

Forum: General Assembly

Issue: Tackling Overpopulation in Developing Countries

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Introduction

In the 1950s, the world population was estimated to be around 2.6 billion people. Since then, it has almost tripled to the 7.7 billion people that inhabit this world today. Much of this past growth can be attributed to developing countries such as India or China. Meanwhile, most of the future population growth is expected to come from the world's forty-eight poorest countries. The UN predicts their population to rise from 850 million in 2010, to 1.7 billion in 2050.

Definition of Key Terms

Overpopulation

Overpopulation means the condition of having a population so dense as to cause environmental deterioration, an impaired quality of life, or a population crash.

Developing Country

A developing country is a poor agricultural country that is seeking to become more economically and socially advanced.

Carrying Capacity

The carrying capacity is the number of people, other living organisms, or crops that a region can support without environmental degradation.

Background Information

General Overview

To fully understand overpopulation in developing countries, one has to first look at the causes that led to it in the first place and the effects that it has on the affected countries. One of the main reasons behind why developing countries are so prone to overpopulation is that poverty is believed to be the leading cause of overpopulation. Poor families tend to have more children to make up for the high infant mortality rate but also because children are seen as a potential source of income in those places of the world where child labor is still used.

Along with poverty comes a lack of proper education and family planning in developing countries. Sex education for example is still not taught in many schools around the world which leads to insufficient use of contraceptives and therefore more unexpected pregnancies. Additionally a majority of developing countries have citizens with little to no knowledge of family planning and take no measures to reduce overpopulation.

A number of problems in developing countries can be attributed to overpopulation. The life expectancy, for example, suffers greatly. After all an increased amount of people in a poor country means that the resources are being stretched. The people then have limited access to things such as jobs, fresh water, medical care and food which would be the cause for this drop in life expectancy.

Overpopulation is also directly linked to climate change in a number of ways. Human activities have been proven to cause global warming and a larger number humans will then speed up these changes. For instance the large need for food is satisfied with intensive farming methods which are considered, due to the machinery required, a major contributor to climate change.

Major Countries and Organizations Involved

India

India has more than tripled its population in the last half century and is one of the most densely populated countries in the world.

UN Population Fund

The UN Population Fund (UNFPA) has assumed a leading role within the UN in promoting population programs that are in line with the human rights of individuals to determine the size of their family.

Timeline of Events

1950	Global population estimated at around 2.6 billion people
1987	Global population reached 5 billion people
1999	Global population reached 6 billion people
2011	Global population estimated at 7 billion people
2019	Global population at 7.7 billion people

UN Involvement

The UN has been addressing issues regarding overpopulation through the work of the United Nations Population Division and the United Nations Population Fund. The UN has also published a World Population Plan of Action (see below).

Relevant UN Treaties and Events

- International Conference on Population and Development (**Cairo, 1994**)
- <http://www.un.org/popin/icpd/conference/offeng/index.html>
- World Population Plan of Action <http://www.un.org/popin/icpd/conference/bkg/wppa.html>

Possible Solutions

An important factor in battling overpopulation is sex education. It will teach the people about family planning, how sex relates to childbirth and will also introduce methods of birth control. Along with that has to come an easier access to contraceptives in developing countries to increase the amount of people that actually use it.

Education can also be quite useful in increasing awareness about overpopulation and the dangers that go hand in hand with it. After all the people have no incentive to reduce overpopulation if they are left in the dark about its aftermaths.

Another way to tackle overpopulation is a change in policies. Certain countries reward families in some kind for having more children. However this policy then leads to them having more children than they otherwise would have.

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