



Missing the Forest: A Position Paper about the Need to Keep
Environment on the Population and Development Agenda

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INTRODUCTION

Ten years ago in Cairo, Egypt, the world made a commitment to work toward a sustainable future through an innovative and holistic approach to population and development. By signing the Cairo Programme of Action (PoA)¹ at the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), the U.S. and 178 other countries agreed that the best way to achieve this future is through human-centered development policies. This new consensus represented a shift in international thinking about development away from a focus primarily on economic and demographic targets toward a new development paradigm that accounts for the complex factors that influence people's lives. Among these many factors is the environment.

Chapter three of the Cairo PoA states that meeting the basic needs of our growing population is dependent upon a clean environment, and that governments should include population factors in environmental planning, especially in ecologically fragile areas.² ***Our paper argues that this call for integration of policy on population and on environment is critical to achieving the goals and promises of Cairo, and that thus far, efforts to support integration for policy and programs and by donors have been inadequate.***³ While this poses challenges to implementing the Cairo PoA, solutions do exist. Some of these are highlighted below in this introduction, with further detail in the key findings and recommendation summary sections of this paper.

There is so much at stake if we fail to meet the goals of Cairo – a future of poverty and poor health for billions of people, the perpetuation of gender-based inequalities, degraded ecosystems and habitats, and even more human conflict. This scenario leads to unstable communities and an insecure world. If we want to make progress toward improving access to reproductive health care, alleviating poverty, achieving sustainable development, and ultimately, maintaining national and global stability, we must recognize the environment as an integral component of the population and development goals for which delegates fought so hard in Cairo. For one important perspective on Cairo, therefore, we must view the status of attaining its goals through an environmental lens. As the international community assesses progress and challenges in implementing the PoA, the National Wildlife Federation (NWF)⁴ urges NGOs, governments and donors not to lose sight of environmental concerns as they relate to the attainment of the Cairo goals. The health of our environment relates directly to human health, economic opportunity, gender status, and wildlife survival, underscoring the necessity of making environmental issues a priority on this tenth anniversary.

¹ http://www.unfpa.org/icpd/icpd_poa.htm (contents of Programme of Action);

Goals and financial commitments of the Cairo Programme of Action: Universal Education (para 4.18); Reduction of Infant and Child Mortality (para 8.16); Reduction of Maternal Mortality (para 8.21); Reproductive Health Services Universally Available by 2015 (para 7.6); and Financial Commitments (paras 13.15 and 14.11) - *para 14.11 states that donor countries should contribute 0.7% of GNP to overall official development assistance

² http://www.unfpa.org/icpd/icpd_poa.htm#ch3c

³ Assessments of other indicators of progress toward the Cairo goals are underway, such as the Global Roundtable, *Countdown 2015*. This paper reviews the Cairo goals from the perspective of integrated population and environment programs and policies.

⁴ The mission of the National Wildlife Federation is to educate, inspire and assist individuals and organizations of diverse cultures to conserve wildlife and other natural resources and to protect the Earth's environment in order to achieve a peaceful, equitable and sustainable future. (www.nwf.org)

Our research indicates that development efforts can be more effective when funding is geared toward programs and policies that integrate population and environment issues instead of “health only” or “conservation only” approaches. ***Integrated, multi-sectoral initiatives can reach a wider audience, have greater benefits to people and wildlife, ensure more meaningful participation at national and local levels, address poverty, mitigate gender constraints, and have greater chances for long-term sustainability.*** In Madagascar, for example, the U.S. Agency for International Development is working with local health, population and environment organizations on an integrated program that has expanded health and family planning services to populations in some of the most ecologically rich regions of the country. Evidence showing increased contraceptive use and improved environmental practices in these communities provides hope that the integrated model is working.⁵

This paper will also make the case that there should be more effort to concentrate integrated population and environment programs in biodiversity hotspots, areas extremely rich in ecological value and severely threatened by human activity. Since population growth in biodiversity hotspots is higher than the global average, and because these regions are invaluable to human health and wildlife survival, addressing population growth in these regions will go a long way toward achieving sustainable development and alleviating poverty. Not only will this address the unmet need of many rural populations for health services and natural resource management programs, but it will also help slow urban migration and mitigate its resulting social and economic impacts.

Garnering support for integrated population and environment programs, especially in biodiversity hotspots, as an effective means to achieve the goals of Cairo will be made easier if countries reaffirm the financial commitments they made when they signed the Programme of Action. The U.S., for example, owes over 8 billion dollars in arrears on the amount it pledged to the international community to fund the Cairo goals.⁶ Although the U.S. recently reaffirmed its commitment to Cairo at regional meetings, such as those in New York and Puerto Rico,⁷ more financial support and leadership are needed in order to adequately address remaining challenges in implementing the Cairo PoA. The lack of full funding has resulted in continued unmet need, especially in rural areas, and limited efforts to integrate population and environment services.

Now more than ever, when funding for sustainable development faces its greatest challenge, mutual support is needed among advocates and policymakers working on population and environment. We will move much faster toward a sustainable future if we can acknowledge that we cannot achieve our goals working separately. ***Gender equality, girls’ education, improvements in maternal and infant health and access to reproductive health will go unrealized if we do not make efforts to scale back biodiversity loss and environmental degradation.*** Women face unique challenges when their environments are threatened, such as foregoing educational and economic opportunities to spend more time collecting water and wood, risking reproductive disorders through increased pesticide exposure, and caring for family

⁵ U.S. Agency for International Development, Health and Family Planning Overview prepared for Bureau for Africa, Office of Sustainable Development, by the Population, Health and Nutrition project (PHNIP), July, 2002.

⁶ Amy Coen, President of Population Action International, Statement of July 8, 2004.

⁷ New York – meeting of UN Commission on Population and Development; Puerto Rico – meeting of Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)

members sickened by diseases - such as malaria and cholera - that are environmentally related. For example, “deforestation in the Sudan has quadrupled the amount of time women spend gathering wood for cooking, and the energy used to tote water from rivers and other water sources accounts for one-third of a woman’s daily calorie intake, according to the WHO.”⁸ It is therefore not merely a good idea to consider environmental issues when reviewing the implementation of the Cairo goals, but rather a necessary piece of the puzzle.

The National Wildlife Federation, like all environmental groups, is concerned with the long-term sustainability of the environment for the health of both people and wildlife. We seek to make sure the environmental message is not forgotten as we assess the progress made and the challenges that remain in implementing the Cairo Programme of Action. Through this report and a multitude of activities at the regional and national levels, as well as through participation in international conferences including the Cairo ICPD, the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), the Commission on Population and Development (CPD), and the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD), NWF is helping to ensure that the linkages between population and environment remain on the agenda of the review process.

The following sections underscore the importance of the environment to the Cairo goals, detailing the failure to integrate the environment into development, the adverse consequences of that failure, and how integration can be accomplished. We do this by evaluating efforts at the policymaking level to address population and environment issues, by providing case studies of integrated programs in areas of high biodiversity, and finally, by making policy recommendations.

