

Population and Sustainability Network



73 Charlotte Street
London W1T 4PL
United Kingdom

Tel: +44 (0)20 8673 8963

Fax: +44 (0)20 7792 9163

cbm@populationandsustainability.org

www.populationandsustainability.org

Population Newsflashes 3 – March 2005

Network Co-ordinator:

Catherine Budgett-Meakin

Newsflashes is in two sections to indicate the Network's overarching concept of the Population Coin – Population growth on one side, and Population and per capita consumption on the other side.

Sponsor:

Margaret Pyke Memorial Trust
The Advancement of Medical Education &
Research in Sexual & Reproductive
Health

Reg Charity No: 1064672

Company No: 3438741

www.margaretpyke.org

Part 1 – Population and Poverty Issues

In the run up to the Millennium Development Goal review at the United Nations in September 2005, there is a great deal of activity.

Part 2 – Population, Consumption and Environment Issues

As the Kyoto protocol comes into operation, there is much information about the threats from climate change.

Part 1

1. News about the Millennium Project

The Millennium Project, set up to research and promote the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), led by Professor Jeffrey Sachs at Columbia University, has produced its report on progress towards the MDGs. See the website below for full details.

<http://www.unmillenniumproject.org/>

The Millennium Project report was released January 17th 2005 at the UN in New York with simultaneous launches at different cities around the world. Thoraya Obaid of UNFPA was one of the speakers at a civil society event hosted by the Millennium Foundation. The report is available at the following website:

<http://unmp.forumone.com/index.html>

Stan Bernstein, who works with Jeffrey Sachs has produced a useful summary of the Population and Sexual and Reproductive Health Recommendations in the Millennium Project Report. An extract follows.

There are strong links between rapid population growth, high fertility, ill-timed pregnancies and poverty – a demographic-related poverty trap exists. And, indeed, demographic trends affect development prospects

- “Impoverished people living in rural areas have the highest fertility rates and the largest families. Rapid population growth and shrinking farm sizes make rural poverty worse. Poor people (in rural and urban areas) have less access to information and services to space or limit their pregnancies in accord with their preferences ...[Overcoming the poverty trap] is helped by a voluntary reduction in fertility, which promotes greater investments in the health, nutrition, and education of each child. We thus strongly support programs that promote sexual and reproductive health and rights, including voluntary family planning.” (“**Investing in Development**”)
- “Poorer countries are more likely to have demographic regimes marked by high fertility and high mortality, resulting in low adult-to-child ratios. Such demographic profiles are also associated with greater conflict risks. Indeed since 1945 almost every instance of massive one-sided violence (genocide or politicide) has occurred in countries with more than a two-to-one child-adult ratio.” (“**Investing in Development**”)
- “Each region's prospects for progress toward the Goals are affected by its demographic conditions. Sub-Saharan Africa is confronted by continuing high population growth, youthful populations, low contraceptive prevalence and

high unmet need for family planning. Western Asia has the second fastest growing population. Less severe demographic constraints affect South Asia and Southeast Asia, but the unmet need for family planning and maternal health services remains considerable. Latin American and the Caribbean's prospects are affected by the dramatic inequality of access to family planning and safe motherhood services between wealthier and poorer social groups. Several European CIS countries face population declines because of low fertility and migration. Countries nearing the end of their demographic transitions will need to pay special attention to the coming needs of aging populations. Many regions are being affected, positively and negatively by migration." (**"Investing in Development"**)

Please email Catherine Budgett-Meakin – cbm@populationandsustainability.org for the two-page document.

2. Campaign to add a 9th MDG

A powerful campaign led by the International Planned Parenthood Federation to add a ninth MDG on universal access to reproductive health has been modified to argue for the inclusion of various modifications to MDG 5 (Improve Maternal Health), and to MDG 6 (Combat HIV/AIDS, Malaria and other Diseases), rather than continuing to argue for a ninth MDG as such.

