



# Population and Sustainability Network

## Newsflashes Four – Summer 2005

This edition of Newsflashes contains useful information about population initiatives around the world, summaries of speeches and articles (with links to the full text), and items about consumption and climate change.

It is encouraging to see so much discussion about 'population' from countries around the world. A good many of the items include information about HIV/AIDS, which reflects the growing threat in parts of the world – particularly for women.

We also welcome the increasing coverage about the threat of climate catastrophe – which will endanger, in particular, the poor of the world.

### **A The population growth side of the population coin**

**UNITED NATIONS, New York, 14<sup>th</sup> April 2005** — Members of the United Nations have emphasized the need to integrate the goal of universal access to reproductive health by 2015 in strategies to attain the world's development goals. Such access, they resolved, should be part of efforts to eradicate poverty, improve maternal health, reduce infant and child deaths, promote gender equality and combat HIV/AIDS.

The two main resolutions passed covered population, HIV/AIDS and poverty, as well as the contribution of the Programme of Action of the 1994 Cairo International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) to the world's development goals, including those in the Millennium Declaration.

Stressing that the full implementation of the Cairo Programme is an essential contribution to the achievement of the world's development goals, the United Nations Members underscored its relevance in reviewing the progress of the Millennium Declaration and other commitments.

Young women and men, United Nations delegates stressed, should be ensured access to information, education—including peer education and youth-specific HIV education, sexual education—and services needed to develop the life skills to reduce their vulnerability to AIDS. HIV/AIDS programmes, they continued, should enable men to adopt safe and responsible sexual and reproductive behaviour and to use effective methods of preventing AIDS.

The cost of providing quality contraceptive commodities would rise to \$1.8 billion in the next decade, from \$810 million in 2000. Each \$1 million of commodities could prevent 800 maternal deaths or 360,000 unwanted pregnancies. And 100,000 maternal deaths could be prevented each year if women who did not want children used effective contraception, says the World Health Organization, which reports that some 300 million women in developing countries suffer from short- or long-term illness caused by pregnancy and childbirth.

73 Charlotte Street  
London W1T 4PL  
United Kingdom  
Tel: +44 (0)20 8673 8963  
Fax: +44 (0)20 7792 9163  
[cbm@populationandsustainability.org](mailto:cbm@populationandsustainability.org)  
[www.populationandsustainability.org](http://www.populationandsustainability.org)

#### **Network Co-ordinator:**

Catherine Budgett-Meakin

#### **Members**

ActionAid  
African Foundation for  
Population and Development, Nigeria  
African Women's Economic Policy Network  
All-party Parliamentary Group  
on Population Development  
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## News from Majority World Countries

### 1. Malaysia:

Men in a Malaysian state oppose Family Planning through a Belief that Large Families Prove Virility

Most men in Malaysia's rural North eastern Kelantan state are against birth control because they believe large families attest to their sexual prowess. They also believe contraception as contravening the teachings of Islam. Men in the state's Muslim-dominated rural areas take pride in having as many children as possible, fathering up to 14 children by practicing polygamy and preventing their wives from using contraception.

"Such parents usually fail to provide proper education for their children," said Rozi Muda, Director for the Kelantan State Development and Planning Board. Adding that religion teaches about "quality and not quantity," and that most people in the state misunderstood family planning.

Only 2,283 of about 700,000 adult women in the state participated in government-sponsored family planning programmes in 2003.

Polygamy is allowed under Islam and is legal for Muslims and the Malaysian state of Kelantan is a stronghold the fundamentalist Pan-Malaysian Islamic party, the only one of Malaysia's 13 states ruled by the opposition party.

Associated Press reported in Push Journal 13/May/05

### 2. Vietnam

VIETNAM PLANS LARGE-SCALE SPENDING ON POPULATION ISSUES

Vietnam plans to pour some 3.5 trillion Vietnamese dong (221.5 million US dollars) into curbing population growth and improving quality of life from 2006 to 2010.

