

United for Life

Raising greater awareness of human life issues

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16 June, 2005

Mr Mark Golding
Chief Executive
VSO
317 Putney Bridge Rd
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Dear Mr Golding

Thank you for your letter of 14 June 2005, in reply to United for Life's **Make Abortion History** Campaign.

In our mailing to you we highlighted the human rights abuses which have taken place in the name of development aid including forced or coercive abortions, sterilisations or contraception and where aid is given in conjunction with or on condition that recipients accept abortion, sterilisation or contraception.

In your letter to us you state that VSO 'responds to government and community organisations throughout Asia and Africa by sending volunteers who work in partnership with colleagues and communities, and in accordance with our partner organisations' priorities, to share skills and learning and jointly achieve change,' and that, 'We regret VSO cannot make any commitment to United for Life's campaign'.

In VSO's response to government and community organisations request for volunteers surely VSO assesses the suitability and ethical nature of that request? For example, if a government or community organisation asked VSO to send personnel to carry out forced or coercive abortions, forced or coercive sterilisations or forced or coercive contraceptive administration, or to help in the administration or related tasks to facilitate such forced or coercive activities, would VSO accept or reject such a request made upon VSO's services and by what ethical criteria would this decision be based?

I look forward to hearing your considered response.

Yours sincerely

Chris Mason
Co-ordinator
United for Life