For full details please email Catherine Budgett-Meakin at CBM@populationandsustainability.org

3. ICPD + 10: Additional resources for Sexual and Reproductive Health and Progress on commitments from ICPD 1994

UK Overseas Development Department (DFID) Donates to UNFPA

DFID is to give £20 million a year to fund UNFPA's activities from 2004 – 2007. This represents a significant increase on previous levels, and mark the UK as a strong ally of UNFPA and its strategy. The sums involved remain relatively small in relation to the scale of the problem (some 350 million couples are without adequate access to family planning services which they would otherwise use according to estimates in 2002 by joint parliamentary groups from Africa, Europe and Asia).

As significant as the sums donated, however, is the wording of the DFID's position paper (<http://www.dfid.gov.uk/>) which supports linkage of population linking programmes to poverty mitigation. The UK's commitment to sexual and reproductive health has remained strong at the political level.....in July 2004, DFID (Department for International Development) released a strong new position paper on sexual and reproductive health and rights.

In 2002, the world's wealthiest countries made more progress toward fulfilling the financial promises made in Cairo than in either of the two previous years... unfortunately, this progress is not uniform across the donor community. A handful of donor countries have yet to contribute even a tiny fraction of their fair share of donor resources.

From Population Action International, January 2005

<http://www.populationaction.org/>

4. Meeting at the UK House of Commons, hosted by the Overseas Development Institute, February 2nd 2005.

Demography, HIV/AIDS and Reproductive Health: implications for the achievement of the MDGs was the title of this meeting. The two main speakers were Mrs Thoraya Obaid, Director of UNFPA, and Professor John Cleland from the Centre for Population Studies at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine.

Two short extracts follow – one from each speaker:

Mrs Obaid: While overall population growth was slowing, it was by no means over and between now and 2050, eight countries, namely India, Pakistan, Nigeria, the United States, China, Bangladesh, Ethiopia and the Democratic Republic of Congo were expected to account for half of the world's population increase. Moreover, by far the highest growth rates were expected in the world's poorest nations where population would nearly triple in the next 45 years. This was a particular concern as these countries had the least access to information and services, the lower use of family planning and the highest fertility and mortality rates.

Professor Cleland: On population growth – in many but not all African countries, continued high fertility and population growth rates were a bigger threat to economic growth and poverty reduction than HIV/AIDS and therefore there was a need for family planning to remain high on the agenda. There need not be any contradiction between vigorous promotion

of family planning to reduce fertility, a commitment to a holistic approach to reproductive health and continued action to address HIV/AIDS, and that all should be advocated in concert and with equal force.

For full details see: http://www.odi.org.uk/speeches/MDGs_2005/meeting_2feb/print_friendly.html

5. Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa

The issue of Pambazuka of January 20, 2005 focused on the Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa. For more information contact the editor@pambazuka.org

Selected short extracts are shown below.

Saudatu Mahdi (from the organisation Women's Rights Advancement and Protection Alternative (WRAPA) in Nigeria) writes.....

It is women who make up 50 percent or more of the population of most African countries and it is women who face growing responsibility - nearly 50 percent in some countries - for heading their households in the face of discriminatory laws, societal prejudice and sometimes violent oppression.

...

The right of women to control their fertility in respect of defining the number and spacing between their children is obscured by the dictates of patriarchy where the decision lies with the man. In many instances the issue of male-child preference pushes many women into multiple deliveries, mostly in close succession or in competition with other wives, in search of the preferred child. Even where women are able to negotiate some respite, they may lose out in the proposal for family planning or the method of contraception they choose to use.

Making reproductive health rights a reality

Anne Gathumbi (a women's rights activist and the outgoing coordinator of the Coalition on Violence Against Women (COVAW) in Kenya writes.....

Violence against women has devastating health consequences on the victims and undermines women's control over their own reproductive health. In dealing with survivors of violence against women at the Coalition on violence's Against Women (COVAW) counselling and legal aid clinic, what has emerged is that most women undergoing violence perpetrated by intimate partners also present with reproductive health risks and problems.

Governments are responsible for upholding women's reproductive health and rights yet they consistently fail to live up to that duty. This has meant the use of international normative frameworks as a strategy to build pressure on governments to abide by universally acceptable standards of promoting women's rights to reproductive health.

....

