

Dear Delegates,

Welcome to the fourth Metro Detroit Model United Nations Conference. Over the past four years we have worked tirelessly to develop an exciting and innovative Model United Nations format that challenges our delegates in a competitive and inclusive environment. We work year-round to ensure that our staff members are as prepared as possible to ensure that all of our delegates can participate in our debates. Moreover, the topics that you will discuss have been carefully selected for their global importance and the larger questions that they ask. When reading through the following background guide, be sure to analyze and evaluate what larger questions are being provoked by the topic and what commentary these larger questions make about the current international system. Finally, if you have any questions, be sure to reach out to your chairs on the email address provided on their committee page.

We look forward to welcoming you in January,

Mitchell Dennis

Secretary General of the Metro Detroit Model United Nations IV

General Assembly Scarlet Topic B 0

Evaluating the World Population Plan of Action

History of World Population Plan of Action

In August of 1974, the World Population Conference was held in Bucharest, Romania. From this came the World Population Plan of Action, which is a result of an international effort to address emerging concerns relating to population. This plan addressed a variety of issues including population growth, morbidity and mortality, reproduction and family planning, and population structure.¹

These issues are still extremely prevalent today; however, they must be reframed with a 21st century point of view. The plan provides recommendations for changing nation's population growth rates as they see fit. For example, a goal set by the Plan of Action was to increase the, "average expectation of life of 62 years by 1985 and 74 years by the year 2000 for the world as a whole." According to the World Health Organization, the average life expectancy in 2015 was 71.4 years old. The Plan of Action set ambitious goals for the world as a whole, meeting some of them, and missing others. The important part of the Plan of Action is that it recognizes the complexity of socio-economic issues in relation to population concerns.

In 1994, the International Conference on Population and Development was held in Cairo, Egypt. This particular conference provided the framework for the United Nations Population Fund.² It also set quantitative goals dealing with universal education, reduction of infant, child, and maternal mortality, and access to reproductive and sexual health services. However, the conference faced pushback from multiple nations about abortion being included in the term reproductive health.³

In the four decades since the third World Population Conference, the world has changed dramatically. Technology has made it possible to travel to the other side of the world in a day. The interconnectedness of the 21st century has changed the outcome of global population concerns. Furthermore, delegates should take special interests in family planning, international migration, education, and environmental issues as they best reflect the current state of the world.

The World Population Plan of Action provides guidelines to help ensure a better quality of life with regard to growing population concern. Some key principles of the Plan of Action include: the formation of population policies, people have the right to determine the number and spacing of their children, as well as having access to the resources and information to do so, and that population and development are intertwined issues. The Population Plan of Action has provided numerous

¹ "Recommendations for implementation of World Pop. Plan of Action." *United Nations Population Fund*. <http://www.un.org/popin/icpd/conference/bkg/mexrecs.html>.

² "World Population Plan of Action." *United Nations Population Fund*. <http://www.un.org/popin/icpd/conference/bkg/wppa.html>.

³ "Parliamentary Questions: Reproductive Health." *European Parliament*. <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=QT&reference=H-2003-0794&language=BG>.

recommendations on how to ensure that these goals are met; however, it is up to the governments of individual countries to implement these recommendations.

Poverty

Poverty and population dynamics are inextricably linked, both influencing each other. This relationship has several components; however, with education and family planning being highlighted here. Education is part of the solution to break the cycle of poverty. A young, educated workforce has the potential to transform an economy overnight. On the other hand, family planning, and access to infrastructure designed around it directly affects birth rates.

Often, poverty and birthrates share an inverse relationship. For example, Japan's GDP per capita is estimated at \$38,938, while its birth rate is 7.8/1,000 population. While Niger has a GDP per capita that estimated at \$363.23 and a birth rate of 44.8/1,000.⁴ This disparity, is in part due to population and poverty being linked. In general, lower poverty rates means more widespread access to education, family planning, and work opportunities, all which influence the number of children a woman will bear.⁵ When it comes to contraceptives, the United Nations Population Fund (UNPF) found that for every dollar invested into contraception, a \$1.43 is reduced from the cost of pregnancy related care.⁶ Furthermore, if the average age of reproduction can be delayed, then governments have the ability to analyze how the money not spent on reproduction can be reinvested into the youth.

