

Bali Declaration on Population and Sustainable Development



Fourth Asian and Pacific Population Conference

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I. Preamble

We, the members and associate members of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), having convened at the Fourth Asian and Pacific Population Conference in Bali, Indonesia from 19 to 27 August 1992, have reviewed the population situation and outlook and noted the substantial progress achieved by the countries of the region in responding to the Asia-Pacific Call for Action on Population and Development adopted by the Third Asian and Pacific Population Conference held at Colombo in 1982. We express concern that population issues remain among the most pressing challenges facing the region and, in addressing the theme of the present Conference, "Population and sustainable development: goals and strategies into the twenty-first century", we

Recognize that:

(a) Population factors play a decisive role in all human endeavours, especially in safeguarding the environment and the pursuit of sustainable development. Accordingly, population considerations must be fully integrated into all aspects of planning and policy-making;

(b) Sustainable development as a means to ensure human well-being, equitably shared by all people today and in the future, requires that the interrelationships between population, resources, the environment and development should be fully recognized, properly managed and brought into a harmonious, dynamic balance;

(c) Full consideration of population concerns is crucial to any strategy to achieve sustainable development and to give future generations an environmental legacy better than that received by the present generation;

(d) An integrated approach incorporating population, resources, the environment and development elements must be pursued, although understanding of the complex interrelationships between these elements is still at an early stage. To do otherwise would endanger the attainment of sustainable development and narrow the options available to future generations;

(e) Measures to improve the status, role and participation of women must be given high priority, both because women have a fundamental right to enjoy equality with men in all aspects of life and because women play a critical role in, and must fully participate in, the sustainable development process;

(f) The alleviation of poverty is fundamental to the achievement of sustainable development;

Emphasize that:

(a) Population problems have local, national, regional and global ramifications and must therefore be addressed at all these levels;

(b) Every country has its own specific array of population problems and policy objectives and has the sovereign right to pursue its own population goals, policies and programmes respecting the goal of global sustainable development;

(c) Dealing with population problems requires strengthening of social policies as well as regional and international cooperation; and

(d) Rapid population growth and the consequent changes in demographic structure and uneven population distribution are crucial factors that impose pressures and constraints on economic development efforts, the environment and natural resources as well as social conditions. However, these factors are often neglected in environmental and economic development strategies that regard population as a neutral factor rather than a dynamic variable requiring policy intervention;

Affirm that:

(a) In showing concern for human well-being, population policies should recognize that individuals are members of the family, community, society, State and global community, and they possess rights within those contexts;

(b) Population size, growth, distribution, structure, composition and mobility should be considered at all levels of planning and in the formulation of comprehensive population policies;

(c) Resolution of population concerns is central to achieving equitable and efficient development of human resources and alleviation of poverty;

Note with appreciation:

(a) The efforts and progress made by the countries of the Asian and Pacific region in demographic, social, economic and development spheres and the leadership exhibited by political leaders and parliamentarians in the formulation and implementation of national policies and programmes dealing with population and development issues and problems;

(b) The invaluable contributions of United Nations organizations, especially ESCAP and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), and other intergovernmental organizations and multilateral agencies in providing technical and financial support for population programmes in the Asian and Pacific region;

(c) The contributions of donor countries through bilateral development assistance programmes;

(d) The pioneering and significant contributions that non-governmental organizations have made to population efforts in the region;

Keeping in mind:

The provisions of the World Population Plan of Action adopted at Bucharest in 1974; the recommendations of the International Conference on Population, held at Mexico City in 1984; the Call for Action on Population and Development adopted at the Third Asian and Pacific Population Conference, held at Colombo in 1982; the Amsterdam Declaration on a Better Life for Future Generations adopted at the International Forum on Population in the Twenty-first Century, held at Amsterdam in 1989; Agenda 21 and the Rio Declaration on Environment of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, held at Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in 1992; and the deliberations of the Fourth Asian and Pacific Population Conference, held in Bali, Indonesia in 1992;

