

Summary Report – Satellite Session

Population Dynamics, Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights and Climate Change: **Why Do Linkages Matter?**

SUMMARY

On the evening prior to the global NGO Forum 'Global Partners in Action' in Berlin, the German Theme Group on sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) invited to a satellite session to discuss the interrelations between demographic change, SRHR and climate change. The event drew attention to the potential role of population dynamics in the debate on global warming and advocated a stronger consideration of SRHR, gender and health when responding to climate change.

The panel of experts and the audience agreed that the discussion of the population-climate change nexus must be framed by three key principles: global equity, human rights and self-determination. Due to the complex and sensitive nature of population dynamics and SRHR in relation to climate change, it was considered indispensable that SRHR and women's rights expert communities be involved in discussions on strategies to respond to climate change. In dialogue and partnership with other sectors a mutual benefit could be derived by incorporating experiences and goals of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), into climate change discussions, particularly with regard to adaptation.

People in developing countries especially, are and will be affected by the impacts of global warming, due to a combination of higher exposure to hazards, differential vulnerability and lower capacity to adapt. Experiences in Ethiopia and the Indian Ocean Islands show that there is an urgent need to support local action to increase adaptive capacity. This requires holistic approaches to improving people's lives and livelihoods while preserving their natural environment.

The satellite session was organised by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ) and the German Foundation for World Population (DSW) on behalf of the German Theme Group on SRHR under the auspices of the German Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). The Theme Group was fortunate to have four excellent panellists namely, Kulvashi Hurrinag, Ulrike Neubert, Dr Karen Hardee and Robert Engelman. Karen Newman, who has extensive experience in the field, chaired the discussion. Over 90 participants from NGOs, UN agencies, political foundations, scientific institutions, and the public and private sectors accepted the invitation and participated in a lively discussion.

Satellite Session:

"Population Dynamics, SRHR and Climate Change: Why Do Linkages Matter?"

1 September 2009, 18.00–19.30 – prior to the Global NGO Forum on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Development, 2–4 September 2009

Chair: Karen Newman, Coordinator, Population and Sustainability Network (PSN)

Opening Remarks: Dr Hedwig Petry, Director Health, Education and Social Protection Division, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ)

Presentations:

Robert Engelman, Vice President for Programmes, Worldwatch Institute: Key note 'Why do linkages matter'

Dr Karen Hardee, Vice President of Research, Population Action International (PAI): 'Population and SRH in Adaptation Strategies'

Ulrike Neubert, Director of Development Programmes, German Foundation for World Population (DSW): 'Multisectoral approaches – from policy to action'

Kulvashi Hurrinag, Member, Development Indian Ocean Network (DION): 'Linkages from the perspective of a small island state'

Open Discussion

Closing Remarks: Joachim Schmitt, Desk Officer, Division 311 – Health, Population Policy, German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)

RATIONALE AND OBJECTIVE

According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), anthropogenic climate change – induced by greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and land use change – is one of the greatest challenges facing humanity in the 21st century. Until recently, linkages between population dynamics, SRHR and climate change had been largely ignored in the international debate on climate change strategies. However, in light of the current global negotiations on climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies, there has been growing interest in exploring the linkages with population dynamics and SRHR. While there is increasing research into different aspects of these interrelations, a broader discussion and positioning has yet to emerge within and beyond the population and SRHR community.

The global NGO Forum on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Development, held 15 years after the ICPD in Cairo, was an opportune time to raise the issue for two reasons. First, NGO representatives from over 130 countries, UN agencies and bilateral organisations, with broad expertise and experience, met in Berlin to discuss the way forward for the ICPD Programme of Action (PoA), including the emerging global challenges such as climate change. Second, in less than three months the United Nations conference on Climate Change (COP15) will be held in Copenhagen to discuss a global regime following the Kyoto Protocol.

The objective of the satellite session was to provide a general overview and a forum for the discussion of the complex relationship between population dynamics and climate change and to inform the discussions and conclusions of the subsequent NGO Forum.



