



Population, Development & Environment, An NGO Position Paper

The following position paper has 78 signatories from around the world, and it is now available in Spanish and French. please call Sidonie Chiapetta at 1-202-797-6639 for a Spanish or French copy. Our goal is to build up a network of NGOs around the positions paper, for future action alerts and for lobbying at the PrepComs and at Cairo. Additional southern NGO signatories are especially welcome.

POPULATION, DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT

AN NGO POSITION PAPER FOR THE

1994 INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT

(DRAFT) 10/28/93

Population, development and environment are inextricably linked and are critical to determining quality of life on Earth, now and for generations to come. The 1994 International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) must address these paramount issues together, with foresight well into the next century. Increasing poverty, overconsumption of resources in the North, low status of women, inappropriate economic policies, rapid

population growth and unsustainable use of natural resources are all interconnected. One quarter of the world's population - predominantly in the industrialized nations - consumes over 70% of the earth's resources and is responsible for most of the global environmental degradation. In addition, the implications of adding 95 to 100 million people annually to the world's current population of 5.4 billion people are staggering and will place tremendous stress on the earth's ability to provide for basic human needs.

Clearly, current patterns of consumption and distribution of people, wealth and natural resources are as much to blame for widespread environmental degradation as is the sheer number of people. Efforts to address population should focus on the root causes of poverty, migration and high fertility rates, such as low status of women and girls, early ages of marriage, lack of education and health care, high child mortality rates, lack of access to family planning information and services for women, men and teenagers, etc. Addressing the consumption lifestyles of peoples and societies is equally important.

Alleviating poverty, empowering women, increasing access to family planning and health care, ensuring human rights, developing more sustainable lifestyles in the North and improving international development policies are all critical to providing a decent quality of life for future generations, without causing irreversible damage to the environment.

RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Improve the status of women. Women's empowerment/ability to

control their own lives is the foundation for all action linking population, environment and development. Women are agents for environmental and economic change worldwide, and should be recognized for their role in managing resources and families. As the status of women improves, they become empowered to make independent decisions concerning their lives, fertility, and contributions to development processes.

ACTIONS:

1. All governments should strive for universal access of women to primary health care that includes reproductive health, maternal and child health and family planning information and services through programs that are women-managed and women-centered. In the effort to meet these goals, governments should follow the United Nations Development Program's recommendation to dedicate 20% of total spending to the satisfaction of basic human needs.

2. Governments and aid agencies should increase total funding to U.S. \$3.5 billion per year for closing the gender gap in primary and secondary school education and for raising literacy rates of women. Efforts should also be made to train and hire more female teachers, build more small schools for greater accessibility to rural populations, especially girls, and set up literacy and tutoring campaigns at the community level.

3. Governments should provide legal framework for increasing women's access, especially rural women, to financial services (credit and savings), land tenure rights, new agricultural technologies and vocational training skills.

4. All nations should ratify and actively support implementation of the Convention for the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women and Girls and the United Nations Treaty on Human Rights.

5. Governments, multilateral and bilateral aid-giving agencies, and NGOs should increase the staff representation of women in all areas of policy-making, program and project evaluation and implementation.

6. Governments should promote public education campaigns to improve social perceptions of women's roles in society and to raise awareness of the value of women's work and welfare to families and societies.

7. ICPD should recognize the fundamental role of women in regulating the relationship between humans and their environment, and should call for increased targeting of development projects toward a better quality of life for women and their children.

B. Increase and improve international family planning and health assistance programs. Current international population assistance is far from sufficient to meet the demand for voluntary family planning and comprehensive health care. Some of the most effective population programs are those which integrate family planning with comprehensive health care and education, and that encourage men to take responsibility for their own fertility and recognize they have a role in their partners' health and

well-being.

ACTIONS:

1. ICPD should endorse the 1989 Amsterdam Forum, with its goal of at least \$9 billion annually in global population assistance by the year 2000.

2. Signers of the Amsterdam Declaration should recommit to those policy recommendations, and countries with the resources and responsibility to act should increase international population aid to 4% of their official development assistance budget.

3. Donor nations should increase funding for programs which are committed to comprehensive health care, that include reproductive health care and provide for pre and post-natal care, safe and legal voluntary contraceptives, prevention and treatment of reproductive tract infections, AIDS/HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases, and sex education and information for girls and boys.

4. Donor nations should support programs that ensure access to a wide range of contraceptive methods where supplies are reliable, and where caregivers are trained to educate clients adequately about choices available and enable them to make competent and well-informed decisions.

5. Governments should provide financial and technical mechanisms which support local reproductive health care initiatives with modest amounts of money to work within their own

cultural and economic framework. Priority should be given to programs that ensure outreach to the very poor, migrants, refugees, unmarried women and adolescents.

6. Governments should encourage programs that educate men on male methods of contraception and their parental responsibilities.

7. All nations should formulate and enforce policies which ensure human rights in order to prohibit involuntary or coercive family planning programs.

