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'Saving precious lives'

By Margriet Gosker

God is our creator. God is the source of all life. Human life is a very precious gift of God. Life is also vulnerable. No one can live without the protection of our human rights or without caring love. Everyone on earth has a right to be protected against hunger, dangerous illnesses, and brutal violence. Because of the fact that we do not live in Paradise yet - but in a dangerous world - these rights must strongly be defended by all of us, always and everywhere. Therefore I strongly regret the decision of the Bush administration to withhold the \$34 million United States contribution to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). As I heard about it, it was my first thought: this decision is a bad one. And I fear this decision will cost a lot of precious human lives. It is well known that UNFPA supports maternal health programs and family planning all over the world. In doing so UNFPA has saved many precious lives of mothers and children. It is very important that the women of the world who need access to prenatal care and family planning are being carefully helped. They cannot just be left alone. Today, millions of people on earth are living with HIV/AIDS - most of them in the African continent - and every day more human beings become infected. This is really a shame for the world. Why is there no more action to help the helpless mothers and children, and to prevent them from suffering and dying? If we would act all together it would be possible to save so many precious lives. As far as I know only four countries - I am glad the Netherlands is one of them - have achieved their "fair share" in what was already agreed. But this cannot make me satisfied. I hope and pray the United States will take their own responsibility and change their policy.

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