

5-1-1999

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Recommended Citation

Rod N. Andreason, *The International Convention on Population Development: The Fallacies and Hazards of Population "Control"*, 1999 BYU L. Rev. 769 (1999).

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The International Convention on Population Development: The Fallacies and Hazards of Population “Control”*

I. INTRODUCTION

The International Conference on Population Development (ICPD)¹ has many admirable goals: it strives to reduce maternal mortality rates;² it aims to enhance the lives of low-income residents of both residential and urban areas;³ and it seeks to eradicate poverty, perhaps its most important objective.⁴ Unfortunately, however, the theme of “population development” for many participants in the Conference is merely a subtle euphemism for population “reduction” or “control.” While asserting that “[p]eople are the most important and valuable resource of any nation,”⁵ the Conference’s *Programme of Action* is replete with policy proposals and declarations which attempt to dissipate that “most important” resource. A number of justifications have been advanced for such an approach, but none appear to validate the serious harms that population reduction programs cause. Ultimately, those programs seeking to diminish or discourage the existence of people—the so-called “anti-natalist” agenda—simply do not enhance people’s lives. Delegates to the ICPD conference in Cairo “assumed that people were essen-

* The author wishes to thank his three precious children—Monterey Laska, Lon Allen, and Joseph Knight Andreason. All three are sweet and wonderful, and have the potential to be anything they desire. They have given the author much joy and a greater love of life, and he will always love them dearly.

1. The International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) was held in Cairo, Egypt, from 5 September to 13 September 1994, under the auspices of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). Delegations from 179 states took part in negotiations to finalize a Programme of Action on population and development for the next twenty years.

2. See *Programme of Action*, United Nations International Conference on Population Development, § 8.20, U.N. Doc. A/CONF.171/13 (1994) [hereinafter *Programme*].

3. See *id.* § 9.13.

4. See *id.* at Ch. II, Princ. 7. See also *id.* § 3.13 (stating that “[w]idespread poverty remains the major challenge to development efforts”).

5. *Id.* at Ch. II, Princ. 2.

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tially a problem rather than a resource."⁶ With so many challenges facing populations worldwide, our task should be to eliminate problems, not people.

This Comment attempts to show the fallacies and hazards involved in population control. Part II examines the major justifications advanced by population reductionists, briefly responding to each in turn. Part III provides a substantive analysis of population reduction, examining its negative effects and reinforcing responses to issues introduced in Part II. Part IV outlines several recommendations for the ICPD, encouraging the Convention to pursue better avenues of serving populations than simply reducing them.

II. JUSTIFICATIONS ADVANCED IN SUPPORT OF POPULATION REDUCTION PROGRAMS

Various justifications have been advanced for promoting population reductions.⁷ They range from a simple fear of the unknown to serious questions about environmental depletion. Many of the justifications are founded on inaccurate information, illogical assumptions, or fear induced by the scare tactics commonly used by population control advocates. Ultimately, all of the reasons given are inadequate in comparison with the harms they create.

A. *Fear of the Unknown*

The first reason can be understood simply as a fear of the unknown. Many commentators point out that we have never had this many people on the earth before, and that our rate of growth is disturbing.⁸ Most commonly, writers point to the time it took for the world's population to reach one billion, then how

6. George Weigel, *The Cairo Conference on Population and Development: A Flawed Concept*, 1995 ST. LOUIS-WARSAW TRANSATLANTIC L.J. 65, 67.

7. The ICPD *Programme of Action* implies that reductions in population are necessary to meet educational needs of the population. See *Programme*, *supra* note 2, § 11.1.

8. See Paul R. Ehrlich & Anne H. Ehrlich, *The Population Explosion: Why We Should Care and What We Should Do About It*, 27 ENVTL. L. 1187, 1187 (1997); Terrence J. Sorg, *Global Hunger, a Doubling Population, and Environmental Degradation: Justifying Radical Changes in U.S. Farm Policy*, IND. INT'L & COMP. L. REV. 679, 685-86 (1996).

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quickly it rose to the nearly six billion people today.⁹ Population alarmists invoke images of children being born with the “speed of a machine gun,”¹⁰ adding a “new Germany” each year.¹¹ Scare tactics are the common technique employed in such statements, attempting to alarm people at the rapid rate of population growth.¹² Media, celebrities, and academia alike¹³ have assumed that unprecedented population increase can only mean that there will be countless billions of people without food, leeching the planet of scarce resources before falling prey to famine, war, and other cataclysmic events.

Amazingly, this argument has little to do with sound logic or economic reality. By itself, the fact that we have no record of larger world populations only means that our experience is incomplete in understanding how to thrive with larger numbers of people. Declaring that having much larger populations than ever before will be a catastrophe is something akin to the worldwide fear of only 500 years ago that travel too far overseas would cause one to fall off the edge of the earth.¹⁴ Moreover, there is abundant evidence that our planet is capable of sustaining a population nearly seven times our current amount—at least forty billion people.¹⁵ By itself, the fact that we have never supported so many people does not necessarily mean that we are incapable of doing so in the future.

B. “People are Starving, and Fewer People Means Fewer Starving”

A related economic argument is that people are starving, and fewer people would mean fewer starving.¹⁶ Proponents of

9. See Ehrlich & Ehrlich, *supra* note 8, at 1187; Sorg, *supra* note 8, at 685-86.

10. Robert M. Hardaway, *Environmental Malthusianism: Integrating Population and Environmental Policy*, 27 ENVTL. L. 1209, 1209 (1997).

11. Ehrlich & Ehrlich, *supra* note 8, at 1187.

12. See *infra* Part III.B.

13. See, e.g., Jeff Jacoby, *The World Isn't Overpopulated, and the Population Explosion is Over*, MINNEAPOLIS STAR TRIB., May 20, 1998, at 23A.

14. See *id.* (noting that “[i]t won't be long before the misanthropic preachings of Paul Ehrlich and the Population Institute are shelved where they belong: with the gibberish of the flat-Earthers and the bunkum of the alchemists”).

15. See Weigel, *supra* note 6, at 66 (citing COLIN CLARK, POPULATION GROWTH: THE ADVANTAGES 44, 48 (1975), and Roger Revelle, *The Resources Available for Agriculture*, 3 SCI. AM. 164, 177 (1976)).

16. See generally THOMAS MALTHUS, AN ESSAY ON THE PRINCIPLES OF POPULATION (Phillip Appleman ed., 1976); PAUL EHRLICH, THE POPULATION BOMB

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this viewpoint assume that not limiting population will force us to be limited by famine, causing a large die-off in the population. It is true that hundreds of millions of people are starving—by some estimates, one-tenth of our total world population.¹⁷ As such, with more people living on the earth, more do starve, especially in the poorest areas of the world.

