

NEGATIVE POPULATION GROWTH

Press Release

For immediate release

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New NPG *President's Column* Sees Recent Population Models as a Global Call to Action

Despite global media attention on new population models, there is still no acknowledgment of the clear solution: widespread access to contraception, and smaller family sizes.

Alexandria, VA (November 20, 2014) – In response to an October 27th article published in the [*Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*](#) (PNAS), today Negative Population Growth (NPG) released a new *President's Column*. In the online column, [NPG President Don Mann reviews](#) the PNAS article and its global media coverage – explaining what the projections mean for those concerned about population growth.

“At first glance this report would seem to see futility for those advocating prompt population reduction,” Mann notes. “However, upon closer inspection, the study’s findings echo what NPG has advocated for decades: we must adopt policies and practices which work to first halt, and eventually reverse population growth – and in the meantime, we must reduce our unsustainable consumption. Sadly, this summary is where most media outlets stopped their coverage – another repetition of the ‘reduce, reuse, recycle’ mantra. But this was far from the end of the story told by the data.”

Mann explains: “Of the multiple scenarios that scientists fed into the model, only two had any significant impact in reducing population growth: eliminating unwanted pregnancies (which represent roughly 16% of all live births), and the worldwide adoption of a one-child policy. Individually, those two factors produced nearly identical results: a global population peak of 8 billion by 2050, and then a reduction to 7 billion by 2100. Out of all the possibilities the team explored – from ‘business-as-usual’ to ‘catastrophic deaths due to war or pandemics’ – these two were the most effective at actually reversing population growth.”

Mann asserts: “These models were designed to illustrate the effects of extreme policies, and their actual implementation is highly unrealistic. It is the results – the value of attaining much lower fertility rates and the concept of *preventing* unwanted pregnancies – that are important.” He adds: “NPG has long held that the U.S. should never enact coercive legislation for the sake of reducing population size. But the study’s results are clear: the only real hope we have for a significant and humane reduction in population growth is if we work to greatly lower fertility rates and to prevent the millions of unintended pregnancies each year.”

Sadly, the PNAS study’s results make very plain that – for the short- and intermediate-term future – there is essentially nothing mankind could do to significantly reduce the momentum of our exponential

population growth. Mann notes: “In a way, that ship has sailed. There have been, and will inevitably continue to be, serious environmental consequences for our past decisions to grow with reckless abandon. We cannot emerge unscathed.”

He concludes: “But the certainty of these consequences does not equate to humanity’s unavoidable demise. While accepting the reality that we cannot quickly reverse the environmental damage we have done through overpopulation, we must not abandon our mission. We must continue to advocate a much smaller, truly sustainable U.S. and world population – and we must entertain every possible option for conserving our dwindling natural resources, as well as curb our insatiable consumption. Rather than closing the door on the population debate, this study should instead open a wide avenue for global dialogue – one that is sorely missing from the media spotlight.”

Since 1972, NPG has advocated [policies and practices](#) which: encourage families to make an educated and pre-planned decision on the timing and number of their children, provide widespread access to effective and affordable contraception for all who request it, promote the benefits of having fewer children, and abandon the fiscal and social policies which are incentives to larger family sizes. We encourage all concerned Americans to get involved in creating momentum for a national dialogue on U.S. population growth, and our [vast online library](#) of resources is available absolutely free of charge. For more information on the link between family size and U.S. population growth, we suggest Lindsey Grant’s NPG Forum paper [The Two Child Family](#), or the recent NPG Commentary [The Choice to be Childfree: An Increasing Factor in U.S. Population Growth](#).

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