



The Catholic Church at the United Nations

A large, white, stylized question mark is centered on a solid green background. The question mark has a thick, rounded top curve and a thin, pointed bottom curve. It is oriented vertically, with its widest part at the top.

Church
or
State?

The “See Change” Campaign

Hundreds of organizations and thousands of people worldwide have initiated a campaign calling for an official review of the status of the Roman Catholic church at the United Nations. We are concerned that the church has flown in under the UN’s radar by calling itself the Holy See, and have called on the secretary-general to review the church’s current status as a Non-member State Permanent Observer. We believe that the Holy See, the government of the Roman Catholic church, should participate in the UN in the same way that the world’s other religions do—as a nongovernmental organization.

The Catholic church at the UN: *A religion or a state?*

Many questions have been raised about the role of the Catholic church at the United Nations as a result of its high-profile and controversial role at international conferences. Participating as a full-fledged state actor in these conferences, the Holy See often goes against the overwhelming consensus of member states and seeks provisions in international documents that would limit the health and rights of all people, but especially of women. How did the Holy See, the government of the Roman Catholic church, come to enjoy this privileged position—held by no other religion—that gives it a voice at international conferences on some of the most sensitive issues of our time? Is there a difference between the Holy See, Vatican City and the Roman Catholic church? In the context of the United Nations, is the Holy See a state or a religion?

The Holy See, Vatican City, the Roman Catholic church: *What is the difference?*

The Holy See is the spiritual and temporal government of the Roman Catholic church. It consists of the pope, the Roman Curia—the various departments and institutes that assist the pope in running the church—and the College of Cardinals. The Holy See is also the government of Vatican City.¹

Vatican City is the temporal residence of both the Holy See and the Roman Catholic church.

It is the world's smallest "city-state" at 108.7 acres. It houses the infrastructure of the Roman Catholic church: the pope's palace, St. Peter's Basilica, offices and administrative services and libraries and archives.² Vatican City was created in 1929 under a treaty signed between Benito Mussolini and Pietro Cardinale Gasparri, secretary of state to Pope Pius XI. The Lateran Treaty was designed to compensate the pope for the 1870 annexation of the Papal States, which consisted of 17,218 square miles in central Italy, and to guarantee the "indisputable sovereignty" of the Holy See by granting it a physical territory.³ According to Archbishop Hyginus Eugene Cardinale, a former Vatican diplomat who wrote the authoritative work on the Holy See and international relations, the Holy See "exists and operates within the international community as the juridical personification of the Church."⁴

The Roman Catholic church is a religious society with some 1 billion adherents worldwide, with the pope at its head.

"The Holy See is not a state, but is accepted as being on the same footing as a state."

— Hyginus Eugene

Cardinale, Titular

Archbishop of Nepte,

Apostolic Nuncio to

Belgium, Luxembourg and

the European Community, in

The Holy See and the

International Order, 1976.

The Holy See at the UN

The Holy See is a Non-member State Permanent Observer at the United Nations. This is a rarely used designation shared only by Switzerland. It gives its holder some of the privileges of a state at the UN, such as being able to speak and vote at UN conferences. No other religion is granted this elevated status. Other religions participate in the UN like most other non-state entities—as nongovernmental organizations.

The Holy See owes its participation in the UN to an accident of history—the membership of

"We often hear 'the Church is not a democracy.' That's true, because it's not a country or a society."

— Cardinal Francis George,

Archbishop of Chicago,

Inside the Vatican,

June/July 1999.

Vatican City in the Universal Postal Union and the International Telecommunication Union. The Vatican is a member of these unions because it owns postal and radio services. Soon after its formation, the UN invited these organizations and their members to attend UN sessions on an ad hoc basis, which the Vatican did.⁵ Representatives of the Vatican and the Holy See began attending sessions of the UN General Assembly, the World Health Organization and the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization in 1951 as ad hoc observers.⁶ In 1956, the Holy See was elected a member of the UN Economic and Social Council and also became a full member of the International Atomic Energy Agency.⁷

The Catholic church was active as an ad-hoc and at times formal observer to various UN bodies between 1948 and 1964, usually at its own request. In 1957, as a result of confusion regarding the interchangeable use of the terms Holy See and Vatican City, the secretary-general of the UN and the Holy See reached an agreement that relations should henceforth be understood as being between the UN and the Holy See.

