

Newsletter, January 2004

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Egyptian President Blames Rapid Population Growth

Last fall Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak blamed runaway population growth as the cause of the country's problems, saying the government could only do so much. "The government is doing its best to find a solution to the problems, **but the real problem is population growth**," Mubarak said when asked about various economic and other problems, including a shortage of bread.

"If population growth continues the way it is, we will be 85 million people in ten years and **we will not have enough resources**," the president warned. Egypt's population grew to 70 million people in 2003, increasing at the rate of 1.3 million people per year, according to official figures.

Mubarak said until now the state had ensured that education and health care were free and subsidized many products, including bread. However, "**The state will not be able to continue to provide such services** with the population growth, and we will be forced to impose heavy taxes on citizens, which would cause investors to flee," he said.

The International Monetary Fund's Global Economic Outlook forecast Egypt's economic growth at 2.8 percent in 2003 and 3.0 percent in 2004, way below the 6 percent required to absorb unemployment.

Mubarak said that the population explosion was the cause of a whole array of economic and social problems,

including poor education, unemployment, and population density.

Lester Brown Offers Solutions

The latest book by sustainability pioneer Lester Brown provides what may be the most complete description to date about why we must change the status quo and how we must change it.

Many books in the past have explained why our current society is environmentally unsustainable, and some other books have given partial solutions to various problems. *Plan B: Rescuing a Planet Under Stress and a Civilization in Trouble* combines both a thorough description of the problem with a concise explanation of primary solutions.

Brown highlights population growth among the primary factors contributing to environmental and political instability worldwide. Our failure to stop population growth has contributed to shortages of land, water, and other crucial resources.

While some may not agree with *all* of Brown's information, what if only a portion of his data is correct? If that turns out to be the case, our children and future generations will still be facing overwhelming problems requiring massive attention by all people.

Brown has been described as "one of the world's most influential thinkers" by the Washington Post. Twenty-seven years ago, Brown helped pioneer the concept of environmentally sustainable development. He is widely known as the founder and former president of the Worldwatch Institute.

Plan B is currently in stock at national bookstore chains. It can also be purchased in bulk from the author's Web site at www.earth-policy.org or downloaded in its entirety free of charge.

Challenge Match Successful!

Over a year ago The World Population Fund of The Minneapolis Foundation offered us a twelve month, \$25,000 matching grant. We are thrilled that we "went over the top" and received \$26,729.66 toward this challenge. Many of you were tremendously generous with your support. Thanks to your generosity, individual contributions increased by over \$12,000 above any previous year. We are grateful to each of you who helped make it happen. Thank you!

We are also grateful to The World Population Fund of the Minneapolis Foundation. Their ongoing support has allowed us to grow significantly as an organization and expand our population-awareness impact in the region.

Again, our sincere thanks to each of you who helped us fulfill our mission.

From the President

By David Paxson

People often ask something like: "If World Population Balance had a magic wand, what would you do about the population issue?" That is great question, since it gets to the heart of our mission and goals.

I want to live to see the day when tens of millions of Americans truly *understand* that: (1) current billions of humans are causing major, irreversible damage to our planet, (2) resources are limited, and many are declining, (3) thousands of species are threatened or going extinct, (4) pollution and wastes are increasing, and (5) all of these factors are threatening the very existence of humans and



other life on the planet.

I am convinced that when many more Americans understand these realities, our nation will enthusiastically support both global and national population stabilization. People will realize that humanely stopping population growth is in our best interest -- that it is essential. They will realize that not stopping population growth will lead to increasing misery, suffering and disaster throughout the world -- that population growth is "hazardous to everyone's health." They will realize that humanely stopping population growth is imperative!

How does America transform from our current unconcern to awareness? *Education* about this mega-issue and its widespread impact is the key! Therefore, **we remain committed to education as our primary mission!**

Each of us can educate others about the population issue. By spending a few minutes a month to raise awareness among people you know, you can educate about this most crucial issue of our time! You can plant the vital seeds of information that will move others along the road toward understanding.

If each of us enlightened twelve people during the year, by this time next year 50,000 more Americans would understand the *big population picture*. During 2005 what if half of those fifty thousand friends joined us in planting seeds with a new person every month? By New Year's Day of 2006, our total would be over 350,000 people!

What if 100,000 of us in Minnesota all decided to educate our legislators and members of Congress? Wouldn't it be inspiring if *every* legislator -- Republican, Democrat and Independent -- "got it" about this mega-issue and agreed to take action? If a hundred thousand people converged on our 134 legislators, that would mean an average of over 700 citizens per member! What an impact we would have! With those numbers, would they listen, learn and take positive action? Of course!

