

# FAMILY PLANNING: AN EMERGING COMPONENT OF CLIMATE CHANGE

How focusing on reproductive health can improve environmental sustainability

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## A GLOBAL ISSUE

With the world's population increasing rapidly, the global need for family planning is paramount. This growing number of people now compete for a shrinking amount of natural resources--creating an inelastic relationship. Governments continue to ignore the impact that family planning may have on global sustainability. By increasing financial commitments, governments can both educate their populations on the added stress that comes with large families and curb the destructive impact of population growth.

## THE PROBLEM

Every year, upward of 75 million unintended pregnancies result from poor access to modern contraceptives. Solving this gap between supply and demand may provide answers to the emerging debate about links among population dynamics, reproductive health rights and climate change.

Alarming population growth- especially in the developing world- heightens vulnerability to the effects of climate change; most notably:

- \* food and water scarcity
- \* environmental degradation
- \* human displacement



**“Don't believe that anything gets easier if we postpone things now. This is the time.”**

- DENMARK'S CONNIE HEDEGAARD,  
PRESIDENT OF THE COPENHAGEN  
CLIMATE CONFERENCE



## THE SOLUTION

The 1994 International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) Programme of Action consensus in Cairo established the following as one of four goals:

\* Access to reproductive and sexual health services including family planning: Family planning counseling, pre-natal care, safe delivery and post-natal care, prevention and appropriate treatment of infertility, prevention of abortion and the management of the consequences of abortion, treatment of reproductive tract infections, sexually transmitted diseases and other reproductive health conditions; and education, counseling, as appropriate, on human sexuality, reproductive health and responsible parenthood. Services regarding HIV/AIDS, breast cancer, infertility, and delivery should be made available. Active discouragement of female genital mutilation (FGM).

Reinstating and increasing support to agencies, such as the United Nations' Population Fund, will help ensure the health and well-being of women, families and the environment. International support of UNFPA, the largest multilateral source of international family planning assistance, can effectively address population growth and work to achieve larger global sustainable development goals at home and abroad.



## STEPS FORWARD

Developing world countries that are less responsible for the growing consumption will likely be subject to the heaviest impact of climate change--with women bearing the greatest toll.

**"OECD countries need to send a signal that they do care about others. (Developing) countries also want to grow and modernize. We cannot have two worlds in the 21st century where we say to some: slow your growth, keep your forests alive so we can keep doing what we did before."**

- KANDEH YUMKELLA, DIRECTOR-GENERAL, U.N. INDUSTRIAL  
DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATION

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