ENVIRONMENT - THE MISSING PIECE

Environmental concerns in the context of population were not new to Cairo. In fact, there are at least three decades worth of precedent at various international fora linking population to the environment as a means to achieve a more sustainable world. The 1992 Rio Declaration underscored this connection in its very first principle, which states that human beings are central to sustainable development.⁹ Despite success in linking population and environment concerns in the 1990s, those connections have been largely ignored and forgotten ten years later and efforts to support this link are still weak relative to other development concerns.

In the frenzy to gather information, report on progress and challenges, and analyze findings in the lead up to the ten year review of Cairo, environmental issues seem to be overshadowed by other, albeit related development concerns like poverty and gender, despite the obvious inter-connections. The review process even goes so far as to measure specific indicators that depend upon the health of the environment, yet environmental indicators have failed to make it onto the agenda. Measuring maternal health and girls’ education, for instance, should include indicators about the state of the environment. For example, degraded soils lead to greater pesticide use, putting more and more women, who make up more than half of the world’s agricultural

⁸ Nierenberg, Danielle, “Correcting Gender Myopia: Gender Equity, Women’s Welfare, and the Environment.” *Worldwatch Paper 161*, p. 34, 2002.

⁹ Lutz, Wolfgang and Shah, Mahendra, “Population Should be on the Johannesburg Agenda,” *Nature*, July 4, 2002. Taken from the Global Science Panel on Population & Environment’s “Population in Sustainable Development.”

workforce, at risk for reproductive disorders. Rapid deforestation leads to school absenteeism for girls as their responsibilities turn toward babysitting younger siblings and collecting resources to help ease their mothers' workloads.

Water also illustrates the interaction among health, environment, population and development, and is a priority issue for NWF.¹⁰ Access to potable water and adequate sanitation, both of which are primary indicators of social and economic development, is dependent upon the environmental health of freshwater ecosystems. NWF, therefore, advocates policies that address freshwater ecosystems, especially in the context of meeting the water and sanitation targets of the Millennium Development Goals.¹¹ Integrated population and environment programs are an effective strategy in addressing freshwater ecosystem health and therefore improving social, economic, and sustainable development.

Over 1.1 billion people in the developing world do not have access to potable freshwater, and over 2.4 billion lack access to adequate sanitation. Water-related illnesses are the leading cause of morbidity and mortality among the poor in developing countries, with most deaths affecting children under five, our next generation. At any given moment, almost 50% of all people in developing countries are suffering from at least one of the main diseases caused by insufficient access to adequate water and sanitation. These include diarrhea, ascariis, guinea worm, hookworm, schistosomiasis, and trachoma.¹² The role of gathering water and caring for the sick falls primarily on women and girls. In Africa women and girls spend 40 billion person-hours per year hauling water, resulting in lost educational and economic opportunities. When girls miss school, progress towards development goals slows. A girl's educational level is a dominant indicator in the size, health and economic well being of her family.¹³

The next section looks at efforts in the international arena to support the linkages among population, environment, and gender issues, and to reaffirm the Cairo commitments.

POPULATION AND ENVIRONMENT IN INTERNATIONAL POLICYMAKING

At the 2002 ten-year review of the Rio Earth Summit, despite tireless efforts by NGOs and environmental activists around the globe urging policymakers to make explicit the critical impact that growing populations and increasing consumption have on achieving environmental goals, WSSD failed to make population a priority issue. According to Jyoti Shankar Singh, President of Population 2005, "the lack of major involvement and participation of population organizations in the preparatory process"¹⁴ was a critical factor in this. Now, at the tenth anniversary of Cairo, we face the challenge of ensuring that environmental concerns are placed on the agenda when measuring progress toward population and development goals. Yet, there was little

¹⁰ "Population, Water & Wildlife: Finding a Balance," National Wildlife Federation (www.nwf.org/population)

¹¹ <http://www.developmentgoals.org/>

¹² United Nations Development Programme, *Water Governance for Poverty Reduction: Key Issues and the UNDP Response to Millennium Development Goals*, pp.41-2, 2004.

¹³ Bellamy, Carol, *The State of The World's Children*, 2004, UNICEF, December 2003, executive summary http://www.unicef.org/sowc04/sowc04_16165.html accessed July 14, 2004

¹⁴ Shankar Singh, Jyoti, "Population and Sustainable Development." *Population 2005*. Excerpt from statement delivered at the Seventh General Assembly of the Asian Forum of Parliamentarians on Population and Development (AFPPD), Beijing, China, October 17, 2002.

representation of environmental organizations at the 2004 Commission on Population and Development's (CPD) ten-year review of Cairo.

The U.S., under pressure from developing countries as well as other donor countries, has only reluctantly reaffirmed its commitment to the Cairo PoA at recent regional review conferences. The U.S. government's reaffirmation has been qualified by reservations to the PoA. This, as well as the history of funding shortfalls, raises doubt about whether there is sufficient political will to fully support and fund the implementation of policies and programs that can meet the goals of Cairo. Such reluctance from one of the world's primary sources of development aid further exacerbates the challenge of garnering high level support for population and environment interactions in the context of Cairo.

In 2000, the global community agreed upon The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) as a framework for measuring development success. *The MDGs commit the international community to an expanded vision of development by setting social, economic and environmental indicators and targets, and by recognizing the importance of creating a global partnership for development.* The MDGs could offer an excellent framework for integrating the policy guidelines of Agenda 21 and the Cairo Programme of Action. However, the absence of reproductive health in the MDGs requires that reproductive health advocates remind all concerned of the importance of reproductive health care to the MDGs and to overall development. Reproductive health advocates should take the opportunity during the anniversary of Cairo, and before the Millennium anniversary next year, to highlight the links among population, environment and sustainable development in order to strengthen understanding of the role that reproductive health plays in ensuring that the MDGs are met.

The unsatisfactory record on integrating global policy on population, environment, and development is all the more regrettable since examples of successful projects exist, which could be replicated if the support were forthcoming. As stated previously, our research suggests that programs that integrate population and environment issues can be more effective in meeting the holistic goals of Cairo than single-sector approaches. The next section highlights examples of multi-sector programs in countries that sit within some of the most biodiverse regions of the world: Ecuador, the Philippines and Mexico. Case studies from these hotspot countries illuminate the benefits of integrated population and environment programs. Following the case studies are lessons learned and recommendations on how international and national level planning can better integrate the environmental link into population and sustainable development policymaking and project implementation.

