

AS WRITTEN

**Statement of the
Caucus for the Advancement of the Billings Ovulation Method
to the General Assembly Special Session -ICPD +5**

**United Nations, June 30 - July 2, 1999
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Caucus for the Advancement of the Billings Ovulation Method, C.A.B.O.M
Proposed statement to the General Assembly - Cairo +5, New York, 1999

The Caucus for the Advancement of the Billings Ovulation Method, C.A.B.O.M. thanks the Chairman for the opportunity to give a short statement to the General Assembly. We represent thirteen eco-sot NGO organizations present at the Cairo +5 meetings and speak for 60 affiliates of the World Organization of the Ovulation Method Billings teaching the authentic Billings Method in over 100 countries around the world. Teaching materials are published in 22 languages and carry the WOOMB logo to ensure authenticity.

The method is the most simple, natural and effective way in the world of achieving or avoiding pregnancy. In a 1978 five nation study, conducted by the World Health Organization, it was found that 93% of women can return, after just one conversation with a Billings teacher, with a recognizeable chart of the few possibly fertile days and many infertile days in her cycle. With some further instruction in the keeping of a simple chart and in the application of a few commonsense guidelines she will know on which days an act of intercourse can possibly lead to pregnancy and which one cannot possibly do so, ahead of time. It allows parents to be in total charge of their fertility without the costly complications of the contraceptive /sterilization /abortion package.

The way in which the method is spreading is reflected in the huge interest in our web site. It had 311,000 visits in March this year compared to 33,000 during the same time last year. Most of the visitors came from the U.S.A. and the E.U. and had selected "achieve pregnancy" as their reason for wanting to use the method. Many from Asia and unspecified areas of the world, wanting to space their children or avoid pregnancy discovered a natural, modern method that is scientific, cost-free and culturally acceptable to all groups, regardless of race, colour, religion or socio-economic background.

I want to say a few words about the proven benefits of this method for mothers of families. It is their right to be told about it. There is now no doubt that the knowledge they acquire from it empowers them as they learn about the physical changes that occur within their bodies. Women in developing nations report that their gift of knowledge of their own fertility enhances their self esteem and status within their relationship and community. Understanding their own cycle gives them deeper insight into their womanhood and the dignity of being a woman. As well as that they will

quickly learn to detect the development of abnormalities, so the Method proves to help women **perserve** gynaecological health.

Breast feeding women welcome the good news as it provides them with the security to resume sexual intercourse, without the worry of pregnancy, by accurately detecting the *presence* of their infertility while waiting for the return of their normal fertility. Women with irregular cycles learn to understand how they can use the knowledge. Mothers pass the information on to their daughters and parents welcome the knowledge that provides them with a healthy context in which to discuss fertility with their sons Blind women are able to use the method as can women who have undergone the unnatural practice of female genital mutilation.

Governments of over 100 nations appreciate the method as it provides them with the lowest cost policy option for fertility planning. There is no longer the need to resort to involuntary sterilization programs. Its widespread appeal removes the need for an agenda of coercive and unpopular child spacing.

Families benefit from knowledge of the Billings Method. Suffice it to say that a healthy mother is vital for the health of the whole family, the basic unit of a healthy society leading to healthy, sustainable economic development. Even women needing treatment for common vaginal infections can understand their cycles. Dr. John Billings in his letter to delegates on the back of our brochure describes further how a marriage benefits from this knowledge:

“A very great advantage of the BOM is that it fosters communication and understanding between the man and the woman, develops cooperation between **them** and a sharing of this important matter of their children. In all these ways it improves their relationship, helping them to grow in love and fidelity to each other. In this way it helps to protect them against the widespread epidemic of sexually-transmitted diseases which cause so much infertility and other complications in virtually all the countries of the world. This protection is also afforded against **AIDs**, against which the only certain protection is the preservation of monogamous sexual relationship.”

With all due respect can we suggest that the time is ripe for the World Health Organization to follow-up on the successful findings of its study of 1978 by shifting the emphasis from “emergency contraception,” resulting in more abortion and more misery for women and families, back to the mother of all education, Nature, which has provided us with such good timely knowledge. European nations are worried by low population replacement levels while the two most populous nations in the world,

China and India, are providing the greatest success in the use of the Billings Method in avoiding pregnancy, by showing near zero method-related pregnancies in recent studies. Even Dr. Nafis Sadik, before a room jam packed with **NGOs** in the March Prepcom meeting of this year, acknowledged that the Billings Ovulation Method should be a 'choice' for women.

When we are blessed with a method like this why are we not taking advantage of it? With all the resources available to the W.H.O. is it not time to apply them to take advantage for the benefit of the whole world? The advantages are: non-political, non religious, non commercial and above all, acceptable to all. Need we look further? The answer is sitting on our doorstep all the time! Let us all accept the challenge of teaching every woman in the world how to understand her cycle by, say, a target date of 20101

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(Duration: approximately 7 mins)
