

	<b>For the Woman's Right to Choose</b>	<b>Code: STATEMENT</b>
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**MEDICUS MUNDI'S  
STATEMENT ON THE DRAFT  
BILL ON PROTECTING THE LIFE OF  
THE UNBORN AND THE RIGHTS  
OF PREGNANT WOMEN**

*For the Woman's Right to Choose*

**Federation of Associations of Medicus Mundi**

<b>Carried out by: FAMME<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Approved by: The Executive Board</b>	<b>Place and date: Madrid, 11/01/2014</b>
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<sup>1</sup> Translator's note: FAMME = Federation of Associations of Medicus Mundi Spain.

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## **MEDICUS MUNDI'S STATEMENT ON THE DRAFT BILL ON PROTECTING THE LIFE OF THE UNBORN AND THE RIGHTS OF PREGNANT WOMEN.**

In June 2011, under the framework of the first Conference on Sexual and Reproductive Health held in Donostia, the Federation of Associations of medicusmundi approved the **STATEMENT ON SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH RIGHTS**. In this statement, **medicusmundi** sets out its position and demonstrates its commitment to the defence of the right of women to choose when, how and with whom they would like to have sexual relations and how and when they would like to become mothers, or not, without ceasing to be women as a result. In the same way that a woman should not be forced to abort, neither should she be forced to become a mother against her wishes.

**medicusmundi's** position is based on human rights treaties, as well as international agreements, commitments and regulations. During the **International Conference on Population and Development** (Cairo, 1994), 179 states, including Spain, signed a Programme of Action to promote *a new concept of "reproductive health" which is broader and more comprehensive than "family planning", the recognition that sexuality is a fundamental dimension of people and the consideration that it is the woman who should be free to control her own fertility under conditions that enable this to occur.*

The question of **access to abortion** should be viewed within the wider context of the **sexual and reproductive rights of the woman**, of her right not to suffer and the obligation of the States to defend and uphold these rights, recognising the woman's capacity for free decision-making over procreation and unwanted pregnancies.

The "**draft bill on protecting the life of the unborn and the rights of pregnant women**" puts inequalities before the rights and wishes of women and prevents them from freely choosing what to do with their own bodies and how to regulate their reproduction.

Today, abortion in Spain is not a healthcare problem, nor does it cause alarm amongst the population. According to surveys, the great majority of both men and women in Spain declare themselves to be comfortable with the current regulation, Organic Law 2/2010 of the 3 March on Sexual and Reproductive Health and the Voluntary Termination of Pregnancy, under which the number of abortions being carried out has fallen by 5%.

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There is evidence on a global level that having more restrictive regulation on the right to voluntarily terminate a pregnancy not only does not reduce the number of abortions, but tends to cause them to become a health problem due to the risks involved in carrying them out in an unsafe manner without health regulation. Also, unsafe abortion is a preventable cause of maternal mortality and morbidity and its elimination is one of the key components of the WHO Global Reproductive Health Strategy.

At **medicusmundi we defend the woman's right to choose** (in all areas related to maternity), **we respect each woman's personal reasons to terminate, or not, an unwanted pregnancy,** and **we demand that the State be obliged to guarantee this through the necessary public services and resources.**

Therefore, **medicusmundi IS REQUESTING** the withdrawal of the **Draft Bill on Protecting the Life of the Unborn and the Rights of Pregnant Women**, and **ASKING** that the regulation included in the **Law on Sexual and Reproductive Health and the Voluntary Termination of Pregnancy of 2010** is retained, as we consider it to be the most common amongst the countries around us and the best way to defend and respect the rights of all women.

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**medicusmundi** is a development cooperation organisation of 50 years standing, which specialises in health. It has its own legal personality, and is a non-governmental, federal, not-for-profit organisation which declares itself independent of public authorities and any other institution or interest group of religious, political or economic persuasion, and is founded upon the basis of independent associations.

Amongst the projects which we are carrying out in impoverished countries, many relate to, or include in their make-up, the defence and promotion of Sexual and Reproductive Rights as we consider that there is demonstrable proof of a link between unwanted pregnancies, especially in adolescence, and an increase in poverty; it is precisely these pregnancies which feed back decisively into the poverty loop and cause social exclusion.