Education

In 2000, the United Nations set an ambitious goal of Education for All by 2015. However, the world has not yet reached this point as there is an estimated 100 million children who have not completed primary education.⁷ Education goals often falter in low income countries. Without marginalized and disadvantaged groups given the priority, future development goals will continue to fall short. Education for All failed due to numerous reasons; from conflict to socio-economic barriers. A primary example of this is the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where one third of all children have not completed primary education.⁸ Countries like the Democratic Republic of the Congo must deal with the challenges of being a low-income country and having a relatively young population. Thus, solutions must be multifaceted and specific to each country's situation.

Currently, the United Nations has several programs involved in increasing access to education. This includes the Global Education First Initiative, which aims to put every child in

⁴ "Country Comparisons: Birth Rate." *CIA Fact Book*. <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/rankorder/2054rank.html>.

⁵ "Female Education and Childbearing: A Close Look at the Data." *The World Bank*. <http://blogs.worldbank.org/health/female-education-and-childbearing-closer-look-data>.

⁶ "Population and Poverty." *United Nations Population Fund*. <http://www.unfpa.org/resources/population-and-poverty>.

⁷ "Quality Education: Why it Matters." *United Nations*. http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/ENGLISH_Why_it_Matters_Goal_4_QualityEducation.pdf.

⁸ "Governance with Empty Pockets: The Education Sector in the Democratic Republic of Congo." *Development and Change*. <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/dech.12235/abstract>,

school, improve the quality of learning, and foster global citizenship.⁹ Programs like this often struggle in countries like the Democratic Republic of the Congo because of civil conflict disrupting access to education. Therefore, special consideration must be given to countries in the midst of civil conflict in order to achieve ‘education for all.’

Family Planning

Infant Mortality

Infant Mortality refers to the death of children under the age of one year. The causes vary, anywhere from medical (malnutrition, infectious diseases, etc), to environmental, and cultural (gender favoritism, birth spacing, etc) effects. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), “Globally, the infant mortality rate has decreased from an estimated rate of 63 deaths per 1000 live births in 1990 to 32 deaths per 1000 live births in 2015.” Reductions in infant mortality rates must be a focus when evaluating the Plan of Action. Public health improvements, advances in medical treatments, and cultural changes are all avenues through which infant mortality rate can be reduced. Simple changes can make a huge difference. According to UNICEF, “Better sanitation alone could reduce diarrhea-related morbidity by more than a third. Improved sanitation combined with better hygiene behaviors could reduce it by two thirds. Handwashing with soap or ashes would prevent 0.5 million to 1.4 million deaths per year.” International public health initiatives have the potential to significantly reduce infant mortality, and that is just one route to do so.

Before 1970, males faced a biological disadvantage within the first year of life. However, since 1970 females now face a societal disadvantage due to a preference for sons over daughters.¹⁰ This issue is especially prevalent in areas of South and Southeastern Asia, specifically, China, India, and Pakistan. Changes in economic policies are key to decreasing the female infanticide rate. If governments were to provide opportunities for gainful employment, the perceived worth of females increases, which leads to more females gaining education, and may be a solution to decreasing female infanticide.¹¹

Reproductive Health

Reproductive health heavily influences population trends, and thus must not be brushed to the side. Key concerns involving reproductive health include unintended pregnancies, unsafe abortions, maternal death and disability, sexually transmitted infections (STIs), and gender-based violence. Impoverished women suffer from these issues the most (UNFPA¹²). UN based programs such as UNFPA and the Universal Access Project work to improve reproductive health around the world. UNFPA is responsible for providing condoms, which are the one of the most effective forms of protection against STIs. However, there is serious political and cultural opposition to some of the

⁹ “Global Education First Initiative.” *UNESCO*. <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/gefi/about/>.

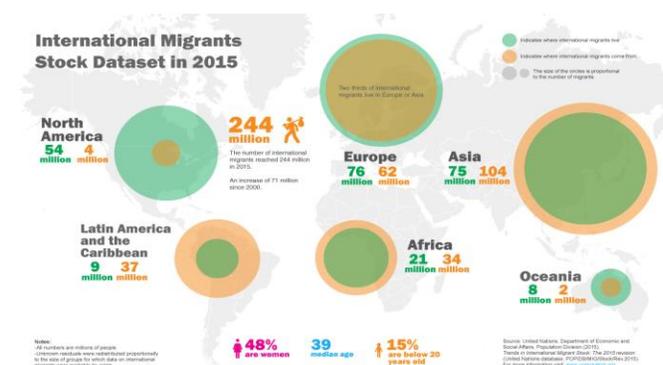
¹⁰ “The Rise and fall of Excess Male Infant Mortality.” *Princeton University*. <http://paa2007.princeton.edu/papers/71947>.

