



# Population and Sustainability Network

19 March 2007

The Editor  
The Observer  
3-7 Herbal Hill  
London EC1R 5SE

Dear Sir,

No one is willing to address the accelerating growth in the world's population: Juliette Jowit, Sunday March 18, 2007

We welcome Juliette Jowit's article: she is right to draw attention to this taboo issue in relation to climate change.

As she rightly points out, this is a solvable issue. Our Network has made a major contribution to the recent All Party Parliamentary Group on Population, Development and Reproductive Health: *Return of the Population Factor*, published at the end of January 2007:

**Population growth exacerbates the problem.** *Population growth is exacerbating problems in environments already left vulnerable by climate change. Population pressures are adding to the difficulty in the achievement of environmental sustainability, particularly regarding agricultural lands, forests, water and biodiversity. And it is often the poorest communities who are worst affected.*

The report concludes:

*It is clear that without addressing the issue of population growth and high fertility in the poorest regions of the world, these regions have little chance of achieving the Millennium Development Goals. Rapid population growth has a detrimental effect on the MDGs. It is also often a factor causing civil conflict and migration. Except for a few oil rich states, no country has pulled itself out of poverty while maintaining high fertility.*

....

*Universal access to family planning, as called for in 1994 at the International Conference on Population and Development, is crucial to achieving the MDGs. Helping couples to achieve their fertility goals is a fundamental and internationally recognised human right and will at the same time help to ensure a safer, more peaceful and healthier environment for tomorrow's children.*

We recommend that the major development and environment NGOs and relevant government departments tackle this issue with courage and without the anxieties which have driven 'population' into the shadows.

Yours sincerely

Catherine Budgett-Meakin  
Network Co-ordinator

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

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Population and Development, Nigeria

African Women's Policy Network

All-party Parliamentary Group  
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& Reproductive Health (UK)

Association for Protection of  
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Best Foot Forward

Centre for Alternative Technology

Commonwealth Women's Network

Department for  
International Development (UK)

DSW – German Foundation  
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