CASE STUDIES: INTEGRATING POPULATION AND ENVIRONMENT ON THE GROUND

Ecuador

Ecuador, a lower middle income country of 12.8 million people, is growing at a rate of 1.97%.¹⁵ This growth rate is substantially higher than the global average of 1.3%. In terms of fertility rates, the average number of children per woman, Ecuador also surpasses the global average at

¹⁵ <http://www.unfpa.org/profile/ecuador.cfm?Section=2>

3.3, compared with 2.8 worldwide.¹⁶ These statistics are significant, especially given that Ecuador lost 1.2% of its forest cover annually between 1990-2000, compared with .5% for the Latin America and Caribbean (LAC) region and a .1% gain for the lower middle income countries globally.¹⁷ The population statistics are significant also because Ecuador contains two of the world's most important ecological regions on Earth, the Choco-Darien-Western Ecuador hotspot and the Tropical Andes hotspot. While much of the land within the Choco-Darien-Western Ecuador hotspot is protected through various mechanisms, including reserves, parks and local controls, these efforts are insufficient to ensure the survival of all of the diversity found within its borders.¹⁸ Severe habitat degradation within this hotspot is due to extremely rapid population growth, a doubling in agricultural activity, increased logging, and the establishment of palm and eucalyptus plantations. Only 2% of the original forest cover remains in coastal Ecuador. Compared to Panama and Colombia, which comprise other sections of this hotspot, Ecuador's forest ecosystem is in dire shape.¹⁹

Much of Ecuador, including its capital city, Quito, comprises part of the Tropical Andes hotspot, considered to be the "single richest and most diverse hotspot on the planet."²⁰ With 15% - 17% of all of the Earth's vascular plant species and a level of diversity and endemism of bird species that is unparalleled, human population growth and its accompanying impacts pose a grave threat to the hotspot's biological integrity.²¹

Ecuador has the highest population density of any other country in the Latin American region.²² Its average total fertility rate is 3.3, but there are major disparities between urban and rural women and between educated and uneducated women. Rural women have a fertility rate of 4.3, while urban women in Ecuador are on par with the global rate of 2.8. Women living in the mountainous regions have an average of 5.6 children, while women in coastal areas have about 3 children. The starkest difference exists among women with different educational levels, with uneducated women having an average of 5.5 children and university educated women having 2.0.²³ The infant mortality rate is almost double in the rural areas compared with the urban areas.²⁴ While Ecuador has achieved significant progress toward achieving ICPD goals, maternal mortality is still quite high.²⁵ In terms of health indicators that relate directly to environmental conditions, there is a stark difference between urban and rural areas in access to an improved water source and sanitation facilities, with rural populations having 15% and 18% less access to these basic services, respectively.²⁶ Such disparities further underscore the need to address population issues not with a one-size-fits-all strategy, but rather with a focused assessment of the

¹⁶ De Souza, Roger-Mark and Nash, Jonathan G., Making the Link - Population Health Environment Wallchart, Population Reference Bureau, MEASURE *Communication*, August, 2002.

¹⁷ World Bank, The Little Green Data Book, 2004.

¹⁸ <http://www.biodiversityhotspots.org/xp/Hotspots/ecuador/?showpage=ConservationAction>

¹⁹ <http://www.biodiversityhotspots.org/xp/Hotspots/ecuador/?showpage=HumanImpacts>

²⁰ <http://www.biodiversityhotspots.org/xp/Hotspots/andes/?showpage=Biodiversity>

²¹ <http://www.biodiversityhotspots.org/xp/Hotspots/andes/?showpage=HumanImpacts>

²² <http://www.sierraclub.org/planet/200401/ecuador.asp>

²³ <http://www.unfpa.org/latinamerica/ecuador/3ecu0103.doc>

²⁴ <http://www.unfpa.org/profile/ecuador.cfm?Section=2>

²⁵ <http://www.unfpa.org/latinamerica/ecuador/3ecu0103.doc>

²⁶ World Bank, The Little Green Data Book, 2004.

differing realities within countries, and within the holistic framework advocated in the Cairo PoA.

In preparation for Johannesburg, Ecuador along with several countries prepared for the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) a national report summarizing its status in implementing the sustainable development goals of Agenda 21.²⁷ By virtue of their mention in the CSD report, it is apparent that population issues are understood by policymakers as part of the follow up to Rio. However, the issues do not seem to be truly integrated into government planning. For example, in the sections on fragile ecosystems, deforestation, and conservation of biodiversity, there is no mention of the value of addressing population impacts through better access to family planning and reproductive health services. There is an acknowledgement that human activity is exacerbating any progress made by environmental protection laws. There is even mention of the fact that the provinces situated in areas with endangered ecosystems are experiencing high levels of out-migration due to the inability of human populations to meet basic needs. But still there is no explicit mention of the benefits of reducing population growth as a strategy to remedy the harmful impact on the environment and therefore improve people's ability to survive in these regions.

So, although demographic factors are cited a few times in the document, population issues could be better integrated into the country's environmental planning. Better integration in the planning phase and at the policymaking level would inform more effective on-the-ground partnerships and action, as well as help to educate policymakers, program planners and community organizations about the need to deal with population growth issues in regions with high ecological value. Furthermore, such a push for integration from these levels might help to highlight its importance for the donor community, resulting, hopefully, in more financial investment in the integrated model, especially in rural areas that are rich in biodiversity.

UNFPA's proposed population program for Ecuador, formulated in consultation with the government, NGOs, bilateral donors and other international agencies, includes a strategy to improve the "capacity of local authorities to incorporate the population dimension, including the relationship between population and the environment, gender and reproductive health, into planning and programming."²⁸ This statement certainly addresses the population-environment link and seems to be in the spirit of Cairo. Yet, as mentioned above, Ecuador sits within two of the world's richest ecological systems, yet neither the Agenda 21 summary prepared for WSSD nor UNFPA's proposed population program specifically address the value of focusing the population-related efforts of Cairo in these two biodiversity hotspots.

Countries dealing with a multitude of development issues with limited financial resources wish to concentrate time and resources on what in their view are the most pressing development goals. However, as developing countries along with others have recognized, dealing with other development concerns cannot be separated from the need to address environmental issues. Environmental deterioration is a primary cause of, and perpetuates, the cycle of poverty, gender inequality, and health-related problems. Moreover, Ecuador's situation underscores why it is so

²⁷ <http://www.un.org/esa/agenda21/natlinfo/wssd/ecuador.pdf>

²⁸ <http://www.unfpa.org/latinamerica/ecuador/3ecu0103.doc> – p.9, section 32, Nov, 2000 (Program period 2001-2003)

important for the United States and other donor countries to meet their Cairo funding commitments. Countries should be afforded sufficient resources to enable them to adopt integrated approaches, which may seem novel to some but which can be most effective.

The good news is that there are examples of innovative strategies, partnerships and programs underway in countries where high population growth rates threaten biodiversity. These programs take the holistic approach advocated in Cairo by integrating population and environment objectives. If such programs could garner more national and international attention, they could be used as models for replication in other countries facing the same challenges.

In the central mountains of Ecuador, the U.S.-based NGO World Neighbors joined forces with Ecuador's Medical Center for Family Planning and Orientation (CEMOPLAF) to offer communities assistance in making sustainable choices to the every-day challenges of rural life. In communities like Guaranda in the Bolivar Province, where subsistence agriculture is the norm, soil erosion and insufficient food production have led to chronic malnutrition and an increase in male migration in search of additional income. High birth rates have exacerbated the degradation of natural resources.²⁹

Health and education indicators in these regions are lower than the national averages, while fertility rates are substantially higher. The unique partnership formed by World Neighbors and CEMOPLAF addresses these complex and interrelated issues, bringing a mixture of programs in sustainable agriculture, natural resource management, food security, and community and reproductive health. This innovative approach has resulted in an increase in agricultural production and soil and water conservation.³⁰ Research results from a 1997-8 study indicate that compared to communities in which "health only" programs are offered, communities with the integrated programs have seen a greater increase in the use of family planning methods and reproductive health services in general. **The number of family planning users in the integrated communities was 87% higher than the health-only communities.**³¹

The integrated programs have been so successful in meeting both the health and natural resource-related challenges faced by these communities that government bodies, other NGOs, and international agencies like UNFPA have begun to replicate this approach in nearby provinces, as well as in neighboring Andean countries.