The money will be mainly used to ensure that each couple to have no more than two children so that the population will remain stable at around 88 million by 2010 at the latest, according to the country's Committee for Population, Family and Children on Monday.

Under a recent resolution of the Communist Party of Vietnam, its population should grow gradually, and then remain stable at 115-120 million in mid-21st century. The resolution stresses that state cadres and party members must be good examples in following population policies and family planning, as well as persuading local people to do the same.

Vietnam will have an addition of more than 1.2 million people in 2005, the committee predicted, noting that its population growth is likely to drop to 1.34 percent in the year.

SOURCE: Xinhua General News Service, via PUSH Journal, 30/MAY/05

### 3. Ghana:

The Planned Parenthood Association of Ghana (PPAG) is to embark on a five-year project to address the sexual and reproductive health needs of marginalized youth in Techiman and Sunyani municipalities.

The project aims to increase access to youth friendly sexual and reproductive health services through the establishment of clinics in Sunyani and Techiman. About 150 youth will be offered skills training in income generation and given links to rural banks for credit facilities.

Home Page Ghana 12/May/05

### 4. Honduras

Catholics turn to condoms in AIDS ravaged Honduras

Faced with one of the fastest-growing AIDS epidemics in the Western Hemisphere, Church volunteers in Honduras are turning their backs on the Vatican's anti-condom stance, which is being upheld by new conservative Pope Benedict.

"It's a minor sin," says Wendy Guerra, Head of Program Open Door in the city of San Pedro Sula. Hers is one of an army of Catholic-run AIDS prevention programmes in Honduras, which is home to approximately 60 per cent of Central America's

HIV/AIDS cases.

"As a Catholic charity we can't hand out condoms but we give advice about them and make sure people know where to get them," said Catherine O'Leary, a British nurse who runs the San Jose Hospice.

According to the United Nations, more than half of new HIV infections worldwide are in the 15-26 age range, with women being the most affected. In Honduras, where a married man without lovers is an oddity, 90 per cent of newly infected women are housewives.

The widespread poverty in Honduras means few have access to healthcare and there is no social network for AIDS sufferers. With women so vulnerable in poor nations, AIDS prevention groups in Central America say promoting condoms is not enough.

"Our global message is ABC: Abstinence, be faithful and condom use, but for many Honduran women abstinence is not an option. Their partners aren't faithful and they are powerless to demand they use a condom," said Thoraya Obaid, Executive Director of the UN Population Fund, on a visit to Honduras.

Reuters 12/May/05

## 5 Pakistan

### DEBATING ISLAM AND FAMILY PLANNING

In a bid to win the support of religious groups in the country, Pakistan earlier this month convened a conference of key religious leaders and scholars from Islamic communities in 22 countries. The conference discussed the thorny issue of reducing high population growth within the framework of Islamic principles.

Around 90 delegates from almost every school of Islamic thought participated in the three-day "International Ulama Conference on Population and Development" held in the Pakistani capital, Islamabad from 4-6 May.

SOURCE: IRIN News, 20/MAY/05

## 6. China

A drop-in cafe heralds a new approach to sex education. In one cafe in southern China, pictures of naked women hang on the walls - a rare sight in this country. But that is what this cafe is all about. It was set up by the City Government Reproductive Health Centre, and is an attempt to bring sex education into the open.

The drop-in centre offers free condoms, and books and information about sex and is a pioneering concept, the first of its kind in China. Yet, it is almost completely empty. Tao Lin, the centres director, admitted the hardest thing was breaking the taboo surrounding sex.

"Our challenge is that people are still too shy to talk about sex. It is difficult to know the right approach. People use tabloids or websites to find out information about sex, but it is often incorrect or unreliable," he said.

One survey has suggested that 75% of young Chinese learn about sex through pornography or porn websites, and computers certainly offer young people the chance to find out about sex in private. Counsellor Tang Weiyao confirmed that even the most highly educated Chinese could be ignorant about sex.

"I had two university students who had been married for two years and hadn't managed to have children. They went to the hospital for a check-up and it emerged that they didn't even know the first thing about sex. They thought simply sleeping in the same bed would get her pregnant," she said.