REMARKS AND PRESENTATIONS

Dr Hedwig Petry opened the satellite session by highlighting the relevance of SRHR and population dynamics in relation to many aspects of sustainable human development. In light of the urgency of countering climate change as one of the main global development challenges of the 21st century, she argued that it was timely to enhance the discussion on these interrelations at the global NGO Forum. She also stressed that we are currently in a critical phase of the global political process, 3 months before COP15. Consequently, she welcomed the opportunity to discuss the linkages with the forum's participants, who are well aware of the importance of addressing the climate change and population nexus in the context of global equity and the rights-based agenda of the ICPD Programme of Action.

“ Expertise and experience from a variety of different perspectives will join forces over the next three days here in Berlin ”
Dr Hedwig Petry, GTZ

Why Do Linkages Matter?

Robert Engelman began his keynote remarks by noting that there is a need to start engaging and mobilising others in the discussion on how to respond to climate change as a global developmental challenge. As there is mounting evidence of global, human-induced climate change, it is a historically important and potentially generative moment in the months before COP15. Climate change however, will remain on political agendas for a much longer time. It is thus important to position the SRHR and women's rights communities, who in his assessment have much to offer to the process.

Mr Engelman then introduced the four areas of potential correlation that need to be considered when investigating the linkages of population dynamics and gender equality with climate change. In climate change, two areas of response need to be distinguished: mitigation (comprising efforts to reduce GHG concentration in the atmosphere and therewith lessening future climate change) and adaptation (efforts to adapt to consequences of climate change).

Woman an Population Human-caused climate change	Population dynamics	Gender equality
Mitigation	Research: strong connections to future emissions. New mentions in climate talks.	Possibilities in attitudes, behavior, REDD and biological carbon sequestration.
Adaptation	Emerging research topic. Most country adaptation strategies cite population pressure.	Evidence gender diversity contributes to resilience. Rights, ethics key issues in adaptation

Encouraging the audience to adopt a long-term perspective, Mr Engelman considered that the atmospheric GHG concentration would more likely be stabilised when all women and men can actualise their fertility intentions, which in turn is expected to lead to overall lower fertility. This is supported by recent research, indicating that slowed population growth tends to result in lower levels of GHG emissions in many future scenarios. Although they are certainly not at the core of mitigation efforts, programmes that potentially slow population growth such as available and accessible voluntary family planning services or female education should be included in the mix of interventions. Mr Engelman emphasised however, that this does not refer to long-overcome technocratic approaches to population, but to the need to respond to the enormous unmet demand

for family planning information and services worldwide. As anchored in the ICPD Programme of Action 15 years ago, each individual has the right to access reproductive health information and services – an unrealised right for many people.

He stated that compared to mitigation, research on adaptation in relation to population dynamics is scarce. However, analyses of recent national adaptation strategies have shown that in most of the programmes, population pressure in tandem with climate change is cited as a major challenge to natural resource management, food and water security. Mr Engelman welcomed the UNFCCC’s decision to explicitly take on gender in their response to both climate change mitigation and adaptation. Besides the strong human rights dimension of integrating gender equality, there is also some evidence emerging regarding the relevance of gender equality to climate change.

“ We need to explain why we are not talking about population control ”
Robert Engelman,
Worldwatch Institute

Mr Engelman reiterated that we have to frame the discussion considering global equity today as well as in the future. If it is our long-term vision to achieve similar development and emission levels globally, this would easier to imagine with a smaller population. He concluded by calling on advocates to spread the ICPD agenda at the discussion on climate change and to actively engage in the ongoing debate on how to counter global warming.

Population dynamics and SRHR: relevant to national adaptation strategies?

Dr Karen Hardee began her remarks by highlighting that adaption has been ‘the poor cousin’ in climate change discussions, as the global framework on climate change had been centred on mitigation for a long time.