In 1964, following the protocol for establishing a permanent observer mission at the UN, the Holy See informed UN Secretary-General U Thant that it had dispatched a permanent observer to the UN's New York headquarters. U Thant accepted the Vatican's designation and granted the Holy See permanent observer status. The bar was not set very high for U Thant's acceptance of the Holy See's permanent observer status. Because permanent observers are not formally recognized in the UN charter, the protocol for their admission developed by custom. U Thant noted of the

criteria he applied in deciding whether to accept UN observers: "I have been following one line which seems to be the only possible one, that is, to accept observers when such an arrangement is proposed in the cases where the country in question is recognized diplomatically in this form or that form by a majority of UN members."⁸

Non-member states obtain Permanent Observer status by notifying the UN secretary-general that they have appointed an observer. Unlike other entities such as NGOs, they do not require an invitation from the General Assembly to send a permanent observer.⁹ The secretary-general acknowledges the appointment if accepted. According to the United Nations Office of Legal Affairs, "in deciding whether or not to afford certain facilities to a Permanent Observer, it has been the policy of the organization to make such facilities available only to those appointed by Non-member States at the UN which are full members of one or more specialized agencies and are generally recognized by members of the United Nations."¹⁰ The Holy See meets this first condition through its membership in UN organizations such as the International Atomic Energy Agency, but it is questionable if it met the second criteria in 1964, the year it appointed an observer. In 1959, only 14 states out of the 82 UN members at the time had formal relations with the Vatican.¹¹ Even by 1985, only 53 countries had diplomatic relations with the Holy See.¹² (At that time there were 159 UN member states.) The United States did not formalize relations with the Holy See until 1984. No vote was ever taken on the Holy See's presence at the UN by the General Assembly.

The Holy See's membership in UN agencies such as the International Atomic Energy Agency—which allowed it to qualify as a Non-member State Permanent Observer—was also not subject to a vote by the general conference.

Contrary to some claims, the Holy See was not invited to participate in the UN. Pope John Paul II confirmed that the Holy See invited itself into the UN when he noted, “Pope Paul VI initiated the formal participation of the Holy See in the United Nations Organization, offering the cooperation of the Church’s spiritual and humanitarian expertise.” There is no evidence that the UN offered the Holy See membership or sought out the Holy See as a member state. In fact, evidence is to the contrary. In addition to the historic reasons cited above, the Holy See is today not eligible for full state status at the UN because it can not carry out the security functions of the UN charter due to its neutrality.

It was the Holy See that initiated requests to be recognized as a state in international bodies. The Holy See wished to be admitted to the League of Nations, the precursor to the UN, and reportedly “regretted its exclusion” due to concerns about its statehood status and the possibility that it would have undue influence on the votes of Catholic member states.¹³ In October of 1944, the pope inquired of US Secretary of State Cordell Hull what the conditions of membership would be for the future United Nations. Hull replied that “the Vatican would not be capable of fulfilling all the responsibilities of membership.”¹⁴

What does Non-member State Permanent Observer status mean?

The United Nations recognizes five types of permanent observers: non-member states (The Holy See and Switzerland); entities with a standing invitation to participate as observers in the sessions and work of the General Assembly and maintaining permanent observer missions (Palestine is the only entity in this category); intergovernmental organizations with a standing invitation to participate as observers in the sessions and work of the General Assembly and maintaining permanent offices (11 organizations, including the European Community and the Organization of the Islamic Conference); other entities having received a standing invitation to participate as observers in the sessions and work of the General Assembly and maintaining permanent offices at UN headquarters (the International Committee of the Red Cross, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and the Sovereign Military Order of Malta); and specialized agencies and related organizations maintaining liaison offices at UN headquarters (11 agencies including the World Bank, the World Health Organization and the International Monetary Fund).

While not required by UN procedure, Non-member State Permanent Observers are normally invited to attend UN conferences and participate in these conferences with “all the privileges of a state,” including the right to vote.¹⁵ Other types of observers do not have this privilege. They may participate in UN

“For a long time the church was seated at the king’s table. Until the last century, it also had a temporal state. Since it has been freed from this ‘ball and chain,’ the church has more easily been able to engage in free reflection upon and be in full support of the promotion of human rights, cultural cooperation, peaceful coexistence, and the primacy of the person...Thus was born the true and proper social doctrine of the church.”

— Monsignor Celestino Migliore, of the Holy See’s Foreign Ministry, in a recent speech.

“Of course the nature and aims of the spiritual mission of the Apostolic See and the church make their participation in the tasks and activities of the United Nations organization very different from that of the states, which are communities in the political and temporal sense.”

