPA, but our community remains strong—the work on behalf of girls’ and women’s health and rights will continue,” said Katja Iversen, who is heartened to see other countries step up and fill the ‘decency’ gap. “Women Deliver stands with UNFPA, efforts like [She Decides](#), and all global advocates who put the lives of girls and women before politics.”