¹¹ “Gender imbalance in Infant Mortality: A Cross-National Study of Social Structure and female infanticide.” *Social Science & Medicine*. <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0277953605002881>.

¹² “Sexual & Reproductive Health.” *United Nations Population Fund*. <http://www.unfpa.org/sexual-reproductive-health>.

services UNFPA provides, which inhibits the effectiveness of these practices. The Universal Access Project also works on providing universal access to reproductive health care.

Socio-cultural factors play a large role in attitudes towards reproductive health. Much of the focus when designing programs like Universal Access Project deal with the supply of services. Attention must be given to whether or not those services are used. South Africa is a prime example of this. Despite annually investing around \$1.5 billion to run HIV and AIDS programs, South Africa retains a high HIV prevalence around 19.2%.¹³ A new approach that considers lifestyle, attitudes, and beliefs towards reproductive health is desperately needed. The MDG-F Joint Programme for Strengthening Cultural and Creative Industries and Inclusive Policies in Mozambique is a program that does this, however, on a much smaller scale.¹⁴ The initiative works to better understand the relationship between socio-cultural values and reproductive health in order to make reproductive health services more efficient.



International Migration

The interconnectedness of the 21st century has allowed people to migrate at a never before seen rate. Immigrants often face many difficulties when traveling to a new country; whether it be a cultural or socioeconomic barrier. However, when the right policies are put in place, immigration has positive consequences throughout the world in which

we live in today, with both the host and home countries benefitting. In 2015, immigrants sent home an estimated \$601 billion in remittances, with developing countries receiving \$441 billion.¹⁵ The remittances are lifelines for the families that receive them. Host countries also benefit from migration. Immigrants can fill labour shortages, create jobs, and contribute to the overall health of that country's economy. Migrants bring with them a new perspective of the world to a host country and the influence they have on culture is intangible.¹⁶

Still, immigrants are particularly vulnerable in host countries. Too often, policies based on prejudice and fear leave migrants vulnerable without access to basic human rights. Public attention

¹³ "South Africa Global AIDS Response Progress Report, 2015." *South African National AIDS Council*. http://sanac.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/GARPR_report-high-res-for-print-June-15-2016.pdf.

¹⁴ "Understanding the Role of Culture in Sexual and Reproductive Health in Mozambique." *Millennium Development Goals Fund*. <http://mdgfund.org/country/mozambique/story/UnderstandingtheRoleofCultureinSexualandReproductiveHealthinMozambique>.

¹⁵ "International Migration at All-Time High." *The World Bank*. <http://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2015/12/18/international-migrants-and-remittances-continue-to-grow-as-people-search-for-better-opportunities-new-report-finds>.

¹⁶ "International Migration Report 2015." *United Nations*. http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/publications/migrationreport/docs/MigrationReport2015_Highlights.pdf.

for this issue has recently shifted to Qatar. The International Trades Union Confederation (ITUC) released a report in 2014, highlighting the brutal working conditions and high mortality rates migrant workers faced.¹⁷ Another report, published by the international law firm, DLA Piper found that almost 1,000 migrant workers have died.¹⁸

The United Nations has taken some steps to combat this. The 2016 UN Summit for Refugees and Migrants published the New York Declaration. The New York Declaration makes commitments to protect and improve the lives of migrants and refugees around the world. It aims to do so by creating a common set of guidelines and principles to guide migration.¹⁹ This includes commitments to ensure rights to education, the prevention of gender and sexual violence and strongly condemning xenophobia against migrants. The New York Declaration aims to do so by beginning negotiations that will lead to migration being guided by a comprehensive set of principles.²⁰

Environmental Stress



Case Study: India

The United Nations estimates that India will surpass China as the most populated country by 2022.²¹ A consequence of urbanization and population growth is a strain on the environment and air quality. A large, aging population and rapid industrialization has led to a 50% increase in premature deaths due to particulate matter from 1990 to 2015.²² Traffic congestion, fuel and biomass burning, and a lack of strong environmental regulation all contribute to the nation's pollution issues. The Environmental Performance Index, which measures environmental health and ecosystem vitality (which includes areas from biodiversity and habitat to air and water quality), ranks India as 141 out of 180 countries, with a score of 53.58, out of 100.²³

¹⁷ "The Case Against Qatar." *ITUC*. http://www.ituc-csi.org/IMG/pdf/the_case_against_qatar_en_web170314.pdf.