I ask you to accept this mission in 2004. Teach the *big population* picture to at least one other person each month. What an inspiring transformation we could ignite!

e-mail David Paxson

Population Video Still Available

We still have copies of our acclaimed video, *Minnesota Population*. This video has a strong impact upon viewers, since they see both population growth and resource depletion at the same time!

If you would like one, please send \$20 and indicate "video" with your request. Thank you.

Please Renew your membership

Our needs for financial support are as great as ever. As expenses and programs continue to increase, it is crucial that we expand our financial support. At the same time we have plans for several new and exciting projects -- to further expand population education in the Upper Midwest.

If you have not yet renewed your World Population Balance membership, we hope you will do so today. Your expiration date should be printed above your address on this newsletter. If there is no date listed, that means your membership lapsed several months ago. If you have any questions about your membership status, please call our office at 612-869-1640. Thank you in advance for your support.

Study: Process of Stabilizing U.S. Population Would Benefit Society

Demographers recognize four factors that affect a nation's population growth. They are rates of: birth, death, immigration and emigration. These are the four variables that determine whether a nation's population is increasing, decreasing or stable. Since numbers of people emigrating from the U.S. change little from year to year, and since everyone hopes death rates do not increase, that leaves reducing births or immigration -- or a combination of the two -- as ways to humanely stabilize our nation's numbers.

A recent study discusses benefits of stabilizing U.S. population growth by reducing birth rates. Citing Census Bureau reports and predictions, researcher Edwin Stennett points out that if we were to reduce our national fertility rate to 1.8 by 2025 we could achieve stability by 2080. We know this goal is achievable, he says, because Canada's fertility rate is already 1.6 and Germany's is 1.3.

The steps that would reduce the fertility rate would also provide other important societal benefits. Stennett suggests: "1) reducing the high school dropout rate, 2) reducing poverty, 3) providing quality family planning services to women living in or near poverty, and 4) using the immense potential of the media to educate all Americans in regard to childbearing."

Stennett emphasizes that when we pursue these goals we must present population stabilization as a positive change. Not only will it have desirable benefits when it is accomplished, but the steps along the way to stabilization are desirable in themselves.

"The additional good news here is that the path to reduced fertility is completely in keeping with the traditional American values of respecting individual freedom and helping those in need," says Stennett.

Stennett's book, *In Growth We Trust*, is available for purchase through Population Connection at www.popconnect.org.

We at World Population Balance believe it is imperative that the U.S. stops its population growth as soon as possible. Unless we take action to reduce birth or immigration rates, our nation's numbers will not stop increasing and could easily pass the half billion mark within a few decades.

We have no preference whether stabilization is accomplished by reducing immigration, reducing births, or a combination of the two. The important thing is to humanely stop population growth, thereby reducing our impact on resource depletion and pollution levels as soon as possible.

Sparing Nature will Exceed all your Expectations

From New Scientist.com

Are humans too good at adapting to the earth's natural environment? Has our explosive population growth led to the mass extinction of countless species in the earth's plant and animal communities?

Jeffrey K. McKee contends that the more population increases, the more we push aside wild plants and animals. In *Sparing Nature*, he demonstrates that nature cannot accommodate both a richly diverse living world and a rapidly expanding number of people. The author probes the past to find that extinction rates have accelerated since the origins of agriculture. Today entire ecosystems are in peril due to the relentless growth of the human population.

McKee gives a guided tour of the interconnections within the living world to reveal the meaning and value of biodiversity, making the maze of technical research and scientific debates accessible to the general reader.

Because it is clear that conservation cannot be left to the whims of changing human priorities, McKee takes the position that the most effective measure to save earth's biodiversity is to slow human population growth.

McKee's case is built on three theses:

1. Human population growth has always caused a loss of biodiversity. We have, deliberately or not, acted from the very beginning to reduce the variety of living things on Earth.
2. The most effective way to combat further loss of biodiversity is proactive slowing, halting or even reversing the population increase.
3. Conservation of species variety is vital to the health of our planet and therefore equally vital to our own self-interest.

Current Population

World: 6,341,984,000 -- doubling time 60 years

U.S.: 292,378,000 -- doubling time 88 years

Minnesota: 5,127,770 -- doubling time 62 years

Extrapolated from U.S. Census and Minnesota Planning data

The author argues strongly that **worldwide birth reduction is the only humane and practical measure available to sustain Earth in an ecologically viable equilibrium with nature.**

As serious as these matters are, reading *Sparing Nature* can be an edifying experience. It will prove more than worthwhile for anyone with an inquiring mind -- and a little time to spare.

Our Mission

World Population Balance is a non-profit, educational organization dedicated to raising awareness about the benefits of population stabilization.

We present our message through public presentations and conferences, appointments with elected officials, written articles, our newsletter, and media interviews.

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WORLD POPULATION BALANCE

P.O. Box 23472 (612) 869-1640

Minneapolis, MN 55423 U.S.A.

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