However, proponents of this argument mistake correlation for causation. While food supply is not unlimited, it clearly exceeds the needs of the world population. In fact, there is almost a universal consensus that there is more than enough food in the world to feed all the people on the planet.¹⁸ Farmers in the United States find it difficult to sell all the food they grow.¹⁹ Former Harvard Center for Population Studies Director Roger Revelle estimated that the agricultural resources of the world were capable of providing an adequate diet (2,500 kilocalories per day) for forty billion people, and that it would require the use of less than twenty-five percent of the Earth's ice-free land area.²⁰ Revelle also estimated that the less-developed continents were capable of feeding eighteen billion people, and that Africa alone was capable of feeding ten billion people, or nearly twice the current world population.²¹ These predictions were based on 1984 technology; there is justifiable optimism that agricultural techniques will make possible substantially better crop yields now and in the future.

In reality, "[t]he problem is not production or overpopulation; it is poverty and accessibility."²² The majority of those who have died from famine starved "due to deliberate governmental policy, official mismanagement, or war, and not to serious crop failure."²³ Starvation once occurred in the sparsely settled Native American populations of North

(1972).

17. See Hardaway, *supra* note 10, at 1210.

18. See JACQUELINE KASUN, *THE WAR AGAINST POPULATION: THE ECONOMICS AND IDEOLOGY OF POPULATION CONTROL* 32-38 (1988).

19. See *Education and Societal Changes Suggest "Population Bomb" Was a Dud*, TAMPA TRIB., Jan. 6, 1998, at 6.

20. See Revelle, *supra* note 15, at 177.

21. See *id.*

22. Sorg, *supra* note 8, at 680.

23. *Id.* at 679 (quoting DENNIS T. AVERY, *SAVING THE PLANET WITH PESTICIDES AND PLASTIC* 146 (1995)).

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America, until European settlers cultivated the land.²⁴ To those who competed for scarce resources, an “overpopulation” appeared to exist at that time. But although the population of the United States is now thousands of times larger, proper use of land and better farming techniques have made food continually more abundant than people.

In addition, higher birthrates and population density have no direct correlation with “gross economic deprivation due to ‘overpopulation.’”²⁵ The densely populated areas of Hong Kong, Taiwan, Singapore, and South Korea fare well in comparison with many of their much less densely populated neighbors.²⁶ In fact, Singapore’s population is over 100 times as dense as Ethiopia’s.²⁷ Changes in United States’ farm policy could induce yet greater production, as well as industrialization and trade, as opposed to simply sending food and aid.²⁸ Furthermore, if countries of the world learned to use their land properly for the development of crops, hunger would be unthinkable for a population many times the size of even the headiest predictions for the next 300 years.

Undoubtedly, developed nations should continue to help, especially emphasizing proportionately more training and technology than simple shipments of provisions.²⁹ But clearly, the fact that people are starving is not due to any worldwide lack of food. The problem continues to stem from government mismanagement and lack of free trade and exchange opportunities. Truly, “population growth is not the cause of development problems in the Third World but rather a symptom of those problems.”³⁰ Universal reductions in the numbers of people should not be the agenda of the ICPD simply

24. See Robert W. Lee, *A World of Plenty* (visited Nov. 13, 1998) <<http://www.ptw.com/~deagle/pr021.htm>> (citing ROUSAS J. RUSHDOONY, *THE MYTH OF OVERPOPULATION X* (1969)).

25. Weigel, *supra* note 6, at 65.

26. See *id.*

27. See *The Myth of Planetary Overpopulation* (visited Nov. 13, 1998) <<http://www.trifax.org/reports/pop.html>>.

28. See generally Sorg, *supra* note 8.

29. See *id.* at 695-96.

30. Dina Shapiro, Book Annotation, 28 N.Y.U. J. INT’L L. & POL. 859, 860 (1996) (summarizing BETSY HARTMANN, *REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS AND WRONGS: THE GLOBAL POLITICS OF CONTROL AND CONTRACEPTIVE CHOICE* (1995)).

because a few governments need to change their economic policies.

C. *“Having Fewer People Raises the ‘Quality of Life’ for the Rest of Us”*

A social argument advanced by population reductionists is that we should be concerned with the “quality of life” of all people on earth, and that the quality of each life is enhanced by having fewer lives to have to share Earth with. Principle Five of the *Programme of Action* states that “[p]opulation-related goals and policies are integral parts of cultural, economic and social development, the principal aim of which is to improve the quality of life of all people.”³¹ It is difficult to be sure what “quality of life” means in the *Programme of Action*. At times, it seems to indicate merely adequate health care for all people.³² At other times, it almost gives the impression that Western consumption should be reduced so that all may enjoy a high standard of living.³³ In all, the term “quality of life” is used in the document twenty-seven times. Promoting a universal high standard of living conflicts with the ICPD’s more balanced goal of “meet[ing] the needs of present generations and improv[ing] their quality of life without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”³⁴ As discussed below,³⁵ the drastic population reductions—being created by current policy—will severely compromise the resources and real “quality of life” of the next several generations.

Certainly, food and health care should be available to all. But, as has been discussed, food shortages in poor areas owe not to population excesses, but rather to domestic policies which prevent achieving an adequate food supply.³⁶ For the rest of the world, reductions in population are not only unnecessary, but often harmful. In fact, having fewer children in a family has a tendency to reduce the quality of life for all people. While a family with four children may not have as many possessions as a family with one or two children, all members tend to benefit

31. *Programme e, supra* note 2, at Ch. II, Princ. 5.

32. *See id.* § 8.3(b).

33. *See id.* at Princ. 6 and §§ 3.9, 3.11.

34. *Programme e, supra* note 2, § 3.1

35. *See infra* Part III.

36. *See supra* notes 22-23 and accompanying text.

from the additional support and relationships they develop.³⁷ This is often difficult to develop when children grow up alone in the home. Quality of life is enhanced by having a family that is not limited, or encouraged to be limited, in exchange for richer lifestyles. If “the ultimate goal is the improvement of the quality of life of present and future generations,”³⁸ people will work to make happy families. In contrast, considerable loss to “quality of life” occurs under population reduction programs, as discussed below.³⁹

D. Our Environment is Being Eroded and Depleted, and More People Would Do More Damage

Perhaps the most convincing argument for population reduction is that our population, even at its current size, is seriously eroding and depleting the environment.⁴⁰ The *Programme* speaks of “environmental degradation [due to] . . . unprecedented growth in people.”⁴¹ Since each person has an effect on the consumption and use of resources, each additional body on the planet is an environmental liability.⁴² Again resorting to the scare tactic, these people insist that the world “ship” is “sinking” under the weight of humanity, and that only eliminating others on the ship will keep us all afloat.⁴³

Without question, humans are misusing and depleting the environment on many fronts, a problem which must be attacked on a global basis. Many other international conventions focus specifically on environmental issues.⁴⁴ Surely,

37. See Nicholas Eberstadt, *World Population Implosion?*, 126 PUB. INTEREST 3, 21-22 (1997).

38. *Programme*, *supra* note 2, § 6.3.

39. See *infra* Part III.

40. See generally Reed Boland, *The Environment, Population, and Women's Human Rights*, 27 ENVTL. L. 1137 (1997).

41. *Programme*, *supra* note 2, § 1.2.

42. See Ehrlich & Ehrlich, *supra* note 8, at 1188 (positing an equation which calculates environmental impact (I) by multiplying the number of people (P) by per capita affluence (A) and the environmental impact due to technologies producing the consumption (T)).

