

Annex

Links and quotations marks were added to Priest for Life's United Nations submissions for meetings taking place in 2022 for information purposes. Official submissions cannot contain links or quotations marks.

60th session of the Commission for Social Development

Priority theme: "Inclusive and resilient recovery from COVID-19 for sustainable livelihoods, well-being and dignity for all: eradicating poverty and hunger in all its forms and dimensions to achieve the 2030 Agenda"

February 7-16, 2022

Priests for Life (PFL) advocates for strategies that respect human dignity in seeking to eradicate poverty and hunger in all its forms to achieve the 2030 Agenda and for an inclusive recovery from COVID-19.

Well-being and dignity for all — every human life without exception — form the foundation of policies and programs that liberate countries and, most importantly, people from poverty and hunger, and ensure an inclusive and resilient recovery from COVID-19.

Priests for Life is concerned that progress is lacking on [Sustainable Development Goal 2: Zero Hunger](#)—End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture, and especially on target 2.2.1 on ending all forms of malnutrition. The World Health Organization estimates that malnutrition is the underlying cause of 3.1 million child deaths each year and leads to lasting damage for millions of other children.

During the 60th session of the Commission for Social Development, attention must be given to reducing the large number of children who are malnourished and to meeting their nutrition needs, right from the start at conception, and to meeting the nutritional needs of women and girls of reproductive age.

Malnutrition during the critical window of the first 1,000 days of life from conception to the second birthday is the most damaging and can impact a child for her or his lifetime. Malnutrition not only leads to deficiencies, stunting, being underweight, and wasting but can permanently impact a child's physical and cognitive capabilities. Nutrition for women and girls of reproductive age is essential for the health of both mother and child. Malnutrition during pregnancy contributes to the preterm delivery, low birthweight, and stillbirth.

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations warns in [The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2021](#) that the world is not on track to achieve targets for any of the nutrition indicators by 2030 and that the current rate

of progress is insufficient especially on reducing child stunting and low birthweight, on preventing anemia in women, and on the negative impacts on the ability of a mother to nurse her child. It shows that an additional 60 million people have been affected by hunger since 2014 and there are still about 144 million children under the age of 5 who suffer from stunting.

The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2021 reports that one in seven live births, or 20.5 million (14.6 percent) babies globally, suffered from low birthweight in 2015. Low birthweight newborns have a higher risk of dying in the first 28 days after birth and those who survive are more likely to suffer from stunted growth and impaired cognitive development leading to increased risk of obesity and adult-onset chronic conditions, including diabetes, later in life.

Malnutrition in women of child-bearing age affects their and their children's health, born and unborn. Malnutrition results in the stunted growth and leads to impaired physical and cognitive development with lasting detriment to the individual and to the economic health of countries.

Adequate nutrition during the first 1,000 days of life — from conception to the second birthday — will not only save the lives of women and children and reduces stunted growth, wasting, and malnutrition but will improve the economies of countries.

When women of child-bearing age are well-nourished, they are healthier and better able to provide nourishment for their children in the womb and those they are nursing. They are better able to make nutritious food choices for themselves and their young children; all essential to ensuring healthy physical and cognitive development. When children thrive, they are empowered to become healthy adults who are better equipped to make meaningful contributions to their families, society, and country.

Healthy children become healthy adults who are equipped with the stamina necessary for productive and sustainable agriculture, to attend school, to receive training in job skills, to enjoy improved health and well-being, and are better able to resist illness and disease.

The report, [*Leveraging food systems for poverty and malnutrition reduction*](#) by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and The International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth, warns that the COVID-19 crisis will exacerbate maternal and child undernutrition and child mortality in low-and middle-income countries. It reports that more than half of the surveyed countries documented disruptions in antenatal care, sick child services and management of malnutrition in 2020.

Priests for Life urges the Commission on Social Development to prioritize the nutritional needs of children in the womb and the long-term impact of malnutrition to future generations, as it considers recovery from COVID-19 and the eradication of poverty and hunger.

The [report of the Commission on Social Development Expert Group](#) recognizes that children, adolescents, and youth have been among the hidden victims of the pandemic. It contains the troubling statement that continued disruptions to food and health systems could result in an additional 9.3 million wasted children between 2020 and 2022 (a 20% increase since 2019) and an increase in the numbers of stunted children, after two decades of global decline in stunting.

