POPULATION AND CLIMATE CHANGE: EMPOWERING 100 MILLION WOMEN

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The OASIS Initiative
ORGANIZING TO ADVANCE SOLUTIONS IN THE SAHEL
ORGANISATION DES SOLUTIONS AU SAHEL

Meeting the world’s need for family planning is a human right and a climate imperative. Wherever women have been given information and access to family planning, birth rates have fallen – even in poor, low-literate societies like Bangladesh or conservative religious countries such as Iran.

The Challenge

Some 220 million women in the world say they want to stop bearing children or delay their next pregnancy – yet are not using contraception. Last year, UNFPA, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, and other donors committed to meet half the world’s need for family planning by 2020. The G20 aims to “achieve global economic stability and sustainable growth.” To meet this ambitious goal, the G20 should commit to meeting the fertility needs of the remaining 100 million women. Here is why and how.

Population and Climate Change

Rapid population growth undermines a country’s ability to meet the basic demands for health, education, and infrastructure. Other than some oil rich city-states, no country with an average family size of five or more has been able to lift its citizens out of poverty. Population is a multiplier of the size of five or more has been able to lift its citizens rich city-states, no country with an average family education, and infrastructure. Other than some oil ability to meet the basic demands for health, Rapid population growth undermines a country’s needs of the remaining 100 million women. Here is why and how.

The Sahel is a desert region of Africa that stretches from Senegal in the west to Eritrea in the east, containing 22 countries. Why and how.

Family Planning Is Freedom

Family planning frees women from the shackles of reproductive slavery. Melinda Gates says, “The most transformative thing we can do is give people access to birth control.”

Family planning and reproductive health have not yet embraced family planning strategies because of fear of a historically controversial topic. Yet there is no need to be afraid to talk about population and family planning.

We call on the G20 nations to commit to meeting the need for family planning among the remaining 100 million women by 2020. Among the Conference of Parties, we call for leadership in prioritising family planning for reducing emissions and adapting to climate change.

References

5. Rhodes, W. 2003. The Sahel: the harshest effects of climate change. The Sahel is a desert region of Africa that stretches from Senegal in the west to Eritrea in the east, containing 22 countries.

About the Authors

Professor Malcolm Potts is a human reproduction scientist and the first holder of the Fred H. Bisby endowed chair in Population and Family Planning in the School of Public Health, Berkeley.

He has developed the Bisby Center with a team of young experts. Professor Potts is also co-director of the Berkeley International Group (BIG) and founder of the OASIS Initiative.

He introduced family planning methods into scores of developing countries while he was the first Medical Director of the International Planned Parenthood Federation for a decade. He has published ten books and over 200 scientific papers. Professor Potts can be contacted at: mppotts@oasisinitiative.org.

Alisha Graves leads strategy, development and advocacy efforts for The OASIS Initiative. She completed her MPH in International Maternal and Child Health at the UC Berkeley School of Public Health in 2006. She worked for six years as Senior Programme Manager for a non-profit organisation to improve access to misoprostol – a generic, essential medicine.

In this role, she worked on policy initiatives, drug registration, and operations research across seven countries in Sub-Saharan Africa and Southeast Asia. She can be contacted at agraves@oasisinitiative.org.

Table 1: Cost-effectiveness of selected carbon reducing strategies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Cost of abating CO2, US$ per tonne</th>
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<td>Family planning</td>
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<td>Wind</td>
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<td>Solar</td>
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<td>Coal (new power station)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Coal (retrofitted power station)</td>
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