Women's rights activists must therefore not relent in their struggle to have governments move beyond lip service to securing serious commitments on issues of women's reproductive health and rights.

6. Ghana says it needs a population control policy

In a feature on a Ghana website (www.ghanaweb.com), on January 18th 2005, a leader article argues that....

"The modern day Ghanaian mother and father have not recognised the need to reduce the number of births.....Times have changed and we must learn to change with the times...I urge the Government to introduce the National Health Insurance Plan in tandem with a Population Control Policy.....Our mothers and sisters are giving birth to too many children that they cannot adequately cater for. When you are brave enough to tell them, they retort with 'God will take care of them'. I happened to think that God is tired."

6. Key Books which highlight Population Issues

John Gray, Professor of European Thought at the London School of Economics, in two recent books (*Straw Dogs*, 2002, and *Al Qaeda and What it Means to be Human*, 2003) highlights the role of population in relation to the environment, and to peace and security. In *Straw Dogs* (page 8) he argues that "a human population of approaching 8 billion can be maintained only by desolating the Earth". In *Al Qaeda* (page 63) he points out "behind intensifying rivalries for natural resources are increasing human numbers. Continued population growth worldwide increases the human impact on the planet as a whole. The result is increasing geopolitical conflict".

Jared Diamond's newly published book *Collapse: How Societies Choose to Fail or Survive*, 2005, analyses a large number of societies. He cites population growth in Rwanda as one of the contributing factors to the 1994 genocide – a factor recognised by many Rwandans themselves.

Part 2

7. The Earth's limits – population growth and ecological footprint

Former UK Minister Raises Population Concerns

In an article in the UK Guardian on February 9th 2005 Michael Meacher, former UK environment minister, argues that accelerating population pressures are having a serious effect on the planet's fragile environment. He also says that globalisation has also spread the demand for higher living standards everywhere. He promotes the concept of ecological footprint as a valuable measure of over consumption. He concludes by saying that "the necessary new global agenda is to recognise the limitations and to act, with enforceable international law, to keep within those limits....[if there is a failure of leadership] the Earth will exact its own price in securing those limits – only it will be a lot more painful".

8. China's ecological footprint

China's per capita eco-footprint (the area of productive ecosystems required to produce the resources that an individual consumes and assimilate some of the wastes) is about 1.5 ha for a total national eco-footprint of about 2.0 billion ha. The US per capita eco-footprint is about 9.5 ha, for a national total of about 2.7 billion ha, so the US still imposes the larger total load on Earth. However, if China were to achieve the US level of resource consumption per capita, she would require more than the entire biocapacity of the earth by 10% or more.

Professor William Rees, University of British Columbia, Canada

The following nine extracts (January 2005) are from information produced on a monthly basis by the UK Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB).

9. **Carmakers take California to court**

A coalition of the US's largest carmakers is legally challenging California's new standards for vehicle emissions of greenhouse gases responsible for global warming. The new rules give car companies until 2016 to achieve a 30 percent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions from new cars, pickups, minivans and SUVs sold in the state.

The carmakers claim that California cannot curb vehicle emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases because federal law grants sole authority to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration to set a uniform, national fuel economy standard. However, the federal Clean Air Act allows California to control air pollution and since the state is regulating air pollution, and not setting fuel economy standards, it acting well within its rights.

10. **EU ministers get tough on curbing greenhouse pollution**

EU environment ministers reaffirmed their commitment to substantial future cuts in greenhouse gas emissions, brushing aside deep international divisions during UN climate talks in December. Meanwhile, new projections helpfully confirmed that the EU-15 can meet its Kyoto protocol 2008-12 emission targets.

These ministers talked in tougher terms than before about the likely scale of carbon cuts. They said that recent research suggests that CO₂ concentrations will have to be stabilised well below the long-held threshold 550 ppm CO₂-equivalent, if dangerous climate change is to be avoided. This will require global greenhouse gas emissions to peak within two decades, followed by cuts of at least 15% and perhaps by as much as 50% by 2050, compared with 1990 levels. Achieving this will require much deeper cuts by EU and other industrialised countries.