“ Cairo is a city in Egypt to the rest of the world. We need to explain the significance of the ICPD Programme of Action ”
Dr Karen Hardee, PAI

Starting in 2001 at the COP6 in Marrakesh, the parties recognised that many developing countries are likely to experience the most severe impacts of climate change, while being more vulnerable and having less capacity to adapt to them. As a result, the National Programmes of Action (NAPA) process was initiated under the UNFCCC. Under the NAPA process, 49 of the least developed countries (LDCs) and small island states (SISs) are eligible to identify priority activities to respond to their immediate adaptation needs and to submit their programmes for funding. While the NAPA guidelines highlight that the process should be participatory and the outcomes should be linked to national development strategies, it has been criticised that so far, most national NAPA coordination

teams were recruited from environmental and/or meteorology ministries, which had considerable implications for the selection of projects.

In order to assess if the countries considered aspects of population, SRH or family planning as relevant for their adaptation, PAI analysed the first 41 NAPAs submitted to the UNFCCC¹. According to their analysis, most of the NAPAs (37) have emphasised the link between population growth and climate change, mainly related to vulnerability to food insecurity and water scarcity, human health, migration and environmental degradation².

1 Complete study report: http://www.populationaction.org/Publications/Working_Papers/August_2009_Climate/WP09-04_NAPA.pdf

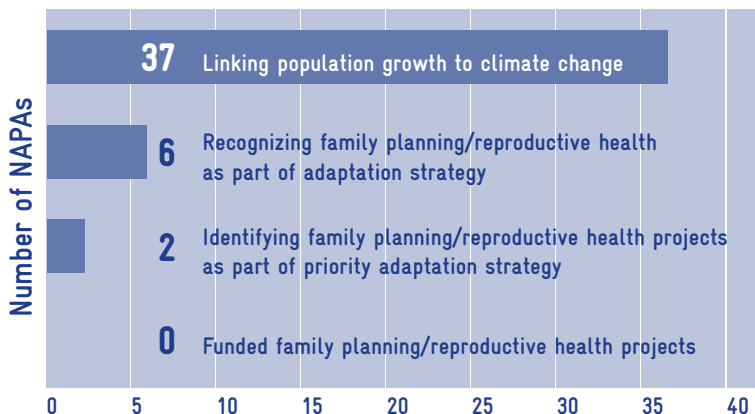
2 This is underlined by findings of a study in Ethiopia, which PAI will release in November 2009.

However, when it comes to the adaptation strategy, only six of them identified reproductive health services and/or voluntary family planning and only two have translated this into an actual project. Additionally, only 7% of all 448 projects across the 41 NAPAs were in the health sector. Dr Hardee contrasted these findings by highlighting that 27 of the 49 eligible countries are expected to at least double their population by 2050 and that unmet need for contraception is an issue for many of their citizens.

Dr Hardee concluded that the NAPA process must be strengthened to involve multiple sectors and to generate a closer link to long-term national development strategies. She reminded those present that the health sector, including the SRHR community, must become more engaged in the process of developing national adaptation strategies to ensure that health components are included.

From policy to action

Ulrike Neubert reminded those present that sustainable development does not happen within single, separate sectors, but requires holistic approaches, acknowledging social, economic and ecological dimensions. Since 1999, DSW, together with GTZ, two private companies and several environmental and developmental NGOs, have been working with local coffee farmers in the Ethiopian highlands to improve their overall living conditions while protecting the natural forest. The project supported local village cooperatives in developing a sustainable wild coffee production and marketing, embedded into a sustainable forest management concept. The project also included a SRH component, responding to the needs of the community, to improve the quality of and access to reproductive health and family planning services. Also, youth clubs were established and members were trained as peer educators on life skills and SRH topics³.



“ People we are working with, especially women and youth, are far ahead of our discussions. ”
Ulrike Neubert, DSW



According to Mrs Neubert the project has achieved many positive results. Farmers, having a guaranteed income, can use it for better housing, improved farming tools and their children’s education. While direct results on the population dynamics can only be seen in future generations, an increase in SRH service seeking behaviour and a high demand for contraception, especially among young women, has been observed. Overall, the discussion of SRH topics within the community, between generations, and women and men has been stimulated. Discussions and community mobilisation activities have shown that the linkages between the size of the local population and natural resource degradation are obvious to many people. Mrs Neubert reiterated that programmes integrating ecological and population aspects within a broader development framework are not only cost efficient and effective, but also play an important role in poverty alleviation.