In other countries facing rapid rates of population growth and severe loss of biodiversity, similar programs are underway. The following case studies highlight two such programs.

The Philippines

²⁹ <http://www.wn.org/CountryPrograms.asp?Country=Ecuador>

³⁰ World Neighbors, *Lessons from the Field: Integration of Population and Environment II: Ecuador Case Study* - <http://www.wn.org/wntstore/PDFs/P&EII.pdf>

³¹ World Neighbors, *Lessons from the Field: Integration of Population and Environment II: Ecuador Case Study* - <http://www.wn.org/wntstore/PDFs/P&EII.pdf>

In the Philippines, where 59% of the population lives in coastal regions and the growth rate in these areas is higher than the national average,³² the government has set out a framework to address food security that aims to decrease population pressures in coastal communities in order to maintain a sustainable resource base.³³ The Philippines is second only to Australia in its diversity of fish found among coral reefs, yet population growth in these species rich and highly endemic areas is increasing at a rate of 4%, much faster than the country's already high average of 2.36%.³⁴ In response, a partnership of local and foreign NGOs, with financial support from both private and government donors, launched the Integrated Population and Coastal Resource Management (I-POPCORM) project in 2001 in several of the country's high priority marine hotspots.

The project's strategy is to incorporate reproductive health interventions into conservation efforts within the country's coastal communities in order to address population growth and population momentum, as well as to meet the high unmet need for family planning. Up to 45% of the population in coastal zones is aged 15 or younger, 8% higher than the national cohort.³⁵ The fish catch, upon which these communities depend as a major source of protein, has decreased significantly in the last 50 years, while population growth has increased eight-fold.³⁶ Despite the country's ecological richness, only 7% of its coral reefs are under protection, and just one-fifth of mangrove forests remains intact.³⁷ To address these issues at the community level, I-POPCORM takes a holistic approach by targeting three critical segments of the coastal population - youth, fisher folk, and entrepreneurs – with a strategy that addresses health and economic needs while simultaneously integrating sustainable use of natural resources.³⁸ This type of approach empowers individuals and strengthens local capacity to maintain personal, family and community well being through better health, economic, and environmental outcomes.

To date, the project has helped nearly 80 villages and three municipalities develop integrated coastal management/reproductive health plans, far exceeding the original goal of ten integrated plans.³⁹ Other accomplishments include:

- capacity building in integrated coastal management and/or reproductive health for 95 Peoples' Organizations;
- family planning assistance for 6,000 couples;
- “information, education and communication” messages on sexuality and education for 5,000 youth;
- cessation of dynamite fishing in Cogtong Bay (Bohol) as a result of 24-hour patrol initiated in 2002;
- alternative livelihood training for 2,000 fisher folk; and,
- the establishment or strengthening of protection for 22 marine and mangrove areas, compared with 17 in 2001.⁴⁰

³² http://www.crc.uri.edu/comm/download/IC_41/Castro.pdf

³³ Aquina, Carmina Angel, Joan Regina Castro, and Leona Ann D'Agnes, Mainstreaming Reproductive Health and Integrated Coastal Management in Local Governance: The Philippines Experience, 2004, p.1

³⁴ Ibid., p.2

³⁵ Ibid., pp.2-4

³⁶ Ibid., p.3

³⁷ Ibid., p.3

³⁸ Ibid., pp.4-5

³⁹ Ibid., p.10

Further, I-POPCORM's evaluation design is unique among other integrated population and environment projects in that it sets out to measure actual biodiversity impacts through data on fish abundance and coral reef coverage.⁴¹

Thus far lessons learned indicate, among other things, that:

- placing reproductive health and family planning in the environmental context and emphasizing its link to food security is effective in increasing contraceptive practice;
- acceptability of family planning by religious authorities is increased if it is linked to food security;
- the concept of coastal resource management, as opposed to health-only approaches, provides the context necessary for enabling the promotion and acceptance of family planning; and
- public-private partnerships are beneficial for reaching common goals. For example, popular community shops called "sari-sari" stores are used to distribute contraceptives and therefore become natural social marketers of affordable reproductive health products and services.⁴²

Evaluation of the I-POPCORM program so far suggests that a holistic approach, involving coastal resource management strategies together with reproductive health interventions, is better poised to achieve food security, alleviate gender issues, and foster a higher level of acceptance compared with the single-sector approaches employed in non-project communities.⁴³ Multi-sector approaches not only address the many inter-linked issues that communities face, but they also involve more stakeholders, thereby ensuring a greater level of participation.

Mexico

Highlighting for U.S. conservationists the importance and success of integrated programs, NWF awarded its distinguished 2003 National Conservation Achievement Award (international category) to Dr. Rosa Vidal for her invaluable work in protecting the health of people and the environment. Dr. Vidal is founder and director of Mexico's Pronatura Chiapas, a conservation organization in the rain forests of Chiapas State in southern Mexico. This region is part of the Mesoamerica biodiversity hotspot, where forests have been disappearing despite protection efforts due to excessive slash and burn agriculture from the area's rapidly growing population. Traditionally Mayan farmers avoided the problem of infertile soils by rotating through small tracts and allowing land that was unproductive to recover. However, today's level of population growth in the region, at 4% annually compared with 1.4% for Mexico as a whole,⁴⁴ means land is rarely left fallow.

Traditionally girls often view marriage as the only means to gain access to land and respect from the elders, so the average age at first marriage for girls is 14 to 15. It is also expected that a

⁴⁰ Aquina, Carmina Angel, Joan Regina Castro, and Leona Ann D'Agnes, *Mainstreaming Reproductive Health and Integrated Coastal Management in Local Governance: The Philippines Experience*, 2004, pp.10-11

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p.7

⁴² *Ibid.*, p.12

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p.11

⁴⁴ The World Bank Group -

<http://devdata.worldbank.org/external/CPPProfile.asp?SelectedCountry=MEX&CCODE=MEX&CNAME=Mexico&PTYPE=CP>

young wife will become pregnant in the first year of marriage. In an effort to serve the community holistically, Dr. Vidal set out to find a partner organization that would provide family planning services in these areas. However, she found that family planning organizations concentrated their efforts in more populous urban areas and did not have staff or resources to work in remote areas of the rainforest.

Women in these communities are responsible for a large percentage of the agricultural work and take on the responsibility for the family's health, food security and consumption levels. A community diagnostic study revealed that the women were suffering from pregnancy complications, sexually transmitted diseases and violence, and did not have access to family planning services. Women were asking for services to give them decision-making power regarding the timing of childbearing and the size of the family in order to keep their families healthy. Through her work in these communities, Dr. Rosa Vidal determined that to improve agricultural practices and protect the environment, women's rights and reproductive health issues must be addressed. Pronatura's programs recognize that providing reproductive health services combined with environmental education to men and women empowers women to make the best choices for their families and the environment.