43. See Hardaway, *supra* note 10, at 1222-28.

44. The United Nations Environment Programme alone has sponsored at least ten different environmental conventions, including The Convention on Climate Change, The Vienna Convention on the Protection of the Ozone Layer, The Convention on Trade in Dangerous Chemicals and Pesticides, The Convention to Combat Desertification, The Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone

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environmental preservation is a valid goal, but not a valid justification for ridding the world of people in the environment. Paul Ehrlich, author of *The Population Explosion*, has said, "By assaulting the earth's ecosystems, humanity is, in essence, sawing off the limb on which it perches."⁴⁵ Ironically, however, Ehrlich would encourage humanity to saw off parts of itself instead. A population which attempts to dramatically slow its growth takes children from parents and siblings from children, and removes members of society in lieu of solving societal problems.

There is some reason for optimism, though not giddy enthusiasm, regarding the manner in which technology has made environmental depletion less necessary, and restoration possible.⁴⁶ Human ingenuity has not only found more reserves of nonrenewable resources than has ever been imagined, it also has alternative technologies awaiting further development when petroleum and natural gas are gone, including solar, wind, water, and other forms of energy. History has shown that necessity truly is the mother of invention; and the industrial revolution, the Green Revolution in farming,⁴⁷ and a meteoric rise in technological expertise give at least considerable hope for adjusting to a world without oil.⁴⁸ One must not use the catch phrase "sustainable development" for supposing that only by diminishing people can the environment be sufficiently suited to human use.

III. ARGUMENTS AGAINST PROMOTING POPULATION REDUCTION

Preaching population reduction holds many dangers. Evidence and assessments by population reductionists have repeatedly proven inaccurate. The scare tactics employed by

Layer, The Basel Convention on Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal, The Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants, The Bonn Convention on Migratory Species, The Convention on Biological Diversity, and The Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species. *See United Nations Environment Programme*, (visited Feb. 3, 1999) <<http://www.unep.org/unep/conv.htm>>.

45. Ehrlich & Ehrlich, *supra* note 8, at 1191.

46. *See* Boland, *supra* note 40, at 1139 ("Human ingenuity and technological progress have so far managed to outpace the natural forces conspiring to bring about . . . the despoliation of the environment. Ways have been found to solve even the most seemingly insurmountable problems.") (footnote omitted).

47. *See* Hardaway, *supra* note 10, at 1210.

48. *See id.*

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reductionists not only use the wrong type of motivation, they inevitably lead to coercive policies in subtle or blatant forms. In particular, “education” is a term used in the Programme to denote family planning pressure on couples to use contraception or otherwise limit their birthrates.⁴⁹ The results of such policies are dangerous, making both the ends and the means of population reduction harmful to the populations “educated” by them.

A. *Population Theory Has Failed to Show Any Predictive Value*

Population reduction theorists have provided no help in forming a credible policy. This is so because they have been far from accurate predictors of the future. “For decades they have been predicting apocalypse; for decades their predictions have failed. Failed utterly, in every detail.”⁵⁰ The Meadows computer models predicted that gold would run out by 1981, and oil would be gone by 1992.⁵¹ Of course, the classic example is Thomas Malthus, who in 1798 assumed that food would grow arithmetically as population grew geometrically, thus eventuating in worldwide starvation in his near future.⁵² In the last 200 years since Malthus’s prophecy, food has outpaced population, yet the world has several times the population it had when that “prophecy” was uttered.

Paul Ehrlich, perhaps the most notorious catastrophist of our times, declared in his best-seller, *The Population Bomb*, that “[i]n the 1970s, the world will undergo famines—hundreds of millions of people are going to starve to death in spite of any crash programs embarked upon now. At this late date, nothing can prevent a substantial increase in the world death rate.”⁵³ He further predicted drastic drops in life expectancy, food riots in the United States, and ecological “death” in Lakes Erie and

49. See *infra* notes 132-35 and accompanying text.

50. Jacoby, *supra* note 13.

51. See DONNELLA H. MEADOWS ET AL., THE LIMITS TO GROWTH: A REPORT FOR THE CLUB OF ROME’S PROJECT ON THE PREDICAMENT OF MANKIND 56-60 (1972); DONNELLA H. MEADOWS & DENNIS L. MEADOWS, BEYOND THE LIMITS 66-73 (1992) (the “now-we’re-really-serious” novel).

52. See generally MALTHUS, *supra* note 16, at 20-21

53. EHRLICH, *supra* note 16, at Prologue.

Michigan.⁵⁴ The “Great Die-Off,” as he called it, of course never happened. He then persuaded many that it would occur in the ‘80s. Then he rescheduled it for the ‘90s.⁵⁵ Amazingly, there are still many people who listen to and believe Ehrlich’s statements. Since none of the predictions of population reductionists have been accurate, it is amazing that many still base governmental programs on them.

Even the United Nations and several governmental agencies have had only limited success in predicting trends in population numbers. The notion of a “population science” has been roundly criticized.⁵⁶ The Cairo Conference could “neither predict with accuracy the growth rates in human populations, nor tell policy makers when (much less how) fertility rates would decline.”⁵⁷ Perhaps unwilling to fully accept the current and serious decline in world fertility rates, the UN has presented three scenarios at high, medium, and low variants.⁵⁸ The low variant seems consistent with current trends (and thus presents some worrisome prospects, as discussed below). The high variant is so far above the low variant that the range between their respective sets of predictions is fantastic. The UN proposes that in 150 years, the world population could be twenty-seven billion . . . or it could be three billion people,⁵⁹ depending on a number of demographic factors.

B. Population Reductionists Rely on Scare Tactics to Promote Their Policies

As noted above, population reduction theorists and programs have almost always relied on scare tactics⁶⁰ to acquire adherents to an otherwise unnatural faith. It is natural for

54. *See id.* at 62.

55. *See* Jacoby, *supra* note 13.

56. *See* Weigel, *supra* note 6, at 65.

57. *Id.*

58. *See* Eberstadt, *supra* note 37, at 3-4 (citing UNITED NATIONS POPULATION DIVISION, WORLD POPULATION PROSPECTS, THE 1996 REVISION (1996)).

