

AFRICAN ANTI-ABORTION COALITION

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PRESS RELEASE

On 14th February, 2008, the African Anti-Abortion Coalition (AAAC) and other Pro-Life Organizations comprising secular and faith-based groups, held a successful annual Forty Million People Life March Against Abortion in all Africa countries with the theme “*Blessed is the Fruit of Your Womb*”. The scientific and technical committees of the AAAC council had determined that the focus in 2008 for the Global Pro-Life Alliance (GPA) would be on “Environment and Contraception”. We wish to highlight the emerging threat to human and aquatic life from high use of estrogen compounds in contraceptive pills in Africa.

The main issues raised were:

1. There is an emerging threat to Global Health by the high use of hormonal estrogen compounds in contraceptive pills. The latter problem is most acute in African countries, where wastewater treatment is poor or absent.
2. Experts at the United States Geological Survey (USGS) Toxic Substances Hydrology Program have established that endocrine-disrupting compounds such as estrogen from contraceptive pills damage the reproductive systems of aquatic life. The researchers discovered an alarming finding of skewed gender ratio and abnormal female fish, downstream of treatment plants and pollution-control equipment. The researchers also discovered many strange, inter-sex fish, which had both male and female reproductive tissue. Similar findings have been made by ecotoxicologists in Canada, United Kingdom, and other European Union countries.
3. The synthetic estrogen hormones in the wastewater influent and effluent were: estrone, estriol, equilin, estradiol, 17 alpha-ethinyl estradiol, which are compounds used in contraceptive pills. The concentration of estrogens in the influent and effluent of the treatment plants ranged from 0.5 to 259 ng/L, which are several million times more than the concentrations found to harm aquatic life in controlled laboratory experiments. The removal of these compounds with sophisticated water treatment techniques ranged from negligible for 17alpha-dihydroequilin to 41-99% for other estrogen compounds. As a result, the fertility and mental health of the human population and aquatic life are severely under threat.
4. More recently in 2007, studies in Africa have shown that contraceptive use is damaging aquatic life. For example, studies in Gauteng South Africa, demonstrated histological evidence of inter-sex in a fish species inhabiting a

South African water source. The researchers discovered many strange, inter-sex fish, which had both male and female reproductive tissue. Any change in the gender ratio or abnormality in reproductive tissue can adversely affect a population of fish, potentially reducing it with each generation. It also threatens the entire food chain of the aquatic eco-system.

5. Participants decried the irresponsible ‘dumping’ of contraceptive pills in many African countries by international funding agencies and governments without regard to health and environmental issues. The problem of environmental effects of estrogen compounds in contraceptive pills would be most acute in Africa, where water treatment measures are very poor or even absent.
6. The participants called on the African Union and United Nations to ban exports of contraceptive pills to African countries, similar to the measures taken for environmentally harmful pesticides.
7. All experts agreed that Africans could be best served by using natural family planning methods.

Signed by:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "P. Njemanze", is written over a light blue rectangular background.

Prince Dr Philip C. Njemanze MD
Chairman,
African Anti-Abortion Coalition (AAAC)