Since 1997 Dr. Vidal has integrated her conservation work with family planning services. Pronatura is promoting local understanding by working with local midwives and by combining family planning services with agricultural services, since the community places high value on their agricultural work. Pronatura uses four person teams made up of a reproductive health specialist, an ecologist, an agricultural specialist and a nutritionist to meet with community members to identify priority needs. These groups work with both men and women on issues of reproductive health, family nutrition and natural resource use.

Through these programs new community development projects have been created, including two new multiple-stakeholder community groups to encourage sustainable development and natural resources planning, trainings in forestry and sustainable coffee growing and incorporating environmental education into schools. Dr. Vidal hopes to expand the population and environment projects to a regional level and initiate similar pilot projects throughout Mexico.

These case studies provide a perspective on the value of integrating population and environment in community level programs. The next section looks at the integration of these issues at the policy and planning levels.

NATIONAL PLANNING AND POLICYMAKING

Just as integrated, on-the-ground projects require participation from all sectors of the community in order to maximize success in accomplishing sustainable development goals, so too must country-level plans garner participation from all stakeholders in order to ensure that the implementation phase will be effective. If governments were to invest more resources and time into identifying local realities, especially by partnering with NGOs, community organizations, and other private sector entities with better local knowledge, then the benefits of addressing integrated problems through integrated programs would be realized more often. If this were to happen, successful programs like those mentioned above could be used as models for replication

in other high growth rate and biologically rich regions, with adjustments made to fit specific cultural contexts.

But despite the examples of successful integrated programs, there has not been enough effort or attention from the global community to help governments replicate these models in other countries where high population growth rates threaten the species-rich ecosystems on which we all depend. The policy guidelines coming out of recent UN conferences clearly state the links between population, environment and sustainable development. The conference documents and their accompanying frameworks for country-level plans can serve as important guidelines for policymakers, as well as for donors making funding decisions. Yet while writing national plans to meet global development goals is worthwhile, it is important to be careful so that countries with limited budgets do not get caught in an overly burdensome planning process. This may diminish resources needed to sustain or replicate the good work that NGOs are doing on the ground.

Streamlining planning requirements and integrating local concerns within existing plans can reduce duplicative efforts and move resources from planning to effective implementation. Too often, countries' sustainable development strategies have tended to ignore local realities, perhaps in part in order to meet externally imposed policy initiatives on how to achieve development. This has exacerbated the challenge of investing sufficient resources and time toward identifying local priorities.⁴⁵ In extreme cases, "pieces of 'analysis' have even been cut-and-pasted from one country strategy to another: these served more to push the point of view of the external 'drivers' of the strategy than to assess local needs and solutions... As a result, strategy decisions were light on new information and innovation."⁴⁶ One promising result of WSSD is attention to integrating and scaling up what already exists. Discussions at WSSD also helped redefine plans as processes that governments can facilitate, rather than as ends in themselves.⁴⁷

UNFPA's 2003 Global Survey illuminates some interesting findings regarding countries' progress in accounting for population and environment interactions in their national population and development plans. Of the 151 countries that responded to this part of the survey, only 50% had taken various measures to address these linkages.⁴⁸ While this represents a dramatic improvement from 1994, when most countries had not reported having explicitly considered the linkages in their planning processes, a greater effort is needed. This is especially true in light of the stark variations that exist among regions in terms of their commitment to addressing population and environment interactions in policymaking. While the Pacific and Caribbean sub-region show considerable progress in this regard, sub-Saharan Africa and the Central Asian Republics have been less successful, with only 40% of countries in those regions reporting having integrated policies. Interestingly, specific countries within these regions that are most affected by poverty and rapid population growth have been more likely to take measures to

⁴⁵ Bass, Stephen and Barry Dalal-Clayton, IIED. *Bridging the Knowledge Gap in SD Strategies: Research Partnerships for Sustainable Development*, chapter from "Stakeholder Dialogues on Sustainable Development Strategies: Lessons, Opportunities, and Developing Country Case Studies." <http://www.nssd.net/pdf/eipi26.pdf>, p.15

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p.17

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, pp.12-13

⁴⁸ *Investing in People: National Progress in Implementing the ICPD Programme of Action 1994-2004*, United Nations Population Fund, p.12, 2004.

address population and environment linkages than less affected countries.⁴⁹ This indicates a recognition and political will by policymakers in countries severely impacted by high levels of population and poverty to address the linkages between population and environment, even with limited resources.

The next section offers an analysis of our key findings and highlights recommendations on how policymakers, program planners, and on-the-ground field staff might more effectively meet the Cairo goals through integrating population and environment plans and programs.

KEY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- Focus Programs in Biodiversity Hotspots:

In addressing rapid population growth, population and integrated population and environment programs should target biodiversity hotspots, and this should be clearly stated at the national planning level. This would go far to mitigate, and hopefully reverse, rapid rates of ecosystem degradation and habitat loss. The focus of integrated programs in biodiversity hotspots should be explicitly stated in national sustainable development strategies so as to inform the work of donors, NGOs, government, and international partners carrying out the work on the ground. According to Mia MacDonald and Danielle Nierenberg of the Worldwatch Institute, policy action should “include targeting areas of high biodiversity for larger-scale improvements in reproductive health, education, and women’s rights and abilities to participate in natural resource management.”⁵⁰

All of us, both human and wildlife, depend upon and are intricately connected to the biological gifts that biodiversity hotspots provide. Yet these places are only defined as hotspots because they have lost at least 70 percent of their original habitat due to severe impacts from human activities. Many of these impacts are driven by population growth and include industrial logging, harmful agricultural practices, illegal trading in endangered species, and the construction of highways, dams and oil wells to name just a few.⁵¹ To really understand the threat that human activities pose to these precious areas, we do not need to look very far. One-fifth of the world’s population lives in biodiversity hotspots, yet these hotspots comprise only 12% of the Earth’s surface. Population growth rates in these hotspots are significantly greater than the global average.⁵²

Inadequate funding and support for the Cairo goals by the United States and other donor countries means a heavier focus on programs in urban areas, where donors and government agencies can claim more return for their investment due to the higher population base there. However, as an unprecedented number of people flood to the cities where there are more health and social services, urban slums result, placing greater pressure on natural resources and perpetuating the cycle of poverty. Full funding of the Cairo Programme of Action would help

⁴⁹ *Investing in People: National Progress in Implementing the ICPD Programme of Action 1994-2004*, United Nations Population Fund, p.13, 2004.

⁵⁰ State of the World 2003 - <http://www.worldwatch.org/press/news/2003/01/09/#chap3>

⁵¹ <http://www.biodiversityhotspots.org/xp/Hotspots/hotspotsScience/>

⁵² http://www.populationaction.org/resources/publications/naturesplace/np_factsheet.shtml

alleviate this imbalance toward funding urban programs at the expense of rural populations that not only need these programs, but also live within the Earth's most precious and imperiled ecosystems. Addressing population and environment needs in hotspot areas can help alleviate rural poverty and will lead to a healthier environment, upon which many indigenous people depend. This in turn will help slow urban migration and its resulting social and environmental pressures.

