

There is No Further Need for Population Control

by Jacqueline R. Kasun, Ph.D., 1995

- Seventy-nine countries with 40 percent of the world's population now have fertility rates below population-replacement levels.¹
- The annual rate of change in world population fell from 2.04 percent in 1965-70 to 1.48 percent in 1990-95. During the same period, the rate in Asia fell from 2.44 to 1.53. In Latin America and the Caribbean the rate fell from 2.75 in 1960-65 to 1.70 in 1990-95. In Europe the rate fell to 0.16--that is, to essentially zero-- in 1990-95.²
- World-wide, the number of children the typical woman had during her lifetime (total fertility) fell from 5 in 1950-55 to 2.96 in 1990-95. In the more developed regions it fell from 2.77 to 1.68 over the same period. In the less developed regions it fell from more than 6 to 3.3. (2.1 is the number necessary to just "replace" the current generation.) Total fertility in Mexico was 3.1 in 1990-95. In Spain it stood at 1.3 and in Italy it was 1.2.³
- Official forecasts of future world population size have been steadily falling. In 1992-93 the World Bank predicted world population would exceed 10 billion by the year 2050. In 1996 the U.N. predicted 9 billion for 2050.⁴

Food supplies are abundant and increasing

- World food supplies exceed requirements in all world areas, amounting to a surplus approaching 50 percent in 1990 in the developed countries and 17 percent in the developing regions.⁵ [Distribution, not amount or overpopulation, is the problem.]
- "Globally food supplies have more than doubled in the last 40 years . . . between 1962 and 1991 average daily per caput food supplies increased more than 15 percent . . . at a global level, there is probably no obstacle to food production rising to meet demand."⁶
- In preparation for the 1996 World Food Conference, the FAO reported that in 1990-92 fewer than a third as many people had less than 2100 calories per person per day versus in 1969-71.⁷
- The conversion of land to urban and built-up uses to accommodate a larger population will absorb less than 2 percent of the world's land and "is not likely to seriously diminish the supply of land for agricultural production."⁸

People already have all the birth control they want

- Surplus condoms and birth control pills fill warehouses in the less developed world and women flee the birth control workers and beg to have their implants and IUD's removed.⁹
- U.S. law requires countries receiving American foreign aid to take steps to reduce population growth.¹⁰
- Far from meeting an "unmet need" for birth control, foreign-supported family planners in India, Bangladesh, and other countries must pay or force their clients to accept it.¹¹
- Foreign-supported population control is so unpopular in Bangladesh that riots prevented the prime minister from attending the International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo in 1994.¹²
- Dr. Margaret Ogola, a Kenyan pediatrician, disputed the claim of "unmet need" for family planning at the International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo in 1994. She said that foreign aid givers have lavished pills, condoms, and IUD's¹³ on hospitals and clinics in Kenya but that simple medicines for common diseases are unavailable.

- A United Nations survey of abortion and birth control policies throughout the world found that high proportions of women were familiar with and were using "traditional" methods of limiting births.¹⁴
- In 1981 the typical Bangladeshi woman was having seven children during her lifetime; since then the number has fallen to 3.4.¹⁵
- The secretary of health in Bangladesh acknowledged that "coercion, blackmail, [and] abuse of payment provisions" were problems in the population control program.¹⁶
- Alarmed by extremely low fertility, South Korea has slashed its government expenditures on birth control.¹⁷
- Singapore,¹⁸ faced with below-replacement fertility, offers tax rebates to couples with more than two children.

Population growth does not discourage economic development nor harm the environment

- Per capita output as well as population has grown more rapidly in the developing regions than in the world in general since 1965.¹⁹
- Pollution levels have been highest in the centrally-planned economies of Eastern Europe and China where population growth is extremely low or negative.²⁰
- Some of the most beautiful parts of the world, with the highest environmental quality, are in densely populated countries such as western Germany and the Netherlands (1163 persons per square mile, compared with 331 in China).
- All the people in the world could be put into the state of Texas with 1300 square feet of land space allotted to each person. The population density²¹ of this giant city would be about 21,000--somewhat more than San Francisco and less than the Bronx.
- "Today, natural resources are about half as expensive relative to wages as they were in 1980 . . . and roughly eight times less costly than they were in 1900."²²
- Vice president Al Gore says population growth is causing global warming. But scientists say " . . . there does not exist today a general scientific consensus about . . . greenhouse warming . . . "²³
- The world's forested area amounts to 4 billion hectares [1.5 million square miles], covering 30 percent of the land surface of the earth, which is the same as the figures for the 1950's.²⁴