Introducing the perspective of an NGO network of five small island states in the Indian Ocean, Kulvashi Hurrinag described how changes in climate patterns affect the livelihoods of people and – in conjunction with other factors, such as industrialisation – population dynamics. She cited the case of Madagascar, where several push and pull factors have accelerated urbanisation and led to changes in the environmental and social context. While increasing industrialisation is offering new job opportunities in larger cities in the northwest, the changing patterns and frequency of cyclones in the Indian Ocean as well as increasing droughts and floods, mainly in the west and south of the country make it difficult to secure livelihoods. From 2005-2006

3 More information on the project: http://www.weltbevoelkerung.de/en/offices/ethiopia/projects_bonga.shtml

the Development Indian Ocean Network (DION) has worked towards helping to cope with the changing environmental and social contexts. Working mainly with low-income factory workers who had recently migrated to the urban areas, DION provided information and support regarding SRH, parenthood in the new context and women's rights, with special efforts to reach youth and single mothers. Being a small network that strongly relies on volunteerism and external funding, Mrs Hurrynag stated that it has been very difficult to extend the scope of their work. The network organised discussions and awareness-raising sessions, but so far lack empirical data to back their statements. From her point of view, organisations and networks, such as DION, lack the international technical and financial support to better establish the evidence and to play an advocating role for their governments and to better support the affected local communities.

“ We don't have the backing or the funding from larger NGOs to carry on doing it for a broader audience. ”
Kulvashi Hurrynag, DION

MAIN POINTS DURING DISCUSSION AND Q&A SESSION

Concerns about ethics and equity

Unsustainable consumption and production patterns mainly pursued by wealthier people and large differences in the per capita GHG emissions of industrialised and developing countries still prevail (e.g. per capita GHG emissions in industrialized countries are 10-75 times higher than in countries with high population growth, such as Nigeria, Bangladesh and Yemen). Against this background it was asked if it was valid and ethically appropriate to discuss a general effect of population growth on climate change. Suzanne Petroni from the Summit Foundation highlighted that new research suggests that only in the cases of the USA, China and India would investment in family planning actually have a significant impact on global warming. However it is not only in China where it would be highly sensitive and misleading to address a scaling up of family planning in the context of climate change. In response Robert Engelman argued that it was hard to predict where the world will stand in terms of socioeconomic development by 2050 (since for example, the emergence of the Chinese economy was hardly foreseen in the mid-20th century). However, he encouraged the adoption of a long-term perspective, where it would be far more likely to have a stable atmosphere in a more equitable world, both in terms of access to voluntary family planning and per capita GHG emissions.

“ Population is not a uniformly global phenomenon when it comes to climate change. ”
Suzanne Petroni,
Summit Foundation

With regards to adaptation to climate change, Karen Hardee stressed that climate change often adds to the challenges of a growing population and their relation to the surrounding natural resources. In this context, slower population growth along with technological, agricultural and other measures could actually help secure environmental services for the population and preserve natural resources.

Availability and ethical use of research

There is an urgent need for more research and evidence on the complex relationships between population, SRHR and climate change to allow an informed dialogue with other sectors and to engage in discussions on climate change adaptation and mitigation. With regard to mitigation, IPCC scientists have identified and included population growth as one of the driving forces for climate change. However, there is emerging evidence that other aspects of population dynamics – such as household structure, urbanisation and ageing – should be considered in this context. More evidence and practical examples are required regarding climate change adaptation in relation to health, population and gender.

How to get the right messages out?