Children in the womb are the most hidden victims of the pandemic as they develop and grow during the most vulnerable time in every human being's life. What happens in the womb will affect them for the rest of their lives and will impact their families, communities and countries. Their health and nutritional needs must be included in programs that address poverty and nutrition and recovery from COVID-19.

Priests for Life believes that their lives, and every human life, need to be valued for their innate worth. No member of the human family should be stripped of human dignity and denied their most basic right — the right to life — through policies that allow individuals to be marginalized, treated as a problem, and their elimination considered an acceptable strategy for poverty eradication.

If the pledge of the 2030 Agenda to leave no one behind is to be realized, programs and policies to reduce poverty and hunger in all its forms and to recover from COVID-19 must encompass the complete life cycle, from conception to natural death, including those suffering disability or illness, the elderly or children alive but not yet born. No individual, and no group, regardless of condition of dependency or stage of development, be treated as expendable and left behind.

Sixty-Sixth Session of the Commission on the Status of Women

Priority theme: "Achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls in the context of climate change, environmental and disaster risk reduction policies and programmes"

March 14-25, 2022

Priests for Life reminds the Commission on the Status of Women of the pledge of Agenda 2030 that no one will be left behind as it discusses gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls in the context of climate change, environmental and disaster risk reduction policies and programs.

Priests for Life recalls the words of Pope Francis writing in [On Care for Our Common Home](#) that since everything is interrelated, concern for the protection of nature is also incompatible with the justification of abortion. He asks the question, *“How can we genuinely teach the importance of concern for other vulnerable beings, however troublesome or inconvenient they may be, if we fail to protect a human embryo, even when its presence is uncomfortable and creates difficulties?”*

Priests for Life concurs and believes that women need to be empowered in their universally valued role as mothers and protected from environmental toxins and the dangers of climate change which negatively impact their and their children’s health, before and after birth, and contribute to maternal and newborn mortality.

Climate change impacts human beings beginning in the womb and can affect an individual’s health and well-being for the rest of her or his life. According to [Catastrophic effects of climate change on children’s health start before birth](#) by Dr. Susan Pachero, the fingerprint of climate change on future generations of children begins before they are born, as pregnant mothers endure environmental crises similar to those their children will experience after they are born. Maternal exposure to climate related disruptions, such as floods, droughts, famine, heat extremes, air pollution, and increased infection risk, as well as the stress associated with extreme weather events, disaster, and other environmental crises, can impact the young one at any point during development.

Pregnant women, during climate crises and other disasters, experience stress, respiratory disease, malnutrition, infection, and heat-induced illness which can lead to low birth weight at birth and prematurity resulting in the child’s increased predisposition to conditions including cognitive deficits, congenital heart diseases, asthma, obesity, type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular problems, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and autism.

A World Bank article asks and answers the question, [How can climate change affect the health of unborn babies?](#) It explains that the climate-induced stresses pregnant women endure impact their children in utero leading to lower birth weight and a higher probability of infant mortality with a potential risk of lung disease, heart disease, type II diabetes, lower cognitive abilities, and learning disorders.

Pregnant women need access to life-affirming health care during all crises and disasters that treats both patients in the pregnancy and includes prenatal and postnatal care and assisted childbirth.

Priests for Life is especially concerned with the large number of women and girls around the world who are adversely impacted by exposure to chemicals and hazardous wastes, which lead to developmental disabilities in unborn children and infertility. [Women, Chemicals and the SDGs](#) by UN Environment Programme describes how women are disproportionately impacted by exposure to chemicals and wastes while having less access to participation in decision making on waste management.

The report describes, for example, how men collect electronic waste, but women become exposed to the hazardous chemicals when they extract the valuable metals in the devices. Women and men are impacted differently by the chemicals, including endocrine-disrupting chemicals (EDCs), which result in women suffering impacts on their reproductive system and pregnancy outcomes long after exposure and for some, the damage has occurred before they even reach reproductive age.

WHO raises concerns about the reproductive health impact of ineffective electronic waste management in the report [Children and digital dumpsites E-waste exposure and child health \(2021\)](#) stating that the problem is triggering a crisis of e-waste health risks to which millions of children, as well as women of childbearing age, are exposed. It expresses concern that lead and mercury exposure in the first trimester of pregnancy can lead to neurobehavioral development problems, low birth weight, spontaneous abortion, and birth defects.

Women, Chemicals and the SDGs reports that textile production includes exposure to chemicals causing cancer, endocrine-disrupting chemicals and allergens. Electronics production has been associated with a variety of adverse health outcomes including cancer, reproductive disorders and developmental disability in unborn children and an increased risk for spontaneous abortion in the semiconductor and electronics industry.

