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## Does the U.N. want to hear Holy See at upcoming meeting on population?

By Rob Cullivan  
Staff writer

A derisive comic strip of the pope may have crudely summed up attitudes toward the church held by many delegates at the final preparatory committee meeting of the United Nations' International Conference on Population and Development. The meeting — the last of three sessions in leading up to the ICPD — took place at U.N. headquarters in New York City April 5-22.

The April 8 comic published in *The Earth Times* refers to "his holymolyness" and presents a drawing of the pope in a miter with the caption: "In his infallible fortress in the Vatican, the pope monitors the grimly celibate preparations for the popcon!"

Given the nature of the April meeting and the atmosphere surrounding it, some observers expect the actual ICPD gathering — scheduled for Sept. 5-13 in Cairo, Egypt — to be the stage for a showdown between the Holy See and other church-related groups opposed to abortion and artificial contraception, and the nations and organizations who favor such methods of population control.

In addition to delegates from the UN's member nations, representatives of more than 1,000 non-governmental organizations — known as NGOs — also attended the meetings and will participate in the September conference, according to David Payton, senior adviser to the Secretariat for the ICPD in New York City.

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Illustration by Mary Kay Williams

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