— Pope John Paul II,
address to the General Assembly, 1979.

conferences as nongovernmental organizations, which means they may observe the proceedings, but may not vote or participate in the other formal aspects of the conference. Because UN conferences operate on consensus, the ability to disagree with the majority consensus has significant power. The official documents of recent UN conferences on women and population and development are replete with “objections” by the Vatican to the majority consensus. For instance, the Holy See insisted on expressing reservations to the Beijing Platform for Action, the final report of the 1995 Beijing Conference on Women. It took issue with the concepts of “women’s right to control their sexuality” and “women’s right to control...their fertility,” asserting that these rights should be understood to refer only to “the responsible use of sexuality within marriage.” The Holy See also condemned “family planning” as “morally unacceptable” and disassociated itself with the consensus on the entire section on health, saying it gave “totally unbalanced attention to sexual and reproductive health.”

Given its role at the UN, these official objections, entered formally into the final report of the conference, serve to weaken support for the conclusions of the majority. Moreover, they represent sectarian religious positions, not governmental public policy positions. This is exactly what the Vatican and its handful of allies—nations such as Libya and the Sudan that do not support full human rights for women—intend.

Non-member State Permanent Observers have other privileges not accorded to lesser types of observers, including the right to place items on the provisional agenda of the General Assembly and greater access to the plenary sessions of the

UN and its main committees, as well as to the Security Council.¹⁶

The Holy See is very active in the UN beyond the special conferences held every few years. In addition to sending a permanent observer to UN headquarters in New York, it sends permanent observers to the UN offices in Geneva and Vienna, as well as to the UN Organization for Industrial Development; the UN Food and Agricultural Organization; the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization; the Organization of American States; the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees; the World Health Organization; the International Labor Organization and the World Organization of Tourism. The Holy See also sends representatives to the International Atomic Energy Agency, the World Organization of Commerce, the Council of Europe, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, the International Institute for the Unification of Private Law, and the International Committee of Military Medicine. The Holy See is also a member of the UN Economic and Social Council, the World Trade Organization and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization.

Is the Holy See a country?

The crux of the Holy See’s special status in the UN is its claim that its possession of a territorial entity—tiny Vatican City—qualifies it as a nation-state. The question of the Vatican’s statehood has been debated without definitive conclusion in diplomatic circles for most of the century. However, it is not the Vatican that is a member of the UN, but the Holy See. The

Holy See is by definition a “non-territorial religious entity.”¹⁷ It is not a state—it is the government of the Roman Catholic church. Because the Holy See is the seat of the Vatican’s diplomatic activity and has historically maintained diplomatic relations with a number of nations—sending and receiving diplomats, entering into treaties—it is recognized as being an international personality, but this is not synonymous with statehood. Granting the Holy See state status is comparable to calling the US Congress a state. The Holy See also clearly does not meet the established international legal criteria for statehood, which include a defined territory and permanent citizenry. The Holy See has no defined territory—as noted, it is a government, not a territorial entity. As such, it also does not have a citizenry.

Even the temporal location of the Holy See, Vatican City, does not have a permanent citizenry. While some people do live and work there, residents hold citizenship only as long as they are employed at the Vatican.¹⁸ There are few families in Vatican City—the majority of citizens are cardinals, prelates and clerics. About 100 women are citizens of the Vatican, mostly nuns, and it has been estimated that there are only about ten children in residence at any given time.¹⁹ Vatican City does not issue passports to its residents—only the Holy See issues passports and even then only to its diplomatic corps.²⁰ Vatican City has no elected officials—it is governed by the Holy See with the pope as the sovereign—and no true municipal infrastructure. Italy carries out many of the municipal functions of Vatican City. It provides the police force, punishes crimes committed in the city and maintains the water and railway systems.

The “See Change” Campaign

Clearly the Holy See—the government of the Roman Catholic church—is not a state. As such, it should not participate in the UN as a state, but as a religion. Hundreds of organizations and thousands of people worldwide have initiated a campaign to change the status of the Roman Catholic church at the United Nations. Concerned that the church has flown in under the UN’s radar by calling itself the Holy See, they have called on the secretary-general to review the church’s current status as a Non-member State Permanent Observer. They believe that the Holy See, the government of the Roman Catholic church, should participate in the UN in the same way that the world’s other religions do—as a nongovernmental organization.

Why is it time for a “See Change”?