For many other young people it is the opposite problem. They are exploring their sexuality without knowing how to protect themselves.

A recent survey has suggested that one fifth of people in China have never heard of Aids.

SOURCE: BBC World News/Louisa Lim, 23/MAY/05

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/asia-pacific/4572859.stm>

## 7. Swaziland

KAPHUNGA, Swaziland (Reuters) - When Chief Mfanyana Lukhele mentions AIDS at community meetings in this Swazi hamlet the men usually get up and leave.

"There are so many people who are dying and sick but no-one will say what they are dying of," he told Reuters outside his homestead in the tiny southern African kingdom's mist-topped mountains.

Impoverished Swaziland is battling the highest HIV infection rate in the world. Around 40 percent of adults live with the disease and more than half of 19-30 year olds are infected, spelling humanitarian and economic crisis for this deeply traditional state squashed between South Africa and Mozambique.

In a country whose absolute monarch chooses a new bare-breasted maiden to wed each year, persuading men to stick to one sexual partner is difficult, even with lives at stake.

Both King Mswati and his government urge people to defer sex until marriage and to use condoms. They talk openly about AIDS, but for obvious reasons they do not urge monogamy.

Chief Lukhele decided education by stealth was the only answer for the men in his 1,800-strong chieftdom, and invited them to a play with free food afterwards. He didn't tell them it was commissioned by UNICEF to spread AIDS awareness.

SOURCE: Reuters Health/Rebecca Harrison, 23/MAY/05

## **And news from somewhere between the minority and majority worlds:**

### **8. Hong Kong**

#### **Will Lower Taxes Equal More Babies?**

A high-level Hong Kong official stirred up controversy in late February by saying that couples there should have three children, and that the Hong Kong government should reward tax benefits to high-fertility couples in the region.

"Hong Kong has one of the lowest total fertility rates in the world, and we need to think about how to resolve the problems discouraging people from having children," said Chief Secretary for Administration Donald Tsang, who also heads a government task force on population policy.

While many in and out of the Hong Kong government have dismissed Tsang's tax-benefit idea as unrealistic, the media attention the proposal generated highlights some of the challenges countries face when their fertility falls below the two-child average needed to sustain population growth: the prospect of population decline over the long term as well as a short-term imbalance of workers to retirees.

In 2003, Hong Kong's total fertility rate was 0.9 children per woman. And if current trends continue, a quarter of the region's population will be age 65 or over by 2031. Immigration from mainland China (which has an official one-child-per-family policy) has not proven sufficient to counter the region's birth deficit, and Tsang has also called for schemes to attract educated professionals—particularly young males—to emigrate from the mainland.

Most observers cite the high cost of schooling, shortage of housing, and long work hours expected by Hong Kong employers for dampening the desire to have children. They say it will take much more than a government pronouncement and modest tax incentives to create a child-friendly environment in Hong Kong.

Source: Population Reference Bureau, May 2005

## **And finally from a minority world country**

### **9. France**

France's population is growing much faster than expected and could reach 75 million by mid-century, making it the largest in the European Union (EU), according to Transport and Development Minister, Gilles de Robien.

The most recent census, which was conducted in 2004, revealed that the country's rate of population growth has risen steadily over the last 15 years to 0.68 per cent per annum. This is the highest level since 1970.

"Suddenly all our projections are well below reality. France could in fact have a population of 75 million by 2050," de Robien told Le Figaro newspaper.

The strong growth goes against the trend across the rest of the 25-member EU, where populations are generally falling because of low birth rates. Experts have attributed the population growth to a birth rate of 1.9 babies per woman, and immigration.

If the predicted increase takes place, France will replace Germany in the coming decades as the EU's most populous country. According to UN projections, Germany's population is set to decline from 82 million today to 70.8 million in 2050. The population of Britain is set to fall from 59.4 million to 58.9 million and Italy from 57.5 million to 43 million, according to the UN. Falling populations and increasing life expectancy have created widespread concern across the EU over how to finance welfare and pensions in the coming decades, with warnings that immigration will be the only answer.