11. **The UK Department for Farming and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) gives agriculture a steer on climate change**

The greatest threats to agriculture and the farming sectors most at risk from climate change have been identified by DEFRA.

These include: inundation and salinisation of coastal lowlands; vegetable and arable crops in the fens, Lincolnshire coast grazing marshes including the Somerset Levels and Thames Estuary; the impacts of increased storminess, including flooding; increased heat stress and other climate-related impacts on livestock, with pigs particularly vulnerable; increased drought stress on some crops; decreased water availability for livestock and crops with high summer water demand eg potatoes, sugar beet and vegetables; increased autumn rainfall hampering cultivation, autumn sowing, late harvested crops and autumn grazing; and poorer acclimatisation to frost and opportunities for vernalisation, the cold-triggered change to flowering stages.

12. Drought areas double

Land affected by serious drought has more than doubled in area from the 1970s to the early 2000s, according to a new analysis by scientists at the National Center for Atmospheric Research. Widespread drying occurred over much of Europe and Asia, Canada, western and southern Africa, and eastern Australia.

The fraction of global land experiencing very dry conditions rose from about 10-15% in the early 1970s to about 30% by 2002. Almost half of that change is due to rising temperatures rather than decreases in rainfall or snowfall.

13. New model of climate change needs mega terraflops

British researchers have built the biggest model yet of climate change. It is so ambitious it may be able to warn of 'surprises' - sudden, potentially disastrous leaps in climate change which have not yet been predicted but which could overwhelm any defensive preparations for global warming.

The new model is too big to run on UK computers and will instead use the Yokohama Earth Simulator supercomputer, the largest when it was built two years ago. With a speed of 36 terraflops, it can do 36,000,000,000,000 calculations per second. This marks a five-year Anglo-Japanese collaboration on climate science.

14. MEP call for car CO2 legislation

The European parliament has added its voice to a growing demands for legislation to cut carbon dioxide pollution from new cars. MEPs have called for urgent proposals for binding CO2 limits for new vehicles from the European Commission.

MEPs suggested that legislation could be based on the Californian CO2 emission trading system for car makers. This allows large car manufacturers to exceed target levels while 'greener' companies benefit financially from selling their excess quotas. European, Japanese and Korean carmakers are currently carrying out a voluntary agreement to reduce fleet average emissions to 140 g per km by 2008/9.

15. Climate scientist says current CO2 level is dangerous

Dr Rajendra Pachauri, chairman of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has told an international conference that he believes the world already has dangerous levels of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. He has called for immediate and very deep cuts if humanity is to survive.

Due to the inertia built into Earth's natural systems, the world is only now experiencing the result of pollution emitted in the 1960s. Much greater effects will occur as the increased pollution of later decades works its way through. His comments have rocked the Bush administration not least because it put him in post after Exxon complained that his predecessor was too aggressive on CO2 pollution and climate change.

16. 2°C set as danger threshold – and just 10 years to act

The global warming danger threshold for the world is clearly marked for the first time in an international report *Meeting the climate challenge*, produced by the Institute for Public Policy Research, the US Centre for American Progress and the Australia Institute.

The report also significantly reduces the level of atmospheric CO2 likely to stabilize a 2°C rise, to 400 ppm (from the IPCC's 550 ppm and a recent Tyndall Centre estimate of 450 ppm). With current levels at 379 ppm and rising at a steady 2 ppm per year, we may surpass the threshold in a decade.

The report calls for global actions, including G8 countries producing at least 25% of electricity from renewables by 2025 and effective strategies for large-scale deployment of low- and no- carbon energy technologies.

16 Oil chief moves to green lobby

The outgoing chairman of Shell intends to take up a post with a climate change charity when he quits the oil giant later this year. Lord Oxburgh has become so concerned at the prospects and impacts of climate change that he will be seeking to devote more time to cutting greenhouse gas pollution and fossil fuel use. He's also recently been reported for remarks that only tough regulation, set by government, will force British businesses to reduce fossil fuel use. Shell's worldwide business and products release around 700 million tonnes of CO2 into the atmosphere each year.

CBM/19 April 2005