The Roman Catholic church has made significant contributions to the well-being of Catholics and non-Catholics throughout the world through its emphasis on social and economic justice, particularly for those in developing nations. At the same time, its actions have been detrimental to many women and men. From decrying emergency contraception for women who had been raped in Kosovo to burning boxes of condoms as AIDS ravages Africa, the hierarchy of the Roman Catholic church has allowed outdated doctrinal concerns to take priority over the lives of real people. Nowhere is that more evident than in the UN, where the Holy See insists on foisting its limited and largely rejected view of gender,

“As a full member of the international community, the Holy See finds itself in a very particular situation, because it is spiritual in nature. Its authority—which is religious and not political—extends over one billion persons scattered throughout the world...The real and only realm of the Holy See is the realm of conscience.”

— *From the preamble to an International Atomic Energy Agency agreement signed by the Holy See.*

**[T]he Vatican City
State was not
established with an
autonomous
purpose, but as a
means to support a
religious body.”**

— Hyginus Eugene

*Cardinale, Titular Archbishop
of Nepte, Apostolic Nuncio
to Belgium, Luxembourg
and the European
Community, in The Holy
See and the International
Order, 1976.*

sexuality and reproductive health on a world intent on creating a more progressive personal ethic that is respectful of the common good.

While the Holy See has the right to a voice at the United Nations, that voice should only be as loud as those of the world's other religions. NGO status would allow the Holy See to continue to advocate for its positions, but without the benefit of a special platform for its views. Seeking NGO status for the Holy See is not anti-Catholic—indeed, it would protect the rights of all religions at the UN and the right of the institutional Catholic church to be heard and appreciated as a religious body, not as a quasi-governmental entity.

With so many big problems in the world, it may seem trivial to worry about the status of the Roman Catholic church at the UN. Does it really matter that the UN has given it, alone among all religions, the status of a Non-member State Permanent Observer? What harm is done by honoring this important religious institution with this special status?

Religious freedom is endangered.

Every other religion with representation at the UN, like the World Council of Churches, is rightly restricted to a nongovernmental organization affiliation. At a time when religious fundamentalism threatens pluralism, tolerance, and women's human rights, the UN, while maintaining and welcoming religious voices, must maintain a clear separation between religious beliefs and international public policy. Successfully challenging the Holy See's status will ensure that only countries decide policy.

***Each year, 600,000 women die needlessly
during pregnancy and childbirth.***

The UN increasingly makes decisions that will

prevent these deaths. As a result of its special status, the Holy See has a powerful voice in these decisions. At the recent world conferences on women and population and development, the Holy See successfully led the effort to block the inclusion of safe, legal abortion in the list of basic reproductive rights for women. It uses its voice to limit access to family planning, safe abortion—even in countries where abortion is legal—and emergency contraception—even for women who have been raped as an act of war. Successfully challenging the Holy See's status will save women's lives.

Each year, 5.8 million people become HIV positive and 2.5 million die from AIDS.

Within the UN, the Roman Catholic church attempts to block international policy decisions that would make condom education and use a major tool in the prevention of HIV/AIDS. The Roman Catholic hierarchy has repeatedly condemned the use of condoms to prevent AIDS—one African bishop even went so far as to claim that condoms cause AIDS. Successfully challenging the Holy See's status will assist in reversing the HIV/AIDS pandemic.

Supporters of The “See Change” Campaign believe that it is time to draw a line in the sand. While the Roman Catholic church has done many good things at the United Nations, the UN urgently needs to reconsider the Holy See's “state” status and open an official review of that status. A UN review of the Holy See's “state” status would send a strong and clear message that it is unacceptable for religions to masquerade as states and impose their views on secular and non-secular states alike.

The following is the text to which hundreds of organizations and tens of thousands of individuals from over 80 countries have put their names:

Dear Secretary-General Annan,

As a UN Non-member State Permanent Observer, the Holy See enjoys unique status, often as a voting partner, with countries at UN conferences. Granting governmental privileges to what is in reality a religious body is questionable statecraft. While the Holy See—the government of the Roman Catholic church—has made positive contributions through the United Nations to peace and justice, this should not be used to justify granting the status of a state to a religious institution.

Governmental participation in the UN should be reserved for actual states. The world's religions have been well represented through nongovernmental organization status. With NGO status, the Roman Catholic church would be able to continue its participation in the UN—like the World Council of Churches—without ambiguity or privilege. We call on you to open an official review of the Holy See's status at the UN.