Agence France-Presse reported in Push Journal 12/May/05

## **B Summaries from articles and speeches (see full articles in our papers section of the website)**

### **1. A Pope for Better or Perhaps Worse**

Richard Cohen, Washington Post, April 21, 2005.

This article draws attention to the influence of the Pope in questions about population control and the worldwide fight against AIDS

"The catastrophe of AIDS and the population growth in areas of the world that can least afford it are matters that concern us all."

### **2. Summary of a speech by Stephen Lewis, UN Special Envoy for HIV/AIDS in Africa, delivered at the University of Pennsylvania's Summit on Global Issues in Women's Health, Philadelphia, April 26, 2005,**

This passionate speech highlights the scourge of HIV/AIDS, and the need for a rethinking of development policy and implementation. It also focuses on the role of women in development and argues for much greater attention to their needs.

He concludes by saying: "I have to say that I can't get the images of women I've met, unbearably ill, out of my mind. And I don't have it in me either to forgive or to forget. I have it in me only to join with all of you in the greatest liberation struggle there is: the struggle on behalf of the women of the world".

### **3. Summary of an article entitled Population and environment: Why they matter together: by Ben S. Malayang III, Ph.D, published in The Philippine STAR March 3<sup>rd</sup> 2005**

Malayang argues that population growth as an issue needs to be considered in the context of the environment and of poverty reduction.

Three points:

- Population exerts a generally net negative pressure on the environment.
- The symptoms of net negative human pressures on the environment are escalating.
- A weakened environment generally weakens the ability of human populations to meet their needs

## **C The per capita consumption side of the population coin**

### **1. The official Climate Change Information Kit** is published by the United Nations Environment Programme and the Climate Change Secretariat for the UN Climate Convention in Milan in December 2003, see [UNFCCC Climate Change Information Kit](#) .

This report states: *"Future greenhouse gas emissions will depend on global population, economic, technological and social trends. The link to population is clearest: the more people there are, the higher emissions are likely to be."*

### **2. Is Ottawa prepared for peak oil?**

Ottawa is one of the fastest-growing cities in Canada, but is Ottawa growing smart? Although a house in suburbia may seem to offer a quiet place to escape to at night and a greener environment for growing families, there are many hidden health, environmental and economic costs.

On March 31<sup>st</sup>, the City of Ottawa's Environmental Advisory Committee hosted an evening event with a presentation on the global peak in primary energy production. The video "The End of Suburbia" was shown to illustrate the hidden costs of urban sprawl. This was followed by Thomas Homer-Dixon's talk on TV Ontario's Big Ideas about peak oil and gas, energy and climate change and the need to build resilience into urban planning.

**A challenging question for Ottawa:** How can we plan for the inevitable changes that the global peak in primary energy reserves will bring?

The extracts which follow come from monthly digests by the UK Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB)

### **3. UK Government pulls the plug on domestic solar schemes**

The DTI is prematurely ending the solar photovoltaic (pv) demonstration programme. Applications for grants for home-type installations – including the RSPB's *Going Solar* scheme - owners will close this summer, with larger installations closing in November.

The Energy White Paper included a commitment to solar grants until 2012, so the news has left the fledgling UK solar pv industry baffled and bruised, despite PM Blair's promise of personal interest. A new grant structure Low Carbon Homes is in preparation but has yet to reach the consultation stage – whatever happens, there will be a period of no grant income that solar companies will somehow have to survive.

### **4. UK retreats over UK carbon allowances**

After the tough posturing, the UK was forced into a humiliating climbdown over its carbon allowance under the EU trading scheme. Mrs Becket had suggested the UK would legally challenge the EC imposition of a lower limit than ministers wanted but this now will hold firm, pegging UK allowance at 736 million tonnes. Emissions are expected to exceed the allocation by 56 m tonnes or 7.6%.