8. Donor nations should provide increased funds for research on safer contraceptives, including women-controlled methods that protect against sexually transmitted infections as well as pregnancy.

C. Reduce overconsumption and poverty. As population and/or consumption in any given area increases, more demands are placed on natural resources. In the industrialized countries of the North, these demands are excessive and overconsumption has led to inequities in resource use. One fifth of the world's population is consuming a majority of the world's resources, leading to global climate change, deforestation, loss of biodiversity, perpetuation of poverty, and local and national environmental degradation. In many regions of the South, a vicious cycle of poverty combined with inappropriate development policies, inequitable land distribution, lack of education and choices, and increasing concentrations of populations drives people to exhaust the very resources on which their livelihood depends, and thereby

leads to environmental degradation.

ACTIONS:

1. All governments, especially in the North, should adopt natural resource and population policies that take into consideration population growth, demographic patterns (such as migration), access to and availability of resources.

2. Northern governments should take action to reduce CO2 emissions in their countries by at least 25% from 1990 levels by the year 2005; to take appropriate measures to reduce substantially emissions of other greenhouse gases; and to take steps to ultimately reduce greenhouse gases by 60%.

3. Northern governments should urge the development and implementation of programs and policies promoting energy efficiency, the use of renewable energy sources, and the transfer of environmentally sound technologies to developing countries.

4. Governments, especially Northern, should encourage community efforts to implement educational programs on the social and environmental impacts of overconsumption and production and to build awareness of consumer responsibility to global environmental well-being.

5. Governments should promote conversion to equitable and ecologically sustainable economies and take responsibility for the needs of those whose livelihoods are negatively affected.

6. Governments should support fair trade, land

redistribution, debt alleviation, equitable tax systems, regulation of transnational corporations, an end to structural adjustment policies and the integration of social and environmental costs into product prices.

7. Governments should support and enforce legislation to strengthen consumer rights, especially to ensure environmentally sustainable, safe and healthy products, and establish the "right to know" laws which enable people to make informed consumption choices.

8. Northern governments should ensure access to safe and effective means of family planning for both men and women citizens in their own countries.

9. Governments should contribute 20% of their overseas development assistance to meeting basic human needs, as called for at the 1990 U.N. World Summit for Children.

D. Increase participation of local organizations and indigenous people in the design and implementation of programs. As is the case with all programs for sustainable development, health and family planning programs must be built with, not for, local people. Consulting with and working through local organizations assures appropriate design of programs, and the quality and effectiveness of service delivery.

ACTIONS:

1. Countries should commit to increasing the decision-

making role of local groups and communities in the design and implementation of population assistance projects. This may be aided by increasing representation of women in the highest administrative levels of governments and multilateral aid organizations.

2. Governments should establish or strengthen procedures for regular consultations with non-governmental organizations representing local, national and global interests in designing, implementing and evaluating development plans, programs and projects.

3. Donor nations should direct support to non-governmental organizations that design and implement community programs.

E. Preparation of ICPD national reports. All nations participating in ICPD should assess interlinkages among population, development and environment in their countries and should strive to coordinate national population policies with their environment and development strategies.

ACTIONS:

1. Each national report should delineate the ways in which rapid growth, population migration and resource consumption are affecting development plans and poverty and make projections for the future. Such assessments should include relationships to availability of basic human needs, including health care, education, food and employment.

2. Each national report should assess population within

the context of sustainability, including where and how demographic pressures are interacting most with natural resources and ecologically sensitive areas, i.e., including population-environment dynamics such as:

Soil erosion and desertification; deforestation; water scarcity; urbanization; production of greenhouse gases; extinction of species from habitat destruction; and coastal resource depletion due to increased demands for water, conversion of wetlands for agriculture and housing, and unsustainable fishing.

Special focus should be on the so-called "ecologically endangered zones": coastal agricultural areas, upland forests, urban squatter settlements, arid and semi-arid grazing areas, etc.

F. Institution-building for integrating population into environmental decision-making. The institutional framework needed to assess the implications of population growth and distribution, especially their potential impact on natural resources and sustainable development, must be strengthened in all countries.

The institutions available for policy analysis and project implementation have been useful to those governments which have invested in long-term planning.

ACTIONS:

1. Governments and multilateral institutions should require an analysis of the effects of population growth and rate of consumption of natural resources in all planning documents and Environmental Impact Assessments.

2. All nations should develop their population impact assessment capability.

3. Those countries with advanced demographic skills and technology should collaborate with countries in the process of strengthening their own resources. Bilateral and multilateral development program funding should include institution building mechanisms with the ultimate objective of enhancing individual country ability to accumulate, analyze and project demographic and natural resource data.

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NGO POSITION PAPER FOR INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON
POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT

FORM FOR SIGNATORIES

All Southern and Northern NGOs and individuals who support these recommendations are invited to be signatories. Please indicate if your organization supports these recommendations or if you list your organization for identification purposes only.

() My organization supports the recommendations

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purposes only.

Name _____

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Country _____

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Organizational signatories: Please write one or two sentences

about

your organization:

PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM TO:

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