U.S. Senator Patrick Leahy (D-VT) has been a key advocate in recognizing the benefits of targeting population programs in biodiversity hotspots. In foreign aid appropriations legislation governing the policies of the U.S. Agency for International Development, Senator Leahy included language that highlights the need for family planning funds in areas where rapid population growth threatens biodiversity or endangered wildlife. This allocation in turn helps inform the work of the USAID as it decides how best to utilize government funds for population and environment programs.⁵³

- Local Ownership:

It is crucial to approach the population and environment nexus, both at the project proposal and implementation levels, from a sector that provides a locally acceptable context for introducing both population and environmental goals, such as water, forestry, or agriculture/food security. By providing a sensible starting point, project planners and field staff will reach community members easily due to its natural fit within the community's daily activities, needs, and cultural context. Community participation in program activities will be greater since its members will see direct benefits to their daily lives.

The same is true for national sustainable development planning and policy-making. Fortunately, the new emphasis on treating national plans as "optional means to an end rather than as ends in themselves"⁵⁴ is a helpful model. It takes the pressure off excessive commitment of resources in drafting new plans that are externally driven, and replaces it instead with a push toward integration and lessons learned from civil society, government and private sources.⁵⁵

National Sustainable Development Strategies and integrated projects should be organically generated and demand-driven. The importance of local ownership in development projects and planning cannot be overstated. If, at the community level, recipients of project services do not feel invested, either because they have not had an opportunity for meaningful participation, or because the project goals are externally imposed and unrelated to community needs, the project is doomed to fail.

According to Kathleen Dowd-Gailey, a past fellow with the University of Michigan's Population-Environment Fellows Program in Mexico, women in rural communities often name

⁵³ Gibbs, Susan L., *Population and Environment: A Review of Funding Themes and Trends*, ECSP Report – Issue 9, Woodrow Wilson Center, p.46, 2003.

⁵⁴ Dalal-Clayton, Barry. "The MDGs and sustainable development: the need for a strategic approach", p. 90, *The Millennium Development Goals and Local Processes: Hitting the target or missing the point?*, edited by David Satterthwaite, International Institute for Environment and Development, 2003.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p.90

illnesses such as diarrhea and other intestinal diseases when asked what their priority health concerns are. Women are the primary caretakers, food producers and water collectors. Although the environmental link may be clear, integrated programs can only be successful if the community itself makes that connection, thereby “demanding” the services offered by integrated programs. Real demand can only be generated through meaningful participation from all community members. In Kathleen’s community in Mexico,⁵⁶ it was a discussion about health that empowered the women to conserve the ecological integrity of the river, their primary freshwater source, especially for bathing. It wasn’t until they realized that a main cause of the intestinal illnesses could be water pollution from their pigs, that they put up fences to keep the pigs out. The impact of their efforts will have beneficial health outcomes, but will also create a long term, sustainable solution to water pollution in their community.

Since so many illnesses in rural areas are directly linked to the ecological health of waterways and soils, discussions about the degradation of freshwater and coastal resources as well as the sustainability of agricultural activities can be appropriate entry points for discussing health issues, including, eventually, family planning. In Kathleen’s experience, who saw first hand the myriad environmental and health issues faced by communities, one mistake that integrated programs make is that they try to “do it all” (i.e., address too many community needs). Susan Gibbs, in her article entitled *Population and Environment: A Review of Funding Themes and Trends*, reiterates this sentiment when she notes that “administrators of integrated projects sometimes struggle with where to draw the line”⁵⁷ when it comes to addressing the wealth of community needs, such as education, transportation, employment and healthcare. With limited human and financial resources, programs can spread themselves too thin by trying to address all of the community’s needs. Kathleen’s advice was for integrated programs to focus on one sector that provides a natural nexus between population and environment, such as water, and then program activities can flow out from that context.

- Awareness-raising, Leadership Development and Capacity-building:

Leadership development, capacity-building and training of advocates, practitioners, government and NGO staff, and academics are strategies that can help foster broad-based support for integrated population and environment programs. Such efforts will help influence private and public funding toward meeting the Cairo goals. An excellent example of this type of effort is the National Wildlife Federation’s Women for Sustainable Development (WSD) Initiative.⁵⁸ WSD is an innovative program that targets women students interested in a career in the sustainable development field. Through skills-building trainings and professional networking opportunities, WSD prepares these women for leadership roles as both students and professionals, and ensures that they gain a broader understanding of the linkages among environment, gender and population issues. Selected participants must use the skills they’ve gained by organizing an event to increase public awareness about international sustainable development, including population and environment issues.

⁵⁶ Name of community: “20th of November”

⁵⁷ Gibbs, Susan L., *Population and Environment: A Review of Funding Themes and Trends*, ECSP Report – Issue 9, Woodrow Wilson Center, p.49, 2003.

⁵⁸ www.nwf.org/population

Another good example of cross-cultural capacity building is The Partners of the Americas “Mexican Youth Ambassadors Tour.” This program brings youth volunteers from the Mexican Conservation Corps to the United States to share information about how they have successfully integrated family planning and health education into their environmentally sustainable community development work.⁵⁹

Other initiatives to build support and awareness on the critical linkages between population and environment include the expansion of course offerings and research opportunities at leading academic institutions on these issues, as well as an increase in fellowship programs.⁶⁰ The University of Michigan’s Population-Environment Fellows Program and the Professional Exchange for Applied Knowledge (PEAK) provide technical training to developing country practitioners on population and environment programming,⁶¹ while simultaneously building the skills of U.S.-based professionals. More interdisciplinary research is needed, however.⁶²

Another effort worth noting is the Population-Environment Research Network (PERN), a partnership between leading science organizations and Columbia University designed to provide access to publications, projects, conferences, data sets, cyber-seminars and other resources for those working in the population-environment field.⁶³

In addition to the need for more educational and training efforts, there should be better cross-collaboration and dialogue among NGOs and government agencies working in the various related sectors, such as population, health, gender, conservation and economic development. The country case studies are good examples of such partnerships. This type of collaboration must happen at the policymaking level as well so that the linkages are better understood at the highest levels, and are considered from diverse perspectives. Such cross-collaboration can provide national and international support for community-based work.

Collaboration is important even at the advocacy level in donor countries. A good example of this is the “A Mother’s Promise the World Must Keep” Campaign. The Campaign was developed and co-sponsored by a diverse coalition, including population, environment, and religious groups, demonstrating broad-based support for the goals of Cairo. Despite co-sponsors’ diverse missions, they were all able to come together around the simple message of reaffirming Cairo.

- Funding Trends - Challenges and Opportunities:

Guaranteeing stakeholder participation in both the planning and implementation phases requires funding commitments from international donors as well as private foundations. But, like all recent funding of social sector programs, the population and environment sectors have been hit hard by the recent drop off in government and private funding. As Susan Gibbs, author of

⁵⁹ http://www.partners.net/news/press_releases/2001/2001_06_mexyouth.htm

⁶⁰ Gibbs, Susan L., *Population and Environment: A Review of Funding Themes and Trends*, ECSP Report – Issue 9, Woodrow Wilson Center, p.54, 2003.

