



## Global Partners in Action: NGO Forum on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Development

ICPD@15 International Conference on  
Population and Development

Berlin, Germany | 2-4 September, 2009

[www.globalngoforum.org](http://www.globalngoforum.org)

### The Population Connection: Other Emerging Issues

Population growth is a dynamic and complex process, whether a country's goal is to slow it down or speed it up. In the Cairo Consensus of the 1994 conference on International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), 179 countries agreed that achievement of sustainable economic development and stable population size requires meeting the needs of individuals, especially women.

Most population growth in the past century resulted from improvements in sanitation, medicine and food production in the least-developed areas. Where access to voluntary family planning and reproductive health care has given women options for their lives beyond childbearing, it has lowered birthrates, eased poverty and fostered economic growth.

Birthrates are falling worldwide as this understanding spreads. But death rates are falling even faster, and history's largest generation of young people – 1.5 billion strong – is just entering its prime reproductive years. While Europe, Japan and some former Soviet bloc countries with aging populations are moving to encourage childbearing, very rapid population growth continues in the least-developed countries.

Meanwhile, concern is growing over food and resource scarcity, immigration and displacement, climate change, urbanization, environmental degradation and much more. Advances in technology are helping to address these problems, but access to reproductive health care remains central to any successful approach.

#### The Situation

Lack of access to sexual and reproductive health and rights is a major spur to population growth.

- > More than 200 million women in the developing world would like to prevent or delay childbearing but are not using modern contraception. As a result, 76 million unintended pregnancies occur each year.<sup>1</sup>
- > Meeting this unmet need could reduce fertility by 35 percent in Latin America and the Caribbean, 20 percent in the Arab states and eastern and southern Africa, and 15 percent in Asia and West Africa.<sup>2</sup>
- > If fertility remains constant, world population will grow from 6.8 billion now to 11 billion in 2050, surpassing the UN projection of 9.1 billion that assumes *increased* contraceptive use worldwide.<sup>3</sup>
- > Nearly all the growth will be in urban areas of developing countries, which are already struggling to meet their people's needs for food, water, sanitation, education, health care and other services.
- > For the first time in history, more than half the human population is living in urban areas. By 2030, urban residents will number almost 5 billion, and 81 percent of them will be in the developing world.<sup>4</sup>
- > Climate change, now firmly attributed to human activity, appears to be accelerating: global carbon dioxide (greenhouse gas) emissions are rising faster than earlier worst-case scenarios of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.<sup>5</sup>
- > By 2050, climate change is expected to displace 200 million people through floods, spreading deserts, conflict over resources and other effects.<sup>6</sup>
- > The estimated global migrant population was about 191 million in 2005, or 3 percent of Earth's people—nearly half of them women.<sup>7</sup> Most seek jobs, safety and better living conditions.
- > More than 42 million people are refugees forcibly uprooted by conflict and persecution: 16 million outside their countries and 26 million displaced internally. Some 80 percent are in developing nations.<sup>8</sup>
- > In the 2004 ICPD@10 Report, 57 percent of countries reported taking multiple measures to integrate population factors into their strategies to combat poverty. This is a notable change from 1994, when only 13 percent of developing countries had reported action.<sup>9</sup>

#### The ICPD Commitment

The Cairo Consensus called on governments to respond to the need of all citizens, including urban squatters, for personal safety, basic infrastructure and services to eliminate health and social problems."<sup>10</sup> The UN

Millennium Declaration expressed the modest ambition of achieving by 2020 “a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers.”<sup>11</sup>

Efforts to slow population growth, reduce poverty, achieve economic progress, improve environmental protection and reduce unsustainable consumption and production patterns are mutually reinforcing. Slower population growth helps promote sustainable economic development, which is essential to eradicate poverty, which eases pressure on the environment and natural resources.<sup>12</sup>

### Areas for Action

- > Governments must give priority to investment in human resource development in their population and development strategies and budgets. Programmes should seek to increase people's access to information, education, skill development, employment opportunities and high-quality general and reproductive health services, including family planning.<sup>13</sup>
- > Governments should plan now to meet the estimated 40 percent increase in demand for family planning worldwide over the next 15 years.<sup>14</sup>
- > To slow urban growth rates, policymakers must choose options that respect human rights. Poor families, like all families, deserve adequate living space with access to water, sewage, power and transport.<sup>15</sup>
- > Countries should address the causes of migration and internal displacement, including environmental degradation, poverty, corruption, discrimination, armed conflict and forced resettlement, and should establish mechanisms to protect and assist displaced persons.<sup>16</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Alan Guttmacher Institute, *Adding it Up: The Benefits of Investing in Sexual and Reproductive Health Care*, Guttmacher Institute, New York, 2004, p. 18 <http://www.guttmacher.org/pubs/addingitup.pdf> (accessed Aug. 19, 2009)