Women and girls who are most at risk from environmental hazards and climate change need to be empowered by education, training and access to skilled jobs to rise above poverty and the dangerous hazardous environments in which they struggle. They can become agents of change if empowered and treated with equality in decision making.

Priests for Life also raises concern about the world's water supply and the presence of an assortment of chemicals that can impact women's health and empowerment but which have not received the necessary attention needed for change.

A growing body of research around the world has raised concern about the negative impact of hormones excreted into water supplies worldwide, including estrogen from contraceptives and from animals treated with hormones or naturally occurring, that affect human, animal, and fish reproduction and fertility while creating the need for new water treatment systems.

Antibiotics and other drugs present in the water supply have been recognized as a growing health problem. According to the [Global Environment Outlook GEO-6 Summary for Policymakers](#) by the United Nations Environment Programme, there is growing evidence that human illnesses due to antimicrobial-resistant (AMR) infections may become a major cause of death from infectious diseases worldwide by 2050. It explains that antimicrobial-resistant bacteria are now found in sources of treated drinking water worldwide stemming from antibiotics entering the water

cycle through domestic sewage and industrial wastewater disposal, agriculture, livestock rearing, and aquaculture.

Women are at increased risk of exposure to AMR during pregnancy and childbirth, especially in unsanitary settings. Antibiotic resistance leads to higher medical costs, long hospital stays, and increased mortality.

Water supplies are also filled with endocrine-disrupting chemicals which have a long-term impact on unborn children's development and lead to adverse birth outcomes and developmental impacts on the child's central nervous, skeleton, and reproductive systems.

The impact of climate change on pregnant women and on the lives of children in the womb cannot be ignored during CSW discussions. Their cries must be heard and answered with respect, inclusion, and prenatal justice.

Priests for Life implores CSW to address the critical need for action to protect women from hazardous work environments which adversely affect them and their children's health, born and unborn. The Convention on the Rights of the Child reminds us in the preamble of the need for special safeguards and care, including appropriate legal protection, before as well as after birth.

A majority of Member States recognize the inherent procreative ability of women as the bearers of a country's future, its children. Countries representing 1.6 billion people united in a joint statement, [Geneva Consensus Declaration on Promoting Women's Health and Strengthening the Family](#), that included a commitment to secure meaningful health development gains for women, to protect life at all stages, and reaffirmed that every human being has the inherent right to life.

They committed to enable women to go safely through pregnancy and childbirth and provide couples with the best chance of having a healthy infant and affirmed that women and girls must enjoy equal access to quality education, economic resources, and political participation as well as equal opportunities with men and boys for employment, leadership and decision-making at all levels.

Women and girls deserve a healthy environment that respects, protects and empowers their procreative ability. The very future of the human family depends on protection and care of all of creation, not the destruction of the weakest and most vulnerable through abortion.

Fifty-fifth Commission on Population and Development

Priority theme: "Population and sustainable development, in particular sustained and inclusive economic growth"

April 25-29, 2022

Priests for Life in its submission to the 55th Commission on Population and Development highlights two particular areas of concern, malnutrition and exposure to environmental risks, under the theme population and sustainable development, in particular sustained and inclusive economic growth as related to [chapter III of the Programme of Action](#).

Priests for Life urges the Commission to address these dual risks beginning at the earliest stage of life, in the womb, which impact an individual for her or his entire lifetime.

Chapter III of the Programme of Action states that widespread poverty remains the major challenge to development efforts and is accompanied by a host of impacts including malnutrition and exposure to environmental risks. Similarly, Agenda 21 warns that the health of children is affected more severely than other population group by malnutrition and adverse environmental factors.

The Programme of Action states that measures need to be taken to strengthen food, nutrition and agricultural policies and programs, and fair-trade relations, with special attention to the creation and strengthening of food security at all levels. The suggested programs for infants and children include prenatal care and nutrition programs.

Priests for Life implores the Commission to address the need for nutrition during the universally recognized critical period of the first 1,000 days of life — from conception to the second birthday — when growth rates and brain development are faster than at any other stage of life. Children in the womb are at the greatest risk of stunted growth and malnutrition which not only negatively results in impaired physical and cognitive development but ultimately negatively impacts the economic health of countries.