59. *See id.*

60. *See* Boland, *supra* note 40, at 1139 (disagreeing with “embracing the doomsday approach, . . . [which] has led to major excesses and mistakes in the planning and implementation of population policies and programs”); Jacoby, *supra* note 13 (decrying the influence of the “farmongers”); Ben J. Wattenberg, *The Population Explosion Is Over*, N.Y. TIMES, Nov. 23, 1997, § 6, at 60 (pointing to “[t]hirty years of persistent alarm”).

people to want to have children; procreation is crucial to the survival of the species, and strong populations are essential for strong countries. In addition, people want to teach, train, love, and live with new people they help raise. Having children allows parents to live on through their posterity. In order to shake off this natural (and positive) tendency, writers like Ehrlich use phrases such as population “bomb,” talk about “explosions,” and use other such emotionally charged language⁶¹ to create a fear of having children. Hysterical warnings have been characteristic of the population reduction movement from the days of Malthus to Ehrlich and the other neo-Malthusians of our day.⁶²

There is something inherently wrong with using fear to promote a social program; such tactics are commonly associated with terrorism and oppression. In addition, the use of scare tactics can cause panic. When convinced of the “dangerous problem,” fearful believers begin advocating drastic policies in an attempt to save their world.⁶³ As is noted below, this type of panic often motivates coercive programs and clear abuses of human rights.⁶⁴

Finally, when fully convinced of the need for population reduction, adherents even begin to ignore strong evidence to the contrary.⁶⁵ “Even the fear that food supply is about to fall behind the growth of world population has been persistently aired, despite the continual *increase* in the amount of food per capita in the world as a whole and in the major undeveloped regions.”⁶⁶

C. Coercion is the Common Tool of Population Reduction Programs

Worse yet, the common result of fear-induced population reduction activism has been massive, state-run coercion. While Ehrlich may feel that “repression has been seen in a relatively

61. See Wattenberg, *supra* note 60.

62. See Weigel, *supra* note 6, at 67.

63. See Amartya Sen, *Fertility and Coercion*, 63 U. CHI. L. REV. 1035, 1042-44 (1996).

64. See *infra* Part III.C.

65. See Weigel, *supra* note 6, at 65-67 (noting in population reductionists “an imperviousness (even hostility) to empirical evidence”).

66. Sen, *supra* note 63, at 1050.

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few instances,”⁶⁷ the record is replete with both blatant and subtle uses of government power to force parents to limit or completely avoid having children.

1. *Blatant forms of coercion*

Blatant uses of force have caused the most obvious human rights abuses. China’s population control programs—based around its “one-child” policy—have received the most focus in this area. Not all information on Chinese enforcement is available, but several methods are well documented, including threats of force, required contraception or abortion, and mass sterilization campaigns.⁶⁸ There have also been denials of social benefits, demotions at work, fines, and psychological pressures not to have children, as family and co-workers are asked to influence women to use IUDs, be sterilized, or get abortions.⁶⁹ Family-planning officials once blew up the home of a family with three children and threatened their neighbors that they would do the same to them if they did not comply with government population control policies.⁷⁰ Another prime example has been the use of forced sterilization camps in India.⁷¹

2. *Subtle forms of coercion*

More subtle, but nonetheless coercive, techniques abound. Indonesia’s national government requires its villages to subject couples contemplating more children to intense group peer pressure.⁷² Throughout the world, there is widespread misuse of technology—such as giving long-lasting antifertility vaccines to those who don’t understand the long-term results of the treatment.⁷³ Many “family planning” units operate under a set of “incentives to population and health workers designed to motivate them to induce other individuals to adopt various

67. Ehrlich & Ehrlich, *supra* note 8, at 1197.

68. See Boland, *supra* note 40, at 1143-44.

69. See *id.* at 1144-46.

70. See Sen, *supra* note 63, at 1054-55.

71. See Boland, *supra* note 40, at 1142-43.

72. See *id.* at 1146.

73. See *id.* at 1147-48.

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forms of family planning.”⁷⁴ Despite the innocent approach to such programs, many protest that “aggressively recruiting for contraception or sterilization programs [is] inherently coercive.”⁷⁵ Some have even advocated allowing abortion in any situation in which it is requested, under the theory that the absence of prohibitions, coupled with rigorous family planning, will result in a natural decrease in the total number of abortions.⁷⁶ Unfortunately, this does not always occur.

This is not to say that people who want contraception should not be able to use it. But promoting contraceptive use as a means of solving the world’s difficulties avoids confronting many real problems, and exacerbates others. Moreover, campaigns to promote contraceptive use often come at the expense of programs which could support development and distribution of food and basic medical supplies.⁷⁷

3. *New opinions on coercion for population control*

To its credit, the ICPD in Cairo explicitly rejected coercion in population planning programs.⁷⁸ It concluded that coercive programs have caused serious violations of human rights. The *Programme of Action* includes several statements opposing the use of coercion.⁷⁹ The Conference delegates are to be commended for stating opposition to at least the more blatant forms of coercion; however, subtle forms are not as likely to be eradicated.

74. *Id.* at 1144.

75. Paula Abrams, *Population Control and Sustainability: It's the Same Old Song but with a Different Meaning*, 27 ENVTL. L. 1111, 1115 (1997).

76. See Hardaway, *supra* note 10, at 1229-30.

77. Non-Western delegates to the ICPD have pointed out the considerable incongruity. A Kenyan pediatrician complained, “We are running out of vaccine. We have no syringes, no needles, no sulfa drugs, no penicillin, yet our Family Welfare Centers never lack birth-control supplies.” Sarah A. Ramage, *Resisting the West: The Clinton Administration's Promotion of Abortion at the 1994 Cairo Conference and the Strength of the Islamic Response*, 27 CAL. W. INT'L L.J. 1, 79-80 (1996). Another delegate “decried Honduras’ terrible shortage of basic medicines—things like penicillin and antibiotics—but you can find the cabinets full of condoms, pills and IUDs.” See *id.*

78. See *Programme*, *supra* note 2, at Ch. II, Princ. 8 (stating that “[r]eproductive health-care programmes should provide the widest range of services without any form of coercion”); see also *id.* §§ 7.3, 7.12.

79. See *id.*

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Unfortunately, some voices oppose the ICPD's more humane stance and still push for more coercive programs. One ICPD critic declared that,

[T]o the extent that this agenda aims at totally non-coercive solutions to overpopulation, it is doomed from the start to some degree of failure. We have simply waited too long in that we do not have enough lead-time left to make totally voluntary means work. . . .

. . . .
. . . There can be little doubt that reductions of twenty-five to eighty percent will require some form of coercion.⁸⁰

Fortunately, such voices appear to be in the minority. "If there were indisputable evidence that specific disasters would occur unless population growth rates were drastically and immediately curbed, strong measures might be warranted. But there is no such evidence."⁸¹ The Cairo Conference members took a significant step in the right direction. The results of dramatic drops in birth rates should cause them to take the next step: not promoting population reduction at all.

D. Reductionist Policies Have Created New Dangers for the Near Future

1. Turning to depopulation

Current population trends pose new dangers. Evidence put forth by the U.N.'s own *World Population Prospects, The 1996 Revision*, and updated by the *1998 Revision*, suggests that the world's population will peak in our lifetimes, and then commence an indefinite decline.⁸² As one writer notes, birth rates have fallen so far, so low, around the world that avoiding *depopulation* may be the next major concern.⁸³ The *1998 Revision* reports:

In practically all countries of the more developed regions fertility is significantly below the level necessary for the replacement of generations (TFR of approximately 2.1). In 20

80. Christine E. Gudorf, *Gender and Culture in the Globalization of Bioethics*, 15 ST. LOUIS U. PUB. L. REV. 331, 340, 342 (1996).

