



Statement by His Excellency Archbishop Silvano Tomasi, Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the United Nations and Other International Organizations in Geneva  
at the 132<sup>nd</sup> WHO Executive Board, re: EB 132/ Conf. Paper. /1  
“Draft Resolution on Implementation of the recommendations of the Commission on Life-Saving Commodities for Women and Children”  
*Geneva, 23 January 2013*

The Holy See wishes to note that Catholic Church-affiliated medical care as well as that associated with other major faith traditions contribute greatly toward reduction in morbidity and mortality for significant numbers of mothers, newborns, and children throughout the world, but most especially in developing countries and among the poorest and most marginalized sectors of society. These organizations agree strongly with the need to achieve further reductions in the loss of life and prevention of illness through increased access to affordable interventions that are respectful of the life and dignity of all mothers and children at all stages of life, from conception to natural death.

It is specifically in this regard that the Holy See wishes to raise grave concern with the consideration being given by the Executive Board to affirm and promote so-called “Emergency Contraception”, which was included as one of the strategies recommended by the Commission on Life-Saving Commodities for Women and Children. It is well known that, when conception already has occurred, the substances used in “emergency contraception” produce an abortifacient effect. For my delegation, it is totally unacceptable to refer to a medical product that constitutes a direct attack on the life of the child *in utero* as a “lifesaving commodity” and, much worse, to encourage increasing use of such substances in all parts of the world.

As it has done on many previous occasions, the Holy See reiterates that it does not consider abortion or abortion services to be a dimension of reproductive health or reproductive health services.

It urges the international public health community to focus its attention, energy, expertise, and finances on procedures and commodities that defend and preserve life at all stages, including life *in utero*, such as those listed as “Maternal, Newborn, and Child Health Commodities” and proposed as recommendations in the above-cited Commission Report.