Malnutrition in women of child-bearing age affects their and their children's health, born and unborn. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations warns in [The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2021](#) that the world is not on track to achieve targets for any of the nutrition indicators by 2030 and that the current rate of progress is insufficient especially on reducing child stunting and low birthweight, on preventing anemia in women, and on the negative impacts on the ability of a mother to nurse her child. It shows that an additional 60 million people have been affected by hunger since 2014 and there are still about 144 million children under the age of 5 who suffer from stunting.

The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2021 reports that one in seven live births, or 20.5 million (14.6 percent) babies globally, suffered from low birthweight in 2015. Low birthweight newborns have a higher risk of dying in the first 28 days after birth and those who survive are more likely to suffer from stunted growth and impaired cognitive development leading to increased risk of obesity and adult-onset chronic conditions later in life.

Adequate nutrition during the first 1,000 days of life not only saves the lives of women and children, it reduces stunted growth, wasting, and malnutrition which improves the economies of countries. When women of child-bearing age are well-nourished, they are healthier and better able to provide nourishment for their children in the womb and those they are nursing. They are better able to make nutritious food choices for themselves and their young children; all essential to ensuring healthy physical and cognitive development. When children thrive, they are empowered to become healthy adults who are better equipped to make meaningful contributions to their families, society, and country.

Healthy children are able to attend school and become healthy adults who are equipped with the stamina necessary for productive and sustainable agriculture, receive training in job skills, enjoy improved health and well-being, and are better able to resist illness and disease.

Conversely, stunting from malnutrition puts children at an increased risk of dying from common infections and is associated with poor cognitive development and a potential negative impact on a country's long-term progress. Stunted children become adults who suffer from diabetes, hypertension and cardiovascular disease, conditions that often impede earning capacity and result in lower incomes.

Exposure to environmental risks also negatively impact the health of women and children, before and after birth, and contribute to maternal and newborn mortality.

Priests for Life is especially concerned with the large number of women and girls around the world who are adversely impacted by exposure to chemicals and hazardous wastes, which lead to developmental disabilities in unborn children and infertility. The report [*Women, Chemicals and the SDGs*](#) by UN Environment Programme describes how women and men are impacted differently by chemicals, including endocrine-disrupting chemicals (EDCs), which result in women suffering impacts on their reproductive system and pregnancy outcomes long after exposure and for some, the damage has occurred before they even reach reproductive age.

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unborn children while there is an increased risk for spontaneous abortion in the semiconductor and electronics industry among women workers.

Priests for Life also raises concern about risks present in the world's water supply caused by an assortment of chemicals that can impact women's and children's health.

Water supplies can be filled with endocrine-disrupting chemicals which have a long-term impact on unborn children's development and lead to adverse birth outcomes and developmental impacts on the child's central nervous, skeleton, and reproductive systems.

A growing body of research around the world has raised concern about the negative impact of hormones excreted into water supplies worldwide, including estrogen from contraceptives and from animals treated with hormones or naturally occurring, that affect human, animal, and fish reproduction and fertility while creating the need for new water treatment systems.

Antibiotics and other drugs present in the water supply have also been recognized as a growing health problem. According to the [Global Environment Outlook GEO-6 Summary for Policymakers](#) by the United Nations Environment Programme, there is growing evidence that human illnesses due to antimicrobial-resistant (AMR) infections may become a major cause of death from infectious diseases worldwide by 2050. It explains that antimicrobial-resistant bacteria are now found in sources of treated drinking water worldwide stemming from antibiotics entering the water cycle through domestic sewage and industrial wastewater disposal, agriculture, livestock rearing, and aquaculture.

Sustained development depends on a healthy population beginning with access to prenatal nutrition and environmental protection for unborn children and their mothers. A majority of Member States value and protect their country's future, its children. Countries representing more than 1.6 billion people are united in a joint statement, [Geneva Consensus Declaration on Promoting Women's Health and Strengthening the Family](#), that includes a commitment to protect life at all stages, to secure meaningful health development gains for women, and reaffirmed that every human being has the inherent right to life.

The countries are committed to enable women to go safely through pregnancy and childbirth and provide couples with the best chance of having a healthy infant. They recognize that women play a critical role in the family and contribute not only to the welfare of the family but to the development of society. The countries seek to improve and secure the highest attainable standard of health and development gains for women, while opposing access to unrestricted abortion on demand.

Priests for Life urges the Commission to address the dangers of malnutrition and environmental risks. The very future of the human family depends on protection and care of all its members during all stages of the life cycle, beginning in the womb. [Read the PNCI 2021 Year end Report](#)