81. Boland, *supra* note 40, at 1161.

82. See Eberstadt, *supra* note 37, at 3.

83. See Wattenberg, *supra* note 60.

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of the more developed countries the TFR has stayed at below-replacement level for at least two decades. In the 1980s-1990s fertility has decreased to levels below replacement in several countries from the less developed regions, including all countries in the populous region of Eastern Asia (except Mongolia). Rapid fertility transition in South-eastern Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean brings an increasing number of developing countries close to that threshold: currently the TFR is below 3 (but higher than 2.1) and decreasing in 34 countries with a combined population of 930 million people.⁸⁴

Only forty years ago, the total fertility rate (or average number of children born per woman, per lifetime) was five. Birthrates in the United States have been below replacement level for twenty-five straight years.⁸⁵ Most of the nations of Europe are already in decline, with Italy dying off the fastest with only 1.2 children per couple.⁸⁶

Why should drops in world birth rates concern people? Baby busts, like baby booms, are geometric.⁸⁷ Based on the current drops in birthrates worldwide, the next generation would be 30% smaller than ours.⁸⁸ While it is true that for a few more years, "absolute increments"⁸⁹ will increase the world population,⁹⁰ current trends show that depopulation will begin by the year 2040, and world population will shrink by at least 25% with each successive generation.⁹¹ True, many in the more congested areas of the world might prefer an "emptier planet." But less than 3% of the earth's ice-free land is occupied by humans.⁹² The *Programme of Action*, while recognizing that population rate is on the decline,⁹³ continues to emphasize the

84. *United Nations 1998 Revision of the World Population Estimates and Projections*, (visited Jan. 22, 1999) <<http://www.undp.org.popin/1998.html>>.

85. See Wattenberg, *supra* note 60.

86. See *id.*

87. See *id.*

88. See Eberstadt, *supra* note 37, at 8.

89. This phrase is synonymous with population infusions on an annual basis.

90. See *Programme*, *supra* note 2, § 1.3.

91. See Eberstadt, *supra* note 37, at 9.

92. See KASUN, *supra* note 18, at 37.

93. See *Programme*, *supra* note 2, § 1.3.

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short term population bulge,⁹⁴ and repeats the need for continuing with population reduction policies.⁹⁵

The possibility of depopulation should concern us. Losing population voluntarily—i.e., before war, famine, disease and other causes take their toll—works against the maintenance (and even survival) of a species. Moreover, it brings with it a host of new problems for populations of the future.

2. *Dramatically ageing populations*

One of the most obvious problems caused by steep birthrate declines will be a dramatic population ageing.⁹⁶ “Ageing populations will strain medical systems in many developing countries, which are still struggling to protect the health of younger age groups.”⁹⁷ The *Programme of Action* itself recognizes “record increases in proportion and number of elderly persons.”⁹⁸

The median age of the world’s population in 1995 was estimated at twenty-five years. According to the UN’s “low variant” model, the median age fifty years from now could be over forty-two. Japan’s median age would be fifty-three; Germany’s fifty-five; and Italy’s fifty-eight.⁹⁹ Currently, “[t]he oldest country in the world in 1998 is Italy, with 1.6 persons aged 60 or above for each person below 15 years of age, followed by Greece, Japan, Spain and Germany.”¹⁰⁰ This trend will weaken the workforce supporting populations of the future. In 2050, it is likely that over half of a nation’s workers will be over fifty.¹⁰¹

With significant increases in elderly populations, the UN is now beginning to measure the rapid growth of octogenarians, nonagenarians and centenarians. In a report issued October 27, 1998, the report concluded:

94. *See id.* § 3.14.

95. *See id.* § 6.1.

96. *See The State of the World Population 1998, The New Generations: Extending Life and Health* (visited on Feb. 9, 1999) <<http://www.unfpa.org/swp/1998/presssummary6.htm>>.

97. *Id.*

98. *Programme*, *supra* note 2, § 6.16.

99. *See Eberstadt*, *supra* note 37, at 11.

100. *United Nations 1998 Revision of the World Population Estimates and Projections*, *supra* note 84.

101. *See Eberstadt*, *supra* note 37, at 16.

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In 1998, 66 million persons in the world were aged 80 or over. . . . This number is expected to increase almost 6 fold by 2050 to reach 370 million persons. . . .

. . . .
. . . [J]ust 1.1 per cent of the world's population are 80 years or older, yet it is the fastest growing population segment.¹⁰²

While the ability of the labor market to provide for society undergoes a relative decrease, the costs of caring for a geriatric population significantly rise.

There will be little money to support this "grayby boom."¹⁰³ First, "[a]s the ratio of employees to retirees falls, a universal pay-as-you-go retirement system has only three options for preventing bankruptcy: reduce pension benefits; raise taxes; or restrict eligibility."¹⁰⁴ Second, the cost of health care will place a large burden on governments and their already overtaxed workforce. The practical costs will become extremely difficult to bear, especially for developing nations who attempt to provide Western-style health care.¹⁰⁵ But population ageing will be a worldwide phenomenon, resulting in an international bidding war for scarce labor resources. As has happened throughout the world's history, people will migrate to the nations with the most favorable living and working conditions. Third, the number of children being born that will support that group is in relative decline.

The proportion of children, less than 15 years old, declined from 34 per cent in 1950 to 30 per cent in 1998 while the proportion of older persons, aged 60 or over, increased from 8 to 10 per cent over the same period. By 2050, it is expected, according to the medium variant projection, that the proportion of children will have declined by one-third of its 1998 level, to 20 per cent, and that the proportion of older

102. *United Nations 1998 Revision of the World Population Estimates and Projections*, *supra* note 84.

103. Wattenberg, *supra* note 60.

104. Eberstadt, *supra* note 37, at 17.

105. UNFPA Press Release, *Expert Warns Developing Countries on Cost of Western-style Social Security Systems, as Technical Meeting Enters Final Day*, Oct. 9, 1998 (visited on Feb. 9, 1999) <<http://www.unfpa.org/news/pressroom/1988/agerel4.htm>>.

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persons will have more than doubled, to 22 per cent, exceeding the proportion of children.¹⁰⁶

3. *World population distributions*

Both migrant movement and the uneven growth patterns in the world populations will cause a significant redistribution of world population.¹⁰⁷ “In 1995, the ratio of population between ‘less developed’ and ‘more developed’ regions stood at about four to one; in 2050, by these projections, it would be seven to one.”¹⁰⁸ As noted above, these populations will not only increase in their own spheres; labor vacuums in the “developed” world will also require Europe and other Western nations to assume increasingly larger numbers of migrant populations. A shift in global power will occur,¹⁰⁹ as nations not bent on reduction will increase their numbers both domestically and in expatriate populations abroad. Many Western nations, convinced that they must rid themselves of their population, will find their people becoming increasingly more scarce, until there are relatively few of them left.¹¹⁰

4. *Son preference*

A problem found largely (but not exclusively) in China is the predominance of “son preference.”¹¹¹ Parents in many societies who want only one child are attempting to opt exclusively for boys, in order to both protect the family and carry on the family name. While the worst abuses of this are clearly in China—including the neglect of female children¹¹² or outright infanticide—the technological ability to determine the gender of the fetus is becoming increasingly available throughout the world. Coupled with authorizations by some governments for

106. *United Nations 1998 Revision of the World Population Estimates and Projections*, *supra* note 84.

107. *See* Eberstadt, *supra* note 37, at 9-10.