Urge that:

- (a) All members and associate members of ESCAP make a firm political and financial commitment to incorporate population and environmental concerns fully in all national efforts to achieve sustainable development;
- (b) All members and associate members of ESCAP establish a set of population targets in line with sustainable development goals, and initiate and implement policies and programmes to achieve those targets;
- (c) The ESCAP secretariat accord high priority and take appropriate action to assist members and associate members in implementing their population, environmental and development policies, programmes and strategies;
- (d) UNFPA strengthen its programme support and mobilize the needed resources to help the members and associate members of ESCAP in implementating their population policies, programmes and strategies;
- (e) Other United Nations organizations, international agencies and non-governmental organizations support the members and associate members of ESCAP in implementing their population, environmental and development policies, programmes and strategies;

Adopt:

The following goals and recommendations for population and sustainable development into the twenty-first century.

II. Population goals

Within the overall objectives of sustainable development, the goals of population policy should be to achieve a population that allows a better quality of life without jeopardizing the environment and the resource base of future generations. Population policy goals should also take cognizance of basic human rights as well as responsibilities of individuals, couples and families.

The population of countries and areas in the Asian and Pacific region amounted to 3.2 billion in mid-1992. Although there has been a significant decline in the rate of population growth over the past two decades and the current annual growth rate of 1.7 per cent is expected to continue to decline steadily, it is projected that 920 million people will be added to the region's total by 2010. The bulk of the increase will occur in South Asian countries and least developed countries, where annual population growth rates are not expected to fall much below 2 per cent. It is in these less developed countries that the problems of poverty are most acute, and pressures on the education, health and employment sectors are greatest.

Fertility, as measured by the total fertility rate, currently averages 3.1 children per woman in the Asian and Pacific region. However, there are substantial variations between and within the subregions of Asia and the Pacific. Fertility is lowest in East Asia, at 2.1 children per woman. It is highest in South Asia, at 4.3 children per woman. A similar marked disparity is exhibited in subregional levels of mortality. For example, infant mortality in South Asia, at 90 per 1,000 births, is more than three times the rate in East Asia, where it is 26 per 1,000 births.

In many countries of the Asian and Pacific region, urban populations are expanding at three or four times the rate of the national population. The region will witness a significant increase in the number and size of urban areas, particularly of "mega-cities" and other large metropolitan areas. Furthermore, new issues, such as environmental degradation, ageing, imbalanced population distribution and international migration, are emerging and require priority consideration.

To help reduce high rates of population growth, countries and areas should adopt strategies to attain replacement level fertility, equivalent to around 2.2 children per woman, by the year 2010 or sooner. Countries and areas should also strive to reduce the level of infant mortality to 40 per 1,000 live births or lower during the same period. In countries and areas in which maternal mortality is high, efforts should be made to reduce it by at least half by the year 2010.

III. Recommendations

A. Population, environment and development

Issues

Among the ultimate objectives of sustainable development are to achieve a balance between human needs and aspirations in balance with population, resources and the environment and to enhance the quality of life today and in the future. There is an urgent need to bring into balance population dynamics, socio-economic development, the use of natural resources and environmental quality. Special attention should be paid to decreasing the demand for natural resources that is generated by unsustainable consumption and to using those resources efficiently, to minimize depletion and reduce pollution. Although consumption patterns are very high in certain parts of the world, the basic consumer needs of a large section of humanity are not being met.

In many countries and areas, high rates of population growth and concentration have caused environmental problems, such as land degradation, deforestation, air and water pollution, threats to biological diversity from habitat destruction and rising sea level due to the green-house effect. In some countries, calamities and associated loss of life have followed the extension of human settlements into marginal and vulnerable areas, especially along rivers, coasts and foothills.

Recommendations

(1) More research needs to be undertaken to improve understanding of the complex synergy between population, resources, environment, and

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