



# Audubon

## POPULATION IMPORTANT POINTS

### Public Policy Fact Sheet



There has been phenomenal world population growth in your lifetime. The population of the world was:

- one billion in 1830
- two billion in 1930
- three billion in 1960
- four billion in 1975
- five billion in 1987
- six billion in 1999



Today there are over *6.4 billion people* in the world.

**Most population growth occurs in less developed countries.**

Over 98 percent of all population growth in the world today is occurring in the less developed countries.



What happens overseas affects the natural world here at home. Population-fueled habitat destruction in Latin America is one reason over 50 percent of all migrant song bird species are in decline in the United States. As forests fall to field, and fields are sprayed with chemicals in order to boost productivity, bird populations suffer.

**The world is at a critical juncture.**

Across the globe over one billion teenagers are now entering their reproductive years. This is the largest group of teenagers in history, and their level of access to basic family planning services will shape the world for generations to come.

“No country has ever become rich without 100 years of low population growth. The more growth, the more capital goes to provide for survival of new citizens rather than improvement of life.”

- Lester Thurow, economist, Sloan School, Massachusetts Institute of Technology

## THE POPULATION CONNECTION

The populations of North America and Latin America were almost exactly the same in 1950; now the western half of the Southern Hemisphere has a population that is 200 million people larger than that of North America. By 2050, the population of Latin America is expected to be over 350 million people larger than the population of North America.

Despite intensive chemical use on crops, about 841 million people – or one in every five persons in developing countries – still go to bed hungry. The United Nations World Food Program classifies 81 countries in the world as “low-income, food-deficient countries”

### **The U.S. does not do enough to support international family planning.**

Among the 20 leading industrialized countries, the U.S. is last when international family planning donations are counted as a percent of Gross National Product. Over the last 30 years, as world population has climbed over 60 percent, U.S. support for international family planning has declined by 40 percent (when calculated as a percentage of federal budget expenditures). Less than 0.02 percent of the federal budget now goes to support international family planning.

### **Family planning is an investment that pays dividends.**

Family planning is one of our most effective forms of foreign aid. Family planning slows population growth, which in turn enables developing economies to invest in hospitals, schools, roads and sewage systems. By enabling child spacing, family planning works to strengthen the health of women and children. As population growth slows, and economies develop, investments in environmental protection and sustainable development become possible. Experts agree that no single investment in human health, environmental protection, or economic and political stability currently has the potential for doing as much good for the environment as increased investment in international family planning.

### **What needs to happen.**

The U.S. should return to historical levels of support for international family planning. In inflation-adjusted dollars, U.S. funding for international family planning has declined by one-third since 1995. To return to the 1995 level, U.S. funding for international family planning needs to increase from \$474 million (FY 2006) a year to over \$865 million (FY 2007) a year.

“Unless we can find some way to slow down population growth, the stresses and strains on the natural resources will be too great to bear.”  
- Jane Goodall, primatologist