It was pointed out that in the past there has been tension between the goals and approaches of environmental groups and SRHR and population groups, compromising some of the efforts in relation to a human rights-based approach to population and sustainable development. Although we have come a long way and there is a broad range of positions and awareness about population and SRHR in other sectors, it is

“ I would be nervous that they [environmental groups] would pay attention in all of the wrong ways, all over again. ”
Gita Sen, Indian Institute of Management Bangalore and DAWN

not clear if the real messages from Cairo have been broadly understood. Meanwhile, population dynamics have already been included in the climate change 'equation', irrespective of whether or not we decide to be involved. Therefore it was seen as the major challenge to get involved in the discussions to propagate the Cairo agenda and to be ready to respond in a responsible manner.

How to get involved in the global climate change negotiations?

With the UN Climate Change Conference in December drawing closer, the panellists agreed that it is crucial to advocate for more attention on health, population and gender in the global post-Kyoto agreement. With adaptation gaining momentum, the pertaining technology focus in global climate change strategies needs to be reconsidered. We should challenge this approach and enrich the discussion with our human rights-based and social development perspective. While population, health and gender most likely will not receive major attention in the already challenging negotiations, the SRHR and women's rights communities should advocate for the inclusion of some terms that can be built on later. Karen Hardee invited everybody to look at the treaty language and to suggest the inclusion of specific wording.

How to advance from micro to macro level?

Good examples of holistic approaches have illustrated that local communities recognise the linkages between environment and population and that integration can foster synergies. However, it is unclear how they can actually be translated into policy level interventions and how the implementation of existing policies can be supported. Also, it has been discussed how such approaches can be promoted at regional and global levels. As a consequence of the presented project, Ulrike Neubert added that an application to establish the first Biosphere Reserve in Ethiopia on 400,000 ha has been submitted to UNESCO. This, together with the involvement of local government institutions in the project and the advocacy of national assemblies and ministries, contributes to the institutionalisation and sustainability of the approach in Ethiopia.

CLOSING REMARKS

Joachim Schmitt concluded by noting that BMZ has a common ground in acknowledging the need to consider population dynamics in climate change adaptation. In contrast, the question of whether population dynamics are relevant factors to climate change requires more discussion within and beyond the ministry. Mr Schmitt outlined the three fundamental principles for such a discussion: global equity and responsibility, human rights and self-determination. According to him, it is important to promote a dialogue beyond SRHR and population expert communities, and reach out to other groups such as human rights groups, economists and climate change experts. This is crucial in order to reach a better understanding of the complex linkages and the scope of responses. While discussions need to start now, he stressed that both climate change and population require a far longer perspective. He encouraged those present to look beyond the end of the ICPD PoA (2014) and the MDGs (2015). He stated that the satellite session was a good start to such a dialogue, which he will report back to the BMZ. He reiterated that it would be important to continue the discussion and to start building bridges between sectors within and beyond our organisations.

“ There is an option for a win-win, but there is not much time. We need to act soon. ”
Joachim Schmitt, BMZ

Interesting Links

- Audio File of the Satellite Session http://www.globalngoforum.de/media_center/audio_files/
- 'Global Partners in Action' website <http://www.globalngoforum.de/>
- PAI Population & Climate Change Initiative http://www.populationaction.org/Issues/Population_and_Climate_Change/Index.shtml
- DSW Bonga Forest Project http://www.weltbevoelkerung.de/en/offices/ethiopia/projects_bonga.shtml
- UN Climate Change Conference (COP15) <http://en.cop15.dk/>
- IIASA Program on Population and Climate <http://www.iiasa.ac.at/Research/PCC/index.html>
- UNFPA <http://www.unfpa.org/pds/climate/index.html>

List of Abbreviations:

BMZ	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development
DAWN	Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era
DION	Development Indian Ocean Network
DSW	German Foundation for World Population, Deutsche Stiftung Weltbevölkerung
COP15	15 th Conference of the Parties to UNFCCC
GHG	Greenhouse Gas
GTZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (German Technical Cooperation)
ICPD	International Conference on Population and Development
IPPC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
LDC	Least Developed Country
NAPA	National Adaptation Programme of Action
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
PoA	Programme of Action
PAI	Population Action International
SIS	Small Island States
SRHR	Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund

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