108. *Id.*

109. *See id.* at 9-11.

110. *See* Eberstadt, *supra* note 37, at 10 (depicting the change in the world's most populous countries from 1950 to 2050, including predictions that half of the cities in 2050 will be new and that Nigeria will have a greater population than the United States).

111. *See* Boland, *supra* note 40, at 1149-50.

112. *See id.* at 1149.

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abortion at will, there is a serious danger of creating a society with a large disproportion of boys to girls.¹¹³ Such would not be merely a dating dilemma; the number of possible mothers is directly related to the number of children that may be born. Thus, there is the potential for even more drastic reductions in population.

5. *Wars, famines, and epidemics*

Perhaps most alarming (and least discussed among academics) is the fact that the U.N. predictions don't consider that "catastrophes such as wars, famines or new epidemics" will take place during the next hundred years.¹¹⁴ The decision-makers of the world are increasingly the post-war baby boomers, individuals in their mid- to late-forties. One may suppose that many of these leaders are unaccustomed to large wars, which incur substantial human casualties, since few of them were alive to see the last world war. But the fact that a generation has largely gone without war does not mean that future populations could not be reduced, even decimated, by regional or global wars. Unfortunately, such fighting usually kills the young, working-age population more than any other demographic group, thus exacerbating the problem of supporting society's infrastructure and legions of the elderly with a reduced workforce.

In addition, while world wide famines may seem unlikely, it is dangerous in long-range planning to assume they will not occur. Moreover, the possibility of natural disasters should not be taken lightly. The recurrence of earthquakes, hurricanes, and flooding seems to increase every year. Thousands have been wiped out in single events, and the number of people that will be harmed in future earthquakes has been estimated in the millions.¹¹⁵ Surely asserting that such will not happen again in population projections is walking a very thin line. Even proposing that natural disasters in the future will not be worse than those we have already experienced is a dangerous assumption.

113. *See id.* at 1149-50.

114. Eberstadt, *supra* note 37, at 4 (quoting UNITED NATIONS POPULATION DIVISION, WORLD POPULATION PROSPECTS, THE 1996 REVISION (1996)).

115. *See* Rick DeVecchio, *Ready or Not*, S.F. CHRON., Jan. 10, 1999, at 1/Z1.

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Finally, it is naive to suppose that no new epidemics will occur. Admittedly, one can place confidence in medical technology in solving such problems. But solutions are not always immediate. The Spanish flu pandemic of 1918 that killed more than twenty million people has yet to be deciphered.¹¹⁶ According to researchers, outbreaks of future viruses are not only “as inevitable as another California earthquake . . . [but] world health officials would not have the capacity to make the vaccine fast enough to save millions of lives if another deadly influenza virus is unleashed upon a population without immunity against it.”¹¹⁷ In contrast, population increases are relatively slow, taking years or decades to develop. So much for the principle of creating an “enhanced quality of life” for future generations. If population decline continues to be purposeful and unabated, the chance increases that if natural disaster, disease, or serious war did hit, the human race would be less equipped to survive it.

A prime example of a real threat is an epidemic we are already familiar with—AIDS.

The *1998 Revision* demonstrates a devastating mortality toll from HIV/AIDS. For instance, in the 29 hardest-hit African countries, the average life expectancy at birth is currently 7 years less than it would have been in the absence of AIDS. The highest prevalence of HIV in the world is currently in Botswana, where one of every 4 adults is infected. Life expectancy at birth in Botswana is anticipated to fall from 61 years in 1990-1995 to 41 years by 2000-2005. Based on the United Nations projections, Botswana’s population by 2025 may be 23 per cent smaller than it would have been in the absence of AIDS.¹¹⁸

AIDS is becoming a more serious problem in areas outside of Africa.¹¹⁹ At the very least, the AIDS epidemic illustrates the need to consider current and potential disasters in deciding whether we should further reduce the sizes of our populations.

116. See William Hathaway, *Flu’s Clues; Scientists in Meriden Racing to Crack Code of a Killer*, HARTFORD COURANT, Dec. 6, 1998, at A1.

117. *Id.*

118. *United Nations 1998 Revision of the World Population Estimates and Projections*, *supra* note 84.

119. *See id.*

Population reductionists may argue that decreases in population will minimize the incidence of wars, famines, and epidemics in the future. Such disasters may indeed harm larger numbers of people in the more densely populated areas of the world. Nevertheless, cutting population numbers in the hopes that fewer catastrophes will result is a dangerous game. Under that theory, the world would need to avoid significant catastrophes for nearly thirty years, since the population will continue to increase approximately that long; if a catastrophe does occur, it could wipe out a vast number of the already scarce working and reproducing section of the population, leading to further depopulation dangers. While it may take twenty years to produce a viable parent, a large number of them may be wiped out in a single day.

6. *Lack of simple recovery from population decline*

Some have dismissed population shrinkage, saying that “[s]hould population decline become excessive in the next 50 years, promotion of childbirth could be accomplished relatively easily.”¹²⁰ But there is really no theory that explains how below-replacement fertility rates will go back up.¹²¹ In addition, some countries—notably Sweden—which are attempting to encourage births by monetary incentives and time off, are finding that “[t]he enticements aren’t working . . . individuals simply don’t want the bother of caring for children.”¹²² Finally, in a time where people are prospering more than at any other time in history, many are saying that they do not have enough money to have children.¹²³ Teaching people that children cost too much to allow us to have the “quality of life” we want may have damaging results that are difficult to overcome.

E. The Anti-natalist Devaluation of Life

120. G. Mackenzie Gordon, Editorial, *The Population Explosion is Over*, N. Y. TIMES, Dec. 14, 1997, § 6, at 20 (responding to Wattenberg, *supra* note 60).

121. *See* Wattenberg, *supra* note 60.

122. *Birth Dearth*, RICHMOND TIMES DISPATCH, Aug. 3, 1998, at A-8.

123. *See* Wattenberg, *supra* note 60; *see also* Justice Georg Fr. Rieber-Mohn, *The Dissolution of Core Values: Development of Crime and Society in Postwar Scandinavia with an Emphasis on Norwegian Circumstances*, 1998 BYU L. REV. 1629, 1634-39 (1998) (noting high consumption levels in Norway, coupled with increasing parental detachment from children).

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Life itself begins to take on a different meaning under population reduction programs. The promulgation of so-called "anti-natalist" programs gives people a specific message: the birth of children is increasingly a bad thing, an unaffordable thing, and something we have to curtail. Before supporting such programs, nations must ask themselves: what will anti-natalist policies do to our country in the long term? Will it affect the way our society's parents regard children? Even strong inherent desires to raise children can be diminished and destroyed by propaganda and governmental incentives that portray children as unjustifiable expenses or "things" to avoid. Moreover, the sanctity of life is automatically diminished under such programs. This is especially so when abortion is available under any circumstance as a means of "controlling" the population.¹²⁴ Already, abortion is used as a form of birth control in many countries. Increased abortion, infanticide, fatal neglect, and other results of population reduction efforts are indicative of the way people regard life.

