Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

October 16, 2002

Secretary Colin Powell
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20520-0001

Dear Secretary Powell,

We read with great concern that the US Agency for International Development (USAID) plans to stop supplying the Philippines with contraceptives within 2 years.

It is widely documented that proper and consistent use of condoms is the most effective way to safeguard against sexually transmitted diseases such as HIV. HIV infects approximately 14,000 people a day, and with the average cost per condom being as low as 3 cents, we cannot fathom why USAID would end its supply to the Philippines. Moreover, USAID is a crucial player in this situation since it provides 80% of the country's contraceptives.

In addition, after a meeting with representatives from USAID, Mrs. Maloney's staff was given an assessment of "Unmet Need Estimates for Contraception for USAID-Assisted Countries" prepared by John A. Ross and William L. Winfrey in response to several questions raised. As you may know, the spreadsheet was used by USAID for selecting the countries that they proposed to receive the $34 million (formerly appropriated for the United Nations Population Fund). According to this chart, Haiti has the "greatest" unmet need at 40% and Hungary has the "least" unmet need at 4%. To put this in perspective, the Phillippines has 19% unmet need, greater than India, Nigeria, and Bangladesh, among others. Mr. Secretary, with this large percentage of unmet need for contraception, we are extremely concerned with the decision to end its supply of contraceptives to the Phillippines.

An alarming 40% of the Filipino population lives in poverty, and as a whole, the country has one of the world's highest growing population rates. Curbing the supply of both contraceptives as well as information on family planning could exacerbate these conditions further. Discontent among pro-family planning advocates in the Philippines has already led to a recent protest, thereby proving the dire need for attention to this issue.

Given these facts, we urge you to reconsider your position.

Sincerely,

CAROLYN B. MALONEY
Member of Congress

JOSEPH CROWLEY
Member of Congress

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