<sup>2</sup> UNFPA, “No Woman Should Die Giving Life,” UNFPA Facts & Figures 2, New York, p. 2, [http://www.unfpa.org/safemotherhood/mediakit/documents/fs/factsheet2\\_eng.pdf](http://www.unfpa.org/safemotherhood/mediakit/documents/fs/factsheet2_eng.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> UNFPA, “New Population Projections Underline the Need for Voluntary Family Planning Programmes,” press release, New York, March 11, 2009, [www.unfpa.org/public/News/pid/2218](http://www.unfpa.org/public/News/pid/2218) (accessed Aug. 12, 2009)

<sup>4</sup> Schlein, Lisa, Joe De Capua and Sven Kruger, “For humanity's sake, developing world must prepare for soaring urbanisation,” UNFPA, VoA and City Mayors, June 28, 2007, <http://www.citymayors.com/society/urban-population.html> (accessed Aug. 3, 2009)

<sup>5</sup> UNDP, *Climate Change 2007: Synthesis Report*, Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, United Nations Development Programme, Geneva, 2007, pp. 1-22 [www.ipcc.ch/pdf/assessment-report/ar4/syr/ar4\\_syr\\_spm.pdf](http://www.ipcc.ch/pdf/assessment-report/ar4/syr/ar4_syr_spm.pdf) (accessed Aug. 12, 2009)

<sup>6</sup> IOM, “World Migration Report 2008,” International Organization for Migration, Geneva, December 2008, p. 398 [http://www.egypt.iom.int/Doc/WMR081%20\(English\).pdf](http://www.egypt.iom.int/Doc/WMR081%20(English).pdf) (accessed Aug. 4, 2009)

<sup>7</sup> UN Population Division, *International Migration Report 2006: A Global Assessment*, New York, 2009, p. xiv, [www.un.org/esa/population/publications/2006\\_MigrationRep/exec\\_sum.pdf](http://www.un.org/esa/population/publications/2006_MigrationRep/exec_sum.pdf) (accessed Aug. 12, 2009)

<sup>8</sup> Guterres, Antonio, “World Refugee Day: 42 million uprooted people waiting to go home,” UNHCR, Geneva, June 19, 2009, <http://www.unhcr.org/4a3b98706.html> (accessed Aug. 12, 2009)

<sup>9</sup> UNFPA, “International Conference on Population and Development: Investing in People: National Progress in Implementing the ICPD Program of Action 1994-2004,” UNFPA, 2004, p. ix, [www.unfpa.org/webdav/site/global/shared/documents/publications/2004/icpd\\_globalsurvey04.pdf](http://www.unfpa.org/webdav/site/global/shared/documents/publications/2004/icpd_globalsurvey04.pdf) (accessed Aug. 4, 2009)

<sup>10</sup> United Nations, “Population and Development, vol. 1: Programme of Action adopted at the International Conference on Population and Development: Cairo: 5-13 September 1994,” Department of Economic and Social Information and Policy Analysis, United Nations, para. 9.14, 1995, New York (accessed July 30, 2009)

<sup>11</sup> UN Millennium Project, “Investing in Development: A Practical Plan to Achieve the Millennium Development Goals,” Report to the UN Secretary-General, p. xix, 2005, London and Sterling, Virginia: Earthscan (accessed July 30, 2009)

<sup>12</sup> UNFPA, “Summary of the ICPD Programme of Action,” [www.unfpa.org/icpd/summary.cfm](http://www.unfpa.org/icpd/summary.cfm) (accessed Aug. 3, 2009)

<sup>13</sup> UNFPA, “Summary...” Chapter 3 (accessed Aug. 3, 2009)

<sup>14</sup> UNFPA, “No Woman...” (accessed Aug. 19, 2009)

<sup>15</sup> Martine, George, “Unleashing the Potential of Urban Growth,” UNFPA State of the World Population Report 2007, New York, NY, introduction, <http://web.unfpa.org/swp/2007/english/introduction.html> (accessed July 24, 2009)

<sup>16</sup> UNFPA, “Summary...” Chapter 9 (accessed Aug. 3, 2009)