



## Why?

**It is historical fact – and current reality – that human populations put pressure on their natural surroundings. Today, environmental degradation is worst in the developing world, where 98 percent of population growth is occurring.**

### Smaller **Families** = Healthy **People**, Healthy **Environment**

- ❖ Since 1950, world population has more than doubled, growing from 2.5 billion to 6 billion in 1999. By 2050, the population is projected to grow to at least 9.1 billion.
- ❖ At the current rate of growth, the world's people will face food and water shortages, deforestation, and poorly managed urbanization and industrialization. All of these threaten human life and the world's environment.
- ❖ Each year, some 40 million acres of tropical forest (an area nearly the size of Washington state) disappear as trees are cleared for crops, human settlements, and fuel wood.
- ❖ The demand for water in many areas exceeds supply. Watersheds, rivers, aquifers, and wetland habitats are being destroyed. As a result, poor quality drinking water is a major public health problem and a major contributor to infant and child deaths in the developing world. Worsening water scarcity stems in large part from increases in population.

## How?

**Family planning programs can help relieve stress on the environment.**

- ❖ Access to USAID's voluntary family planning programs helps couples space births and have the number of children they want. Family planning not only improves the health and lives of women and their families, it also helps reduce pressure on the environment.
- ❖ USAID supports many programs in communities in the developing world that incorporate family planning with education about sustainable agricultural practices and earth-saving landscape approaches.
- ❖ Integrating family planning and environmental programs works. Many such efforts have achieved significant advances both in acceptance of family planning and adoption of agricultural practices that are environmentally sound.

Now more than ever we must be aware of the link between population growth and environmental stress and take action to protect the environment.

## What can **YOU** do?

- ❖ Get informed about international development, the environment, and family planning. Look for stories in your newspapers and on radio and television. Search the Web for information.
- ❖ Find out what the rest of the world is saying about this issue by viewing [www.onlinenewspapers.com](http://www.onlinenewspapers.com).
- ❖ Tell others about the connection between family planning and the environment and why this is important – not only to Americans but to the rest of the world.
- ❖ Get involved with an organization that is active in international affairs, the environment, health, or any area that interests you.
- ❖ Support international family planning programming and additional funding for programs that make family planning available to all people.
- ❖ Talk to children and young people about the world's people and tell them why helping others in the world is important. Explain it is important for the United States to play a role in improving world health.
- ❖ Find out what your government is doing in this area through the U.S. Agency for International Development. Visit our Web site at [http://www.usaid.gov/pop\\_health/pop/index.html](http://www.usaid.gov/pop_health/pop/index.html).

*Family Planning Saves Lives*

Cover Photos: D. Hinrichsen/JHU (top), H. Bower/WHO



## People and the Environment – Not an Either/Or Proposition

As growing numbers of people compete for survival, natural resources dwindle. Maintaining the delicate balance between human health and productivity and protecting the environment and resources on which all life depends is crucial to successful and sustainable development programs.

USAID's programs in family planning and the environment show how common sense coupled with logical programming can protect and improve conditions for both people and the earth.

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[www.usaid.gov](http://www.usaid.gov)



# Get the Facts!