"It will be clear to all, we hope, that the pope really has only the territorial space indispensable for the exercise of a spiritual power entrusted to men. We do not hesitate to say that we are glad that this is so; we are pleased to see our territorial realm reduced to such minute proportions that it may and must itself be considered spiritualized by the immense, sublime and truly divine spiritual power which it is destined to support and serve."

— Pope Pius XI, in a speech in Rome following the signing of the Lateran Treaty.

Endnotes

- ¹ The Catholic Encyclopedia, 1986.
- ² The Catholic Almanac, 2000.
- ³ *The Holy See and the International Order*, Hyginus Eugene Cardinale, pp. 101, 124.
- ⁴ *The Holy See and the International Order*, Cardinale, p. 83.
- ⁵ *The Holy See and the International Order*, Cardinale, p. 256.
- ⁶ “Notes on the Legal Status of the Vatican City and Holy See,” William Schabas, 1994.
- ⁷ *The Holy See and the International Order*, Cardinale, p. 233.
- ⁸ UN press release, April 21, 1960.
- ⁹ *The Status of Observers in the United Nations*, R. G. Sybesma-Knol, 1981.
- ¹⁰ “The Question of Observer Status in the United Nations: The Case of Non-Member States,” United Nations Public Information Office, Feb. 4, 2000.
- ¹¹ *The Status of Observers in the United Nations*, R. G. Sybesma-Knol, 1981.
- ¹² “Church or State?” Center for Reproductive Law and Policy, 1995.
- ¹³ *Fragmentation and the International Relations of MicroStates*, Jorri Duursma, p. 399.
- ¹⁴ *The Creation of States in International Law*, James Crawford, 1979, pp. 152-161.
- ¹⁵ “The Holy See at United Nations Conferences: State or Church?” Yasmin Abdullah, *Columbia Law Review*, 1996.
- ¹⁶ *The Status of Observers in the United Nations*, R. G. Sybesma-Knol, 1981.
- ¹⁷ “The Holy See at United Nations Conferences: State or Church?” Yasmin Abdullah, *Columbia Law Review*, 1996.
- ¹⁸ The Law on the Rights of Citizenship and Sojourn, Vatican City.
- ¹⁹ *Inside the Vatican*, Nov. 1995.
- ²⁰ Oral communication with US Vatican Embassy, Aug. 9, 2000.

Chronology of the Holy See's Entrance into the UN

Prior to 1870: The pope was head of a defined territory known as the Papal States which consisted of 17, 218 square miles in central Italy.

1870: Italy annexed the Papal States, which resulted in the pope's loss of the territory except for the Vatican and Lateran Palaces and the Villa of Castel Gandolfo.

1920s: The Holy See sought to become a member of the League of Nations, but was turned down because of questions about its state status.

Feb. 11, 1929: The Lateran Treaty was signed between Benito Mussolini and Pietro Cardinale Gasparri, creating Vatican City as compensation for the Papal States.

June 1, 1929: Vatican City was admitted to the World Telegraph Union. Vatican City joined the Universal Postal Union by becoming a State Party of the Stockholm Postal Convention of 1924.

1931: Vatican City joined the Radiotelegraph Service.

1932: The World Telegraph Union and the Radiotelegraph Service merged to create the International Telecommunication Union; Vatican City remained a member. It is by membership in this union and the postal union that Vatican City originally gained admission into the UN as an observer.

1944: The Holy See made tentative inquiries to the US Secretary of State about the eligibility of Vatican City to become a member of the UN and was told that membership was not appropriate.

1948: The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) became the first specialized UN agency to grant the Holy See/Vatican City* the status of permanent observer to its conferences. FAO explicitly noted that this status had been granted because of the special religious nature of the Holy See/Vatican City.

1951: A representative of the Vatican Migration Bureau was accredited to the International Relief Organization. The Holy See/Vatican City began attending meetings of the UN General Assembly and the World Health Organization (WHO) as an ad hoc

observer. The Holy See appointed its first permanent observer to the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

1956: The Holy See participated in the founding conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) as a full member. This status was not subject to a vote by the general conference. The Holy See was elected a member of the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).

Oct. 16-19, 1957: Confusion regarding the interchangeable use of the terms Holy See and Vatican City prompted an exchange of notes between the Holy See and the secretary-general of the UN. This resulted in an agreement that relations should henceforth be understood as being between the United Nations and the Holy See. (At this time the Holy See was not a permanent observer.)