⁶¹ Ibid., p.50

⁶² O’Neill, Brian (editor), Global Science Panel on Population & Environment, *Population in Sustainable Development – Analyses, Goals, Actions, Realities*. IIASA, IUSSP, and UNU, p.3, 2001.

⁶³ Gibbs, Susan L., *Population and Environment: A Review of Funding Themes and Trends*, ECSP Report – Issue 9, Woodrow Wilson Center, p.52, 2003.

Population and Environment: A Review of Funding Themes and Trends points out, integrated program funding makes up only a small portion of population and environment funding overall.⁶⁴ Even as the theory of integrated population and environment programming is starting to gain traction, such programs pose particular challenges for donors. While these are not insurmountable obstacles, it is worth noting some of the difficulties here in order to appreciate fully the reasons that the integrated paradigm has been relatively slow to catch on, as well as some possible solutions.

As foundations have moved toward desiring clearer measures of success in program evaluations, this may have affected support for interdisciplinary programs since they present more challenges in the monitoring of results. This is especially true for population and environment monitoring. While there are several accepted population indicators on which to measure progress, conservation impacts have been more difficult to measure. Monitoring and evaluating conservation impacts are improving, though, and hold promise for facilitating donors' ability to fund such initiatives in the future. For example, ***indicators such as the adoption of sustainable resource management practices and the number of protected natural areas are now being used in evaluation processes within integrated programs, accompanying the better-known population indicators like contraceptive prevalence rates.*** In fact, one of the innovations of the I-POPCORM program is its attempt to measure actual biodiversity impacts.⁶⁵

Gibbs says another challenge is that, typically, foundations wishing to link population and environment funding do so only after their individual population and environment goals are set. Once program priorities are developed independently, it is difficult to then go back and integrate them, even when a foundation seeks to do so. This is even true for bilateral donors such as the US Agency for International Development. For example, it can be challenging to coordinate project funding even within the same department, such as health and population, let alone different issue sectors like population and environment.⁶⁶ ***Working within a collaborative framework from the outset, rather than after the fact, can help ensure that program priorities make sense to the needs of the project community.***⁶⁷ Focusing on a sector that provides a direct and easy-to-understand link between population and environmental concerns can also mitigate the underlying challenge of clearly and concisely communicating the linkages between these two issues.

Gibbs also found in her research and in talking with foundation staff that a major reason that foundations have difficulty funding these programs is that they receive relatively few good proposals.⁶⁸ ***If foundations were to receive many good proposals, and ones that included indicators from both fields, this would serve to peak the interest of foundation staff and might encourage them to adopt integrated funding goals and evaluation measures.*** Hopefully, this would result in a larger number of grants for integrated, on-the-ground pilot projects, serving

⁶⁴ Gibbs, Susan L., *Population and Environment: A Review of Funding Themes and Trends*, ECSP Report – Issue 9, Woodrow Wilson Center, p.44, 2003.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p.51

⁶⁶ Environmental Change & Security Project Report, Issue 5 (Summer 1999), Summary of meeting “Developing a Strategic Framework for Population-Environment Intervention” (April 15, 1999).

⁶⁷ Gibbs, Susan L., *Population and Environment: A Review of Funding Themes and Trends*, ECSP Report – Issue 9, Woodrow Wilson Center, p.44, 2003.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p.44

many more people than are currently being served and making it difficult for both governments and civil society to ignore. As it currently stands, there are few integrated projects compared with the number of communities that could benefit from them.⁶⁹ As stated earlier, biodiversity hotspots hold about 20% of the world's population and growth rates in the hotspots are higher than the global average, underscoring the need for programs targeted in these areas.

Finally, while environmental organizations have sought and received funding to advocate the integration of family planning and reproductive health issues, the same is not true for health organizations. ***There does not appear to be evidence of population and health related organizations seeking to integrate conservation goals, at least not at the advocacy level.***⁷⁰ ***In order to ensure donor, government and societal support for the population and environment nexus, collaboration needs to be generated from within both fields.*** Integration stemming from one side only will not be sufficient to increase awareness on the benefits of such programs, and may even jeopardize the potential of integrated programming to garner enough support and commitment to meet the Cairo goals in the future.

- Meeting the Goals of Cairo is Key to Achieving the Millennium Development Goals and Other Global Objectives:

Millennium Development Goal #7 and the Johannesburg Plan of Action have a target of reducing by half the number of people without access to safe drinking water by 2015. While this target deals with an environmental/ecosystem issue, it will be quite difficult to attain if the population and health goals of Cairo are not met. This is because rapid population growth and heavy human impact on water resources is a leading cause of water pollution and exacerbates clean-up efforts. ***The water sector (or other sectors like marine resources or agriculture, as evidenced in the case studies), exemplifies the need for government and NGO efforts that take a holistic approach to development and development goals.***

Another issue that is currently emerging as a natural nexus for population and environment issues is that of HIV/AIDS. The toll from this disease is having a decisive impact on the ability of conservation organizations to achieve environmental goals.⁷¹ With so many workers dying or ill from this epidemic, conservation groups are losing a large base of employees and are struggling to implement natural resource management strategies. Staff time is lost to caring for sick family members or attending funerals. Community leaders with indigenous knowledge of local biodiversity conservation are dying. Funds meant for conservation projects are diverted to paying for HIV/AIDS treatments and funeral expenses.⁷² Biodiversity loss reduces nutritional and medicinal sources for rural communities.⁷³ A concerted effort from the U.S. government, other bilateral and multilateral donors, and developing country governments to address this urgent issue may provide fertile ground for funding of integrated programs within this area.

⁶⁹ Phone interview with Robert Engelman, Vice President for Research, Population Action International, June 7, 2004.

⁷⁰ Gibbs, Susan L., *Population and Environment: A Review of Funding Themes and Trends*, ECSP Report – Issue 9, Woodrow Wilson Center, p.46, 2003

⁷¹ Ibid., p.51

⁷² <http://www.undp.org/equatorinitiative/pdf/Daulos-HIVandAIDSandBiodiversityConservationLinkages.pdf>

⁷³ <http://www.undp.org/equatorinitiative/ppt/Dwasi%20Presentation.ppt>

Poverty alleviation, long considered a priority among donor and developing countries and international development banks, is another example of a global issue that depends upon reducing population's impact and improving the environment. Population growth further decreases already short supplies of water and remaining forest habitat, and exacerbates existing pollution problems. These problems in turn perpetuate poverty as the poor spend more time and energy in search of clean, potable resources, and their money is spent on health care for illnesses resulting from a polluted environment. If we want to improve economic and educational opportunities for the poorest of the poor, we must address the underlying causes of poverty. Failing to do so will perpetuate the current situation in which billions of people live on less than two dollars per day. Meeting the holistic goals of Cairo is an essential step toward changing course.

