

TITLE: Population growth, demographic change and environment in developing countries.

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ABSTRACT: This book chapter describes world population growth and distribution and patterns in China and India. The author discusses population structure and the effect of population growth on the environment. It is stated that population may double in the next 50 years. Growth of population in developing countries mandates both socioeconomic development and family planning programs. 95% of world population growth occurs in developing countries. The annual increase in total world population amounts to 87 million people. Africans are the fastest growing population in the world. Population growth does not match the distribution of world resources; it affects land use patterns, consumption patterns, and the environment. Developed country populations represent about 25% of world population, but they consume 50% of the world's food. Industrialized farming in the West uses a large proportion of world energy and financial resources. Livestock in the US consume 25% of the world's entire grain production, which is equal to the entire consumption in both India and China. The causes of hunger, malnutrition, and famine in developing countries originate in the economic and political sphere and are influenced by external factors. There is a need to increase food production and to use more advanced farming techniques. The land newly added to production each year may equal the amount of unusable land due to erosion, dryness, salt deposits, and water saturation. Agricultural demand for water is likely to double during 1970-2000. Growing food demand will create the need to increase use of chemical insecticides and fertilizers. Population pressure on the land to produce more food and cash crops leads to losses of topsoil, trees, and native plants and animals. Environmental damage is a result of poverty, affluence, land tenure systems, uncontrolled commercialization of natural resources, inadequate pollution controls, destructive farming methods, and urbanization.

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