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**US Congressman Chris Smith Takes War on Women Global**  
*Amidst US Budget Crisis, Congressman Launches Dangerous Offensive in Kenya*

WASHINGTON, March 23, 2011—The Center for Reproductive Rights (CRR) and Center for Health and Gender Equity (CHANGE) today condemned U.S. Representative Chris Smith’s (R-NJ) trip to Kenya on Monday, where he attacked the country’s new constitution and opened a new front in the international offensive of his war on women.

Smith spoke under the guise of “human rights” at the Kenya Christian Professionals Forum. He condemned the new Kenyan constitution’s decriminalization of abortion in emergency situations or to protect the life or health of the pregnant woman, telling audience members that “we need a world that is free of abortion.”

While Smith spoke graphically about abortion, he made no mention of the 2,600 Kenyan women who die annually from unsafe abortion, nor the 21,000 additional women hospitalized each year as a result of complications resulting from unsafe abortions. He also neglected the fact that more than one-third of maternal deaths in Kenya are the result of unsafe abortion.

“Kenya addressed the devastating effect of illegal abortion in a democratic constitutional reform process,” said Nancy Northup, president of the Center for Reproductive Rights. “But Congressman Smith evidently traveled across the globe in an attempt to roll back the clock on these changes, disregarding clear evidence that criminalizing abortion merely makes it less safe, increasing the risk to women’s lives and health.”

The Center for Reproductive Rights documented the impact of Kenya’s abortion law on women’s lives and health in the fact-finding report [\*In Harm’s Way: The Impact of Kenya’s Restrictive Abortion Law\*](#).

In May of last year, Rep. Smith argued in a letter to the State Department’s Inspector General that the U.S. ambassador to Kenya should not be permitted to discuss Kenya’s abortion law – yet on Monday, Rep. Smith viciously attacked Kenya’s modest efforts to permit abortions where the life or health of the mother is at risk, or in an emergency situation.

“It’s the hypocrisy that is so repugnant,” said Serra Sippel, president of the Center for Health and Gender Equity (CHANGE). “Rep. Smith promotes himself as a defender of human

rights while trampling the rights of women and putting them directly in harm's way—and this smacks of a desire to impose abroad what he cannot accomplish at home.”

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The [Center for Health and Gender Equity \(CHANGE\)](#) is a U.S.-based non-governmental organization whose mission is to ensure that U.S. international policies and programs promote women's and girls' sexual and reproductive health within a human rights framework.

The [Center for Reproductive Rights](#) is a global legal organization dedicated to advancing women's reproductive health, self-determination and dignity as basic human rights.