### **5. Spain hit hard by climate change**

Spain is particularly vulnerable to climate change and could face a future of heat waves and coastal erosion, according to a new Spanish Government report based on the work of 400 scientists. Lower rainfall and higher risk of extreme weather add to the likely problems.

Spain's average temperature rose by 1.5°C last century, almost double the European average increase. Summer temperatures have already reached 45°C and could rise by up to 7°C by 2070-2100. Sea level rise of 10 to 68 cm could swamp many beaches and the associated tourist industry, which provides 11% of Spain's economy appears threatened.

### **6. China legislates for renewable energy**

The Renewable Energy Law has been passed by China's Legislature in one of the largest state-sponsored commitments toward renewable energy. China hopes that renewable energy will prove 10% of China's energy by 2020, from a current contribution of 3%. From next year, power grid operators will be required to purchase energy from registered renewable energy producers. Financial incentives will also be offered, including a national fund to foster renewable energy development and discounted lending and tax preferences for renewable energy projects.

### **7. May attacks Bush**

Lord May, president of the Royal Society and former UK Government Chief Scientist, has attacked President Bush for avoiding necessary action on climate change. The 13% rise in US greenhouse pollution since 1990 dwarfs and undermines the cuts countries are making under the Kyoto treaty.

Lord May also called for an end to misleading reports and undue prominence given to cast doubt on climate change and the threats it poses. He singled out The Daily Mail of waging an undeclared propaganda against the science of climate change

### **8. Zero emissions cargo ship**

The sun, the wind and waves provide the energy for a fuel cell powered cargo ship that is planned to transport 10,000 cars around the world emissions-free. If successful, the technology can be transferred to ferries and cruise ships.

Wave energy is captured by 12 dolphin-like fins, while sun and wind energy is collected by three giant, rigid, fin-like sails covered with solar panels. The ship will cruise at 15 knots and the special pentamaran hull provides stability without the need of water ballast, whose collection and disposal concerns marine conservationists.

### **9. Aviation consultation**

The European Commission is undertaking a consultation on how to tackle rising climate change impacts of aviation. The results will feed into a strategy due this summer, focusing on possible use of economic instruments. The leading contender is to bring aircraft emissions into the EU industrial greenhouse gas emission trading scheme. The consultation canvasses opinion on this plus other options including aircraft fuel taxes, VAT on air transport, departure/arrival taxes, en-route charges or taxes on emissions. Richard Oxley is co-ordinating the RSPB's response.

#### **10. Bush wins Congress support for Arctic oil exploration**

Exploratory drilling for oil in 1.5 million ecologically rich acres along the coastal plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Reserve in Alaska has been passed by the US Senate by 51 votes to 49. The plain is used by millions of migratory birds, calving caribou, musk oxen and polar bears. After 20 years of failing to get through the Senate, this year the Republicans attached the vote to the budget, which cannot be filibustered and is subject to a straight majority vote, rather than requiring a 60:40 vote majority to move issues.

#### **11. G8 recognises need for support for Africa**

The G8's environment and development ministers have agreed that action is needed to protect Africa from the consequences of climate change. The Commission for Africa report, was released just before conference.

The G8 ministers' statement acknowledges that Africa is especially vulnerable to climate change, that it represents a threat to development, that measures to reduce vulnerability are needed and that African nations need assistance in understanding climate risks. It steered clear of the future of subsidies and trade tariffs. Behind the scenes the US appears to have been determined to block any mention of linkages between climate change and issues such as trade and agricultural subsidies.

#### **12. EU leaders agree key greenhouse targets**

EU heads of state endorsed greenhouse gas reduction targets for developed countries of between 15 and 30% by 2020, compared to 1990 levels. However longer term targets 60 to 80% cuts by 2050 also recommended by EU country environment heads was dropped, after pressure from Germany and Austria.

For the first time, heads of government also backed an existing EU goal that global temperatures should not be allowed to rise to more than 2°C above pre-industrial levels.

#### **13. Canada beats car makers into submission**

The Canadian government has got the automotive industry to voluntarily reduce its greenhouse-gas emissions by around 5.8 million tons by 2010.