¹⁸ "Qatar Government admits almost 1,000 fatalities among migrants." *The Guardian*. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/may/14/qatar-admits-deaths-in-migrant-workers>.

¹⁹ "New York Declaration." *United Nations*. <http://refugeesmigrants.un.org/declaration>.

²⁰ "New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants." *United Nations*. http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/71/1.

²¹ "India Will be Most Populous Country Sooner than Thought, U.N. Says." *The New York Times*. https://www.nytimes.com/2015/07/30/world/asia/india-will-be-most-populous-country-sooner-than-thought-un-says.html?_r=0.

²² "India's Air Pollution Rivals China's as World's Deadliest." *The New York Times*. <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/02/14/world/asia/indias-air-pollution-rivals-china-as-worlds-deadliest.html>.

²³ "Country Rankings." *Yale Environmental Performance Index*. <http://epi.yale.edu/country-rankings>.

India is the world's largest consumer of fuelwood for energy purposes. It is estimated that annually, India uses 148.7 million tons fuelwood and biomass for domestic energy use.²⁴ Fuelwood has several direct consequences; from the by-products of combustion, to deforestation. In order to ease the environmental strain of an ever growing population, sustainable energy is a must.

Currently, India is working towards developing and distributing improved cook stoves that are more efficient at burning fuel.²⁵ This is an important short-term solution; however, when finding efficient fuel means for areas with high population densities, it is imperative to develop long term solutions for future generations. The consequences of deforestation in India have already shown face, including a loss of biodiversity and flooding.²⁶

Food Security

Food security is made up of three elements: food availability, food access, and food utilization. This simply means food must be available in sufficient quantities, people must be able to acquire that food, and that the consumed food must have a positive nutritional impact (World Food Programme). According to recent estimates, around 795 million people globally are undernourished.²⁷ Countries with high population growth rates are especially prone to having issues with food security. Niger, for example has a population growth rate of 3.8%, one of the highest in the world, and an estimated 20% of the 19.8 million population cannot meet their food needs.²⁸ As Niger continues to grow, it is likely that serious advancements and reforms will be needed to ensure that the people in Niger can produce enough food to support this larger population. If the globe does not work to combat food insecurity then it is likely that people across the planet will be negatively impacted. Conflict and environmental stress only exacerbate the issue.

Global undernourishment rates are influenced by a number of factors, most importantly, economic growth, agricultural productivity growth, markets (domestic and international), and social protection, which is essentially policies implemented by governments to protect fundamental human rights. In order to combat these current statistics, the United Nations has established the High Level Task Force on Global Food and Nutritional Security (HLTF).²⁹ HLTF's goal is to, "promote a comprehensive and unified response of the international community to the challenge of achieving global food and nutrition security." Programs like HLTF are essential to ensuring global food security. Still, it is important to not overlook the role of NGOs, such as The Hunger Project have in this fight. The Hunger Project works to end hunger and poverty through sustainable methods.

²⁴ "Fuelwood Studies in India." *Center for International Forestry Research*. http://www.cifor.org/publications/pdf_files/Books/Fuelwood.pdf.

²⁵ <http://www.worldwatch.org/node/6328>

²⁶ "Deforestation: Causes, Effects and Control Strategies." <http://cdn.intechopen.com/pdfs-wm/36125.pdf>.

²⁷ "The State of Food Insecurity in the World." FAO. <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i4646e.pdf>.

²⁸ "Niger." *The World Food Programme*. <http://www1.wfp.org/countries/niger>.

²⁹ "High Level Task Force on Global Food and Nutrition Security." *United Nations*. <http://www.un.org/en/issues/food/taskforce/>.

Questions to Ponder

- In what ways do population growth policies have an actual, tangible effect on the lives of society's most vulnerable (such as migrants, impoverished women, the disabled, children, etc)?
- What short term solutions are there for increased strain nations face because of population growth?
- Socio-economic and cultural factors play an important role in population trends, in what way does the diverse nature of the world's nations and cultures change how appropriate policy is written and adapted?
- What other factors influence the relationship between poverty and population dynamics?
- How can population growth be managed while maintaining respects for the choices of individuals?
- To what extent is a new World Population Plan needed in order to help manage population in the coming decades?