Problems commonly blamed on "overpopulation" are the result of bad economic policy

- Western journalists blamed the Ethiopian famine on "overpopulation," but the government caused it by confiscating the food stocks of traders and farmers and exporting them to buy arms.²⁵
- Africa, beset with problems often blamed on "overpopulation," has only one-fifth the population density of Europe and has an unexploited food-raising potential that could feed twice the present population of the world.²⁶
- The International Monetary Fund says African economic problems result from excessive government spending, high taxes on farmers, inflation, restrictions on trade, too much government ownership, and over-regulation of private economic activity. There was no mention of overpopulation.²⁷
- The government of the Philippines relies on foreign aid to control population growth but protects monopolies which buy farmers' output at artificially low prices and sell them inputs at artificially high prices. This causes widespread poverty.²⁸

- Advocates of population control blame "overpopulation" for poverty in Bangladesh. But the government dominates the buying and processing of jute, the major cash crop, so that farmers receive less for their efforts than they would in a free market. Impoverished farmers flee to the city but the government owns 40 percent of industry and regulates the rest with price controls, high taxes, and unpublished rules administered by a huge, corrupt, foreign-aid dependent bureaucracy. Jobs are hard to find and poverty is rampant.²⁹
- It is often claimed that poverty in China is the result of "overpopulation." But Taiwan, with a population density five times as great as China's, produces many times as much per capita. The Republic of Korea, with a population density 3.6 times as great as China's, has a per capita output almost sixteen times as great.³⁰
- The Malaysian government abandoned population control in 1984, ushering in remarkable economic growth under free market reforms.³¹
- Ecuador, Uruguay, Bulgaria, and other countries complained at the International Conference in Cairo that they had reduced their population growth but still had deteriorating economies.³²

Programs to reduce teenage births and other "unwanted" fertility in the U.S. have not been successful

- Large increases in teenage births since 1985 in the U.S. have followed major increases in the control programs.³³
- The likelihood of a first premarital birth on the part of young white women is higher in states which provided more liberal access to contraceptives, abortion and AFDC benefits.³⁴
- States which spend larger amounts per capita on birth control subsequently have higher rates of teenage pregnancy, higher ratios of unwed births, and higher rates of dependency on public assistance.³⁵

Notes:

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6. "Food Requirements and Population Growth," World Food Summit Technical Background Documents 1-05, Vol. 1, FAO, 1996, pp. 6,17.
7. WFS 96/Tech I Executive Summary, FAO, 1996, pp. 8-9.
8. Paul Waggoner, How Much Land Can Ten Billion People Spare for Nature? Ames, Iowa: Council for Agricultural Science and Technology, February 1994.
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19. World Bank, World Development Report, 1997.

20. World Bank and IMF, The Economy of the USSR, 1990.
21. 5.7 billion world population divided by 262,000 square miles of land in Texas = 21,000 persons per square mile or 1300 square feet per person.)
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28. Secretary of Health of the Philippines, Press Conference, U.N. Conference on Population and Development, Cairo, September 7, 1994.
29. American Embassy, Dhaka, Bangladesh: Country Commercial Guide, 1996; "Poverty Pushes Poor from Villages to Cities," The Morning Sun, Dhaka, September 18, 1996.
30. Statistical Abstract of the United States, 1996; World Bank, World Development Report, 1997.
31. Malaysia, National Report on Population and Development, ICPD, 1994.
32. ICPD Plenary, September 9, 1994.
33. NIHS, Monthly Vital Statistics.
34. S. Lundberg and R.D. Plotnick in Family Planning Perspectives, November/December, 1990.
35. J. Kasun in Review of Austrian Economics, vol. 10, no. 2, 1997.

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