2005 marks the five-year anniversary of the Millennium Declaration, and will be a time to review progress on implementation of the Millennium goals. It will be important during this process not only to look at the short-term quantitative progress made toward each indicator, but also to look at the strategy for long-term sustainability and integration of services aimed at reaching these goals. As stated earlier, it would be wise for reproductive health advocates to strengthen efforts to show the links among population, environment and sustainable development in order to increase understanding of the role that reproductive health plays in ensuring effective implementation of the MDGs. ***The means to achieving the MDGs are intertwined with the means to achieving Cairo, and those connections must be recognized and evaluated.*** The practice in international policymaking of addressing issues separately should not prevent us from integrating initiatives in order to achieve more effective implementation.

- Northern Consumption:

It is critical to address the consumption patterns of industrialized countries if we are truly to expect the achievement of the Cairo goals. For example, the average American uses much more water and generates many times more CO₂ per year than the average person living in a developing nation. ***Developed country governments and their citizens must better understand their role in global resource degradation and take corrective action.*** Discussions about population policy cannot be separated from discussions about unsustainable consumption, as such patterns of consumption create as much if not more human impact on the environment as population growth.

The Center for Environment and Population (CEP) is producing a "U.S. National Report on Population and the Environment," which will document how the U.S. population impacts the environment, both in the U.S. and around the world. It will show the impact of consumption and resource use on water, land-use, forests, biological diversity, climate change, and marine resources. By presenting the population and environmental links, trends and projections, the Report will help us better understand the American population's role and responsibilities as a major player in global resource use.

* * *

The previous sections demonstrate the need for integrated population and environment planning and programs and the ongoing harm to people and the environment if we fail to meet this need. In the following section we summarize policy recommendations for ensuring that environmental concerns play an integral role in the assessment of Cairo's population and development goals through 2015, and in action to carry out the Cairo commitments.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- Countries should meet their financial and other commitments under the Cairo Programme of Action.
- Multi-sector programs and policies that integrate population and environment can be more effective at meeting the holistic goals of Cairo and involve more stakeholders than single-sector approaches, such as “health only” or “conservation only” programs.
- Population and integrated population and environment programs should target biodiversity hotspots, and this should be clearly stated at the national planning level.
- Governments should work to improve stakeholder participation and integrate local realities in both planning and implementation.
- National Sustainable Development Strategies, national population plans, and field based projects should be organically generated and demand-driven in order to ensure the highest level of community acceptance and participation.
- Leadership development, capacity-building and training of advocates, practitioners, government and NGO staff can foster broad-based support for integrated population and environment programs, helping to influence private and public funding toward meeting the Cairo goals.
- Organizations, donors, governments and international agencies should invest in developing more and better conservation indicators in order to improve the way that environmental progress can be measured in integrated programs.
- In general, donors, both government and private, and service providers should develop a collaborative, rather than separate, process for establishing population and environment goals.
- Achieving the goals of Cairo will help achieve the MDGs, as these goals are interrelated and mutually dependent.
- It is important for population and health organizations to initiate the integration of conservation goals, rather than the impetus for integration coming solely from environmental organizations. In order to garner more support for integrated population and environment programs from donors, governments, and civil society, efforts by all concerned will be needed.
- Developed countries need to make stronger efforts to better understand their role in global resource use, and adopt policies to address this.

CONCLUSION

At Cairo, the international community resolved to address several of humanity's greatest challenges simultaneously. It did this not because governments and civil society wanted a bigger problem, but because of a recognition that the challenges could not be successfully addressed separately. According to UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, "without an integrated approach, we could face a tangle of problems. But with one, we could generate a cascade of progress."⁷⁴

Evaluating the decade since Cairo, it would be inaccurate to say that no progress has been made. The difficulty is that if we are satisfied with our current rate of progress, we will fall far short of our goals, and the adverse consequences threaten to overwhelm our modest achievements so far. This would be doubly unfortunate because the tools to achieve success lie within reach. As we have argued in this paper, a key instrument of our development strategy should be integration of population and environment measures, from global policies to projects on the ground, along with the resources to ensure success.

The degree to which progress has been achieved since Cairo varies significantly around the world. However, a number of countries have seen an increase in the use of modern family planning methods, a greater level of women's participation in policymaking, and the integration of family planning and safe motherhood into primary healthcare systems. And, although much greater effort is needed, more and better environmental indicators are being developed. Despite the challenges in garnering leadership and commitment from governments, donors, and civil society, excellent work is also underway by policymakers, NGOs and communities to implement the Cairo PoA. These modest efforts, however, do not match the magnitude of the challenge.

Conflicts arising from population pressures and resource scarcity are not simply theoretical. In the wake of the Rwandan genocide, a former high Rwandan official told James Gustave Speth, then Administrator of the UN Development Programme, that complex interactions among population pressures, land shortage and inequitable land distribution, and soil degradation produced a socio-economic crisis.⁷⁵ Less visible perhaps, but more pervasive, are the billions of people who lack adequate water and sanitation and the consequences in disease and lost educational and economic opportunities for the women who must spend untold hours hauling water.

These are not isolated examples of the poverty, population and environment connections. Roughly one-fifth of the global population lives on less than one dollar a day and is directly dependent on natural resources such as forests and fisheries for their survival. Many of these same people do not have access to adequate reproductive health care, clean water or education. Without adequate health services to ease population pressures, the natural resource base will deteriorate faster, exacerbating and perpetuating poverty.

Nevertheless, as we have argued, the solutions lie at hand. Central to dealing with the interlocked problems of population pressure and environmental degradation is a strategy that integrates population and environmental policies and programs. One of the clear calls to action in the Cairo

⁷⁴ Secretary-General's remarks to the UN Commission on Sustainable Development in New York, 28 April 2004.

⁷⁵ Speth, James Gustave, *Red Sky at Morning: America and the Crisis of the Global Environment 2004*, pp. 122-23

PoA is a reduction of human stress on our natural resources, ensuring a clean and healthy environment for all species. Evidence from programs such as those in the Philippines and Ecuador shows that integrating and addressing environmental issues can improve the success of achieving population and development goals. Of course, in order to succeed, commitment to policy integration must be accompanied by fulfillment by the United States and other donor countries of the financial commitments made at Cairo. The United States must resume its position of leadership on this issue.

Development efforts devoid of environmental considerations cannot alleviate poverty. If we fail to approach development from a multi-faceted perspective that includes the environment, our efforts will be futile. This is because ultimately, it is the Earth's environment that human beings, as well as all other species, depend on for our very survival. If our review at this ten-year anniversary is done without adequately considering all of the factors addressed in the Cairo PoA from a holistic standpoint, then we will fail to capture the very essence of sustainable development and we will not do justice to the review process.

Life's challenges and opportunities are naturally integrated and cannot be squeezed into neat compartments. Experience generally shows that programs and policies that take into account the interconnected facets of people's lives, and the ability of the environment to sustain those lives, will be more successful than single-sector interventions. Considering the fundamental importance of environmental sustainability to the well being of all species, and knowing the danger faced by the Earth's richest and most diverse biological systems upon which our health, economies, and lives depend, we should not lose sight of the critical role that environmental issues play in achieving Cairo's population and development goals.



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