March 21, 1964: UN Secretary-General U Thant received a letter from the secretary of state of the Roman Curia at Vatican City stating that the Holy See will have a permanent observer at UN headquarters in New York. Pope Paul VI dispatched Rev. Msgr. Alberto Giovannetti to New York as the first permanent observer of the Holy See to the UN.

April 1964: UN Secretary-General U Thant accepted the Holy See's designation of itself as a permanent observer. There appeared to be no involvement of the General Assembly or the UN Security Council in the decision.

Feb. 1, 1967: Pope Paul VI named a permanent observer to the UN's Geneva Office, as well as to the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees.

1967: The Holy See named permanent observers to the WHO, the International Labor Organization (ILO) and the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). The United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) was established and the Holy See joined as a full member.

1978: The Holy See became a permanent observer to the Organization of American States.

1997 : The Holy See became a member of the World Trade Organization.

*Prior to October 1957, the terms Holy See and Vatican City were often used interchangeably.

Catholic Social Justice Groups

Catholics for a Changing Church: UK
Catholics for a Free Choice: Canada and USA
Catholics Speak Out/Quixote Center: USA
Católicas pelo Direito de Decidir: Brasil
Católicas por el Derecho a Decidir Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Latin America, México, Perú and Spain
CORPUS - The National Association For A Married Priesthood: USA
Initiative Christenrechte in der Kirche: Germany
Loretto Women's Network: USA
National Coalition of American Nuns: USA
We Are Church groups in England and Wales, France, South Africa and Venezuela
Women Church Convergence: USA
Women's ordination groups in Australia, South Africa, UK and USA

Human Rights Groups

Americans for Religious Liberty: USA
Arab Commission for Human Rights: France
Center for Economic and Social Rights: USA
International Committee for Peace in Africa (INCOPA): Nigeria
International Women's Human Rights Law Clinic: USA
Legal and Human Rights Centre: Tanzania
Movement for Inter-Racial Justice and Equality: Sri Lanka
Race Relations Institute, Fisk University: USA
W.E. A.R.E. for Human Rights: USA
Women's Alliance for Peace and Human Rights In Afghanistan (WAPHA): USA

Reproductive Health & Rights Groups

Association of Ugandan Women Medical Doctors: Uganda
Center for Reproductive Law and Policy: USA
Choice USA: USA
Family Care International (FCI): USA
International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) and family planning associations in Albania, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Egypt, England, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, New Zealand, Poland, Romania, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Uganda and USA.
Latin American and Caribbean Women's Health Network: Chile
Marie Stopes in Australia, Ethiopia, South Africa and UK
Medical Students for Choice: USA
National Abortion and Reproductive Rights Action League (NARAL): USA
National Association of Nurse Practitioners in Women's Health: USA
National Family Planning and Reproductive Health Association: USA
National Latina Health Organization: USA
Pacific Institute for Women's Health: USA
Physicians for Reproductive Health and Choice: USA
Population Concern: UK
RAINBO: USA
Republicans For Choice: USA
Women's Global Network for Reproductive Rights: The Netherlands
World Population Foundation: The Netherlands

Humanist Groups

The International Humanist and Ethical Union and humanist organizations from Argentina, Belgium, Chile, France, Iceland, India, Ireland, Luxembourg, Nepal, Nigeria, Poland, Slovakia, UK and USA

Women's Rights Groups

African Centre for Empowerment, Gender and Advocacy: Kenya
American Women's Work: USA
ARROW (Asian-Pacific Resource and Research Center for Women): Malaysia
The Breast Cancer Fund: USA
Center for Health and Gender Equity (CHANGE): UK and USA
Center for Women's Global Leadership: USA
Centre for Women and Adolescent Empowerment (CWAE): Nigeria
Federation of Women Lawyers: Kenya
Feminist Majority Foundation: USA
Girls' Power Initiative (GPI): Nigeria
Modemmujer: México
National Organization for Women: USA
Women for Independence Self-Sufficiency and Economic Advancement (WISSEA): Caribbean and Nigeria
Women Leaders Online: USA
Women Living Under Muslim Laws: France and Nigeria
Women's Caucus for Gender Justice: USA

Development Groups

Action Canada for Population and Development: Canada
FEMNET: The African Women's Development and Communication Network: Kenya
International Women's Development Agency: Australia
NGOWorld: Nigeria
Philippine Rural Reconstruction Movement: Philippines
WIDE-Austria: Austria
Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO): USA

A full list of endorsers is available at www.seechange.org/endorsers

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