China is again at the "forefront" of population reduction activism. Its National People's Congress prepared a draft law calling for sterilization of the mentally and physically disabled and those suffering from hereditary diseases.¹²⁵ Although the actual law was toned down due to worldwide criticism, the new law still requires that couples found in their premarital exam to be "unsuitable for reproduction" take long-term contraceptive measures; those with communicable diseases must postpone marriage.¹²⁶ In addition, another Chinese draft law would allow hospitals to euthanize terminally ill patients at the patients' request.¹²⁷ This has been considered more seriously since the proportion of elderly people in China is straining the economy so seriously.¹²⁸ These are not the ravings of a population reduction extremist. These were actual laws, thoroughly discussed and reviewed by a people's government, if only in Communist China.

124. It is notable that the *Programme* condemns abortion as a form of birth control: "In no case should abortion be promoted as a method of family planning." *Programme*, *supra* note 2, § 8.25.

125. *See* Boland, *supra* note 40, at 1151.

126. *See id.* at 1152.

127. *See id.*

128. *See id.* at 1153.

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The atrocity of such laws becomes even more apparent through a simple analogy. Medical technology shows that AIDS is a vicious, as yet incurable disease that continues to spread. The more people that have it, the worse it gets, and the quality of life is severely diminished for all. One could suggest that we stop the spread of the disease—euthanize all AIDS carriers, or at least sterilize and seclude them from the rest of humanity. Why do we not do it? Because we favor life. We try to help preserve life and save even the lives of the few. We must focus on treating people's problems, not eliminating people.

Not surprisingly, virtually all religions have supported sustaining life and have thus been strongly pro-natal.¹²⁹ Husband and wife have, as their major responsibility, the task of rearing children correctly as positive contributors to the family and society. It should be sobering to all religions that some have attempted to manipulate their doctrines to comport with a new theology on population, consumption, and ecology.¹³⁰

F. Population Reduction Fosters the Disintegration of the Family

Principle 9 of the *Programme of Action* states: "The family is the basic unit of society, and as such should be strengthened. It is entitled to receive comprehensive protection and support."¹³¹ In many parts of the text, the Conference pledges to promote "policies . . . supportive of the family"¹³² and provide "more effective assistance to families."¹³³ Nevertheless, the Programme seeks to continue population reduction. Population reduction seriously detracts from families in at least three ways.

First, it directly seeks to reduce the family itself. While giving lip service to allowing families the right to choose the

129. See Harold Coward, *Religious Responses to the Population Sustainability Problematic: Implications for Law*, 27 ENVTL. L. 1169, 1171 (1997) (citing Catholic, Muslim, Hindu, and Buddhist teachings). One religion declared: "We affirm the sanctity of life and its importance in God's eternal plan." THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS, *The Family: A Proclamation to the World* (Sept. 23, 1995) <http://www.lds.org/en/4_Official_Church_Policy/Proclamation.html>.

130. See Coward, *supra* note 129, at 1171-79.

131. *Programme*, *supra* note 2, at Ch. II, Princ. 9.

132. *Id.* § 5.9.

133. *Id.* § 5.10.

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number and spacing of their children, it aggressively persuades them to reduce or eliminate the number of children they will have. In the guise of "offering choices," the Programme encourages contraceptive use whenever possible. This agenda is tellingly revealed by one supporter of population reduction in the Programme, who stated, "The Cairo Programme emphasizes *reduction* in birth rates *through voluntary, informed choice* by individuals and couples."¹³⁴ In other words, "informed choice" is only a tool for the underlying agenda of reducing birthrates.

Certainly, people should have the choice to use contraceptives, and many are indeed unable to access that technology. But there is a difference between making contraception available and preaching to people the need for its use, especially when subsidized contraception programs come at the expense of additional food and medical supplies. Moreover, contraception has been ineffective in its ill-conceived attempts. As one commentator has noted, "[t]he weight of expert opinion is on the side of choice and motivation, rather than contraceptive availability, as the key to family size."¹³⁵

More importantly, population reduction programs have increasingly caused people to have only one child in the family. The trend is worrisome indeed. Families of children without brothers, sisters, aunts, and uncles will create a sadder, lonelier society.¹³⁶ In the year 2050 (according to its present birthrate), nearly three-fifths of all Italian children will have no siblings, cousins, aunts, or uncles!¹³⁷ Less than five percent of Italian children will have both siblings and cousins.¹³⁸ It is incredible to imagine a society in which the "only biological relatives for many people—perhaps most people—will be their ancestors."¹³⁹ But sadness and severely diminished quality of life are not the only downsides; the nature of the human population will be radically affected.¹⁴⁰

134. Abrams, *supra* note 75, at 1114-15 (emphasis added).

135. Virginia Deane Abernethy, *Allowing Fertility to Decline: 200 Years After Malthus's Essay on Population*, 27 ENVTL. L. 1097, 1098 (1997).

136. See Wattenberg, *supra* note 60.

137. See Eberstadt, *supra* note 37, at 21.

138. See *id.*

139. *Id.* at 20 (emphasis deleted).

140. One international religion has thus declared: "We warn that the

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Throughout the remembered human experience, the family has been the primary and indispensable instrument for socializing a people. In the family, the individual found extended bonds of obligation and reciprocal resources—including emotional resources—upon which he could draw. Under the demographic projections considered here, all that would change momentously

. . . .
 . . . How will each person's little tribe be formed in such a future? Who will we play with, learn from, love unthinkingly, and fight with ferociously, knowing all the while that we can do these things because we are linked together by an indissoluble common tie?¹⁴¹

Second, population reduction programs seek to replace traditionally private family matters with governmental intervention and decision making. Choices for when to marry, how many children to have, and when to stop bearing children would increasingly be the province of administrative bureaucrats. Suggestions that government replace the family are increasingly being voiced. As one supporter noted, "Better health, social and financial support services will take the place of large families in providing for old age; encourage smaller, healthier, better-educated families."¹⁴²

Third, population reduction programs increasingly are trying to take the most important element of the family out of the equation—the mother—in the guise of providing women with "more fulfilling" opportunities of work and education. In a press release following an ICPD meeting, Conference delegates declared: "Women are having half as many children as their mothers' generation, because they have more choices—in education, marriage and employment, as well as in family size and spacing. Extending these choices to all women will further slow the momentum of population growth."¹⁴³ The Programme's

disintegration of the family will bring upon individuals, communities and nations the calamities foretold by ancient and modern prophets." THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS, *supra* note 129.

141. Eberstadt, *supra* note 37, at 21-22.

142. *The State of the World Population 1998, The New Generations: Maximizing Resources for the New Generations* (visited on Feb. 9, 1999) <<http://www.unfpa.org/swp/1998/presssummary1.htm>>.

143. *The State of the World Population 1998, Summary: The New Generations*.

