Specialized Comprehensive Examination in Reproductive Health
October 16, 2007

PLEASE ANSWER TWO OF THE FOLLOWING FIVE QUESTIONS

1. The 1994 Population and Development Conference in Cairo was a watershed event for reproductive health programs and policies. In your essay, describe the tenets of the ICPD Programme of Action, including the paradigm that the Programme of Action hoped to replace. Next, choosing a Latin American country or countries, describe where we are now, more than 10 years post-Cairo, regarding achieving the goals of the Programme of Action. What are the challenges or barriers to achieving the goals? Drawing upon your knowledge of the literature, what policies could and/or should be implemented to achieve the goals of the Programme of Action?

2. Starting in the late 1980s and picking up momentum throughout the 1990s, a social learning/social networks literature has emerged that has argued for a more "contextualized rationality" when attempting to describe women's (or couple's) choices in practicing family planning. Give an overview of the main approaches undertaken in this literature. Evaluate whether these approaches depict, in a meaningful way, the demographic realities of women in a Latin American country or countries.

3. IFN/IFR awarded you "whatever money it took" to conduct the best survey of fertility-related behavior in Latin America to date, what would be the key features of your survey? Describe a sampling frame (i.e., who would you target and why?), a research design (e.g., what features might you build in, and why?), and key areas of content. Relate these choices to relevant literature in the area. What research questions could such a project hope to address? What questions would remain unanswered? Which three outside (non-UT) scholars might you bring aboard the research team? Justify these choices based on the expertise and added value they would bring to the project.

4. Using one Latin American country as an example, discuss how expression of culture—which may or may not include religion—has shaped fertility patterns and contraceptive practices. How has this changed over the past 50 years, if at all? How does this change relate, if at all, to the so-called Second Demographic Transition? How have policymakers wrestled--if at all--with questions of religious and cultural influences on fertility patterns.

5. Geoff McNicoll once remarked that interest in fertility was inversely proportional to the distance of the TFR from the replacement level in reference to the growing number of people attending sessions at PAA on below-replacement level or lowest-low fertility. What are the prospects for the emergence of below-replacement level fertility in Latin America? How long will it take to appear? Of the factors now being discussed as driving fertility in some European and Asian countries to very low levels, which are most relevant to one or more of the Latin American countries with which you are familiar?