The industry had been threatened with strict fuel-economy standards if it didn't agree to voluntary cuts. The automakers insisted cuts are in terms of total emission reductions rather than fuel economy (though the end result will be the same), as agreeing to fuel-economy standards would imperil their pending lawsuit against the strict standards imposed in California. With car makers are now required to make fuel-efficient vehicles for Europe, California, and now Canada - might this finally push automakers to make their entire fleets more efficient?

#### **14. CO2 rise continues**

Results for atmospheric concentration of CO2 in 2004 showed continued rise, according to the US government's Climate Monitoring Diagnostics Laboratory. But after two years of a more rapid increase of nearly 2.5 ppm of CO2, last year's rise has returned to the longer trend average of 1.5 ppm of CO2. This puts atmospheric concentration of CO2 at 378 ppm, which is 100 ppm (or 36%) higher than in pre-industrial times. The CO2 level did not vary by more than 7 ppm for 800 years between 1000 and 1800. The level of CO2 needed to stabilise climate change at the 2°C agreed by European heads of government (see above) is believed to be around 400 to 450 ppm CO2.

#### **15. Opinion strong yet unsure**

The Energy Savings Trust's recent poll shows that climate change tops the the list of national concerns – ahead of the threat of terrorism, school standards and hospital waiting lists. Yet the poll also shows that 49% have no idea that our homes and lifestyles contribute to the problem.

Other interesting stats include: 22% of people would like to lead greener lives; 76% of people turn their TV's off from standby everyday; 71% have installed energy saving light bulbs and 75% own A-rated appliances. Furthermore, 80% of people would like to be recommended more energy efficiency products and services. But: 25% of us never walk anywhere.... More info at: [http://www.est.org.uk/partnership/energy/index.cfm?mode=view&news\\_id=366](http://www.est.org.uk/partnership/energy/index.cfm?mode=view&news_id=366)

#### **16. US moving on carbon issue...?**

EU environment commissioner Stavros Dimas claimed signs of a rapprochement between Europe and America on climate change policy, following high-level talks between EU and US officials. 'We moved beyond discussing technological innovation,' he said. 'The results of these talks could well mark the beginning of a new phase of US-EU cooperation on climate change', including on international controls post-2012.

#### **... well, probably not, actually**

meanwhile, President Bush is pushing for legislation to boost oil production to cut costs at the pump and force through exploration in Alaska's Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

### **17. EU commitments towards energy efficiency**

MEPs on European parliament's energy committee are insisting that EU member states must take on binding national targets to gradually improve the energy efficiency of their economies. The MEPs' boldness is in stark contrast with that of national governments.

Voting on the draft end-use efficiency directive, the committee said governments should commit to cutting 11.5% off energy consumption by 2015. This should happen in three three-year stages from 2006: a 1% annual efficiency increase in the first three years, 1.3% in the second period years and 1.5% for the third.

### **18. Climate change – who to believe?**

More than 10,000 reputable, peer-reviewed climate scientists believe the evidence of climate change caused by human activity; seven do not. They send briefing papers from corporate-funded think tanks designed to give the impression that this is a controversial debate with two sides.

### **19. So who spreads the malicious gossip?**

In 1998, the American Petroleum Institute outlined a strategy to sow the seeds of doubt about global-warming science with Congress, the media and other key audiences. 'Victory will be achieved,' read an API memo 'when ... recognition of uncertainty becomes part of the 'conventional wisdom.'

ExxonMobil - one of API's leading members - has been working valiantly in pursuit of that strategy even as other oil, energy, and car companies bow out in the face of overwhelming scientific consensus or public pressure. From 2000 to 2003, Exxon funnelled more than \$8 million into a network of think tanks, quasi-journalistic media outlets, and civic and religious groups, to great effect. While peer-reviewed scientific journals contain virtually nothing that challenges the consensus on anthropogenic global warming, a flood of 'reports,' press releases and op-ed columns is creating the illusion of scientific controversy.

CBM/17/06/2005