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tenth principle states that “[e]veryone has the right to education . . . designed to strengthen respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, including those relating to population and development.”¹⁴⁴ One of the Programme’s stated objectives is

[t]o ensure that comprehensive and factual information and a full range of reproductive health care services, including family planning, are accessible, . . . [and]

. . . .
. . . [t]o enable and support *responsible* voluntary decisions about child-bearing and methods of family planning of their choice, as well as other methods of their choice for regulation of fertility . . . and to have the information, education and means to do so.¹⁴⁵

Amazingly, a major purpose of population reduction programs in educating women is to induce them to “raise their sights” and stop having children. One commentator insists that we should reduce birthrates and “improv[e] . . . the status of women” by providing more contraception, giving women other interests, and increasing “education.”¹⁴⁶ The traditional role of women as mothers is even directly attacked: “Schools, the media and other social institutions should seek to *eliminate stereotypes* in all types of communication and educational materials that reinforce existing inequities between males and females”¹⁴⁷ To such population reduction supporters, this means that the stereotypical role of women as mothers should be completely removed.

This point is not to be misunderstood. Gender discrimination is a real problem, persisting in nearly all societies. Every woman should receive a good education, including marketable skills and a broad background. But educational programs which demean motherhood or declare that all careers outside of mothering are better and “more fulfilling,” are making a direct attack on the family. The motives of those promoting such programs should be clearly

(visited on Feb. 9, 1999) <<http://www.unfpa.org/swp/1998/presssummary1.htm>>.

144. *Programme*, *supra* note 2, at Ch. II, Princ. 10.

145. *Id.* § 7.5 (emphasis added).

146. Boland, *supra* note 40, at 1164-66.

147. *Programme*, *supra* note 2, § 4.19 (emphasis added).

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exposed. This type of “education” destroys societies by undermining their foundations. Preserving the family is important to most of the nations attending the ICPD. There is still hope that what has become the duping of the Western woman will not spread to the rest of the world.

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS

In order to better focus on population “development,” a number of steps should be taken. First, we need to reevaluate. We should assess our situation as it really is and make clear the negative effects of population reduction. Political leaders should be keenly aware of pending problems with ageing populations, near-bankrupt retirement programs, and the continually shrinking workforce destined to support them both. People should understand that influxes of migrant populations are due in part to increasingly scarce labor resources, which will be magnified in the years to come.¹⁴⁸ Everyone should become more informed about the long-term consequences of geometric population reduction, especially in light of natural and man-made disasters which are occurring and are yet to come. People should understand the detrimental effect of population reduction policies on families, and thus on society as well. The most worrisome aspect of the real population problems is that very few are aware of them, and most are still convinced that the opposite exists.

Second, we must mitigate our damages. Governments should end policies which blatantly or subtly promote population reduction. The destructive trends noted above should be tracked to their source and conscientiously reversed. In particular, the ICPD should reexamine its Programme where censure is given to “[c]ountries that have not completed their *demographic transition*.”¹⁴⁹ Unless governments and organizations like the ICPD take the lead in halting these trends, the peoples of the world are not likely to adopt more sustainable patterns. Particularly in the United States, politicians can use the opportunity to do more than *talk* about the importance of “family values.”¹⁵⁰

148. See *supra* notes 102-108 and accompanying text.

149. *Programme*, *supra* note 2, § 6.4 (emphasis added).

150. “Family values” was one of the major themes of President Clinton’s

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Third, we must reject improper population “incentives.” The ICPD has, at least generally, renounced the use of coercive methods of attaining ideal population goals.¹⁵¹ The Conference needs to take it a step further: it must condemn subtle and blatant forms of coercive population control outright. Only then is it possible for human rights violations in family choices to cease. In addition, by removing support and incentives for population reduction, we will gain resources to use for furthering productive governmental objectives.

Fourth, we should reevaluate our attempts to “educate” populations. Any part of our “educational” plans which encourage population reduction or demean valuable family roles should be removed. More generally, education should include an exposure to a variety of ideas with a minimal amount of public programming. But if ideology must be a part of training programs, it should never include perceptions which directly harm society. Declaring mothers inferior or having children objectionable is directly harmful to society, and should be recognized as such. We should do all that we can to reinforce the Programme’s commitment to the family, by following through on family-sensitive policies, leaving traditional family responsibilities to the family members, and by not trying to “educate” according to anyone’s ideology.

Fifth, we should work to reduce environmental abuses as much as we can without trying to eliminate the people in the environment. A growing population and a healthy environment do not need to be mutually exclusive. While clear solutions to repairing and maintaining the environment are not always forthcoming, progress is being made.¹⁵² Even private industry is making choices that are increasingly more environmentally

reelection campaign in 1996. See Floyd Abrams, *Clinton v. the First Amendment*, N.Y. TIMES, Mar. 30, 1997, § 6, at 42; *Clinton Hits Distillers for Lifting TV Ad Ban*, CHI. TRIB., Nov. 10, 1996, at C-14; *State of White House Also Needs Attention*, S.F. CHRON., Feb. 4, 1997, at A18; *Re-elect Clinton; Misgivings Aside, the U.S. is Headed in the Right Direction*, PITTSBURGH POST-GAZETTE, Nov. 1, 1996, at A-12.

151. See *Programme*, supra note 2, at Ch. II, princ. 8, §§ 7.3, 7.12.

152. See Paula Murray, *The International Environmental Management Standard, ISO 14000: A Non-Tariff Barrier or a Step to an Emerging Global Environmental Policy?*, 18 U. PA. J. INT’L BUS. L. 577 (1997) (stating that “[i]n the latter half of the twentieth century, there has been an increasing awareness of the need for environmental protection on a global scale”).

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sensitive.¹⁵³ Nevertheless, there is no justification for giving up on keeping people in the environment.

Sixth, we should focus on actual development. This includes following the Programme's goal of "strengthen[ing] food, nutrition and agricultural policies and programmes, and fair trade relations, with special attention to the creation and strengthening of food security at all levels."¹⁵⁴ The Programme also rightly supports "[j]ob creation in the industrial, agricultural and service sectors . . . facilitated by Governments and the private sector through the establishment of more favourable climates for expanded trade and investment."¹⁵⁵ We should recognize that contraceptive programs should not have priority over programs for food production and distribution, medical care, agricultural development, and antipoverty efforts. Institutions that perpetuate poverty should be replaced with income and land distribution, employment opportunities, social security, health care, and better life for women.¹⁵⁶ Global policies must focus on alleviating poverty and sharing resources.¹⁵⁷ Poor, hungry people are not a blight that must be controlled or suppressed by population control programs; if we will help them feed themselves, they will be a healthier, happier, more "developed" population.

V. CONCLUSION

In responding to the significant dangers of depopulation and anti-natalist policies in general, we must avoid causing a pendulum shift to the other extreme. Using scare tactics to increase fertility should not be the reaction to dangerous population trends. Public policy should only rarely advocate the extreme. Instead, we should simply stop promoting population reduction, point out its damaging effects, then set about the task of solving the world's real problems. Focusing on people's

153. *See generally id.*

154. *Programme, supra* note 2, § 3.20.

155. *Id.* § 3.21.

156. *See* Shapiro, *supra* note 30, at 861.

157. *See* Asoka Bandarage, *The Population Explosion is Over*, N. Y. TIMES, Dec. 14, 1997, § 6, at 24.

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problems will never be simple. But it will be no more difficult, and much more rewarding, than trying to eliminate the people themselves.

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