

# NEGATIVE POPULATION GROWTH

## Press Release

*For immediate release*

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## NPG Forum Paper on a Sustainable Economy Holds True 20 Years Later Cites Critical Need for Balanced Economic Growth and Population

Alexandria, VA (March 28, 2019) – Donald Mann, President of Negative Population Growth (NPG), wrote a significant position paper in 1999 that addressed the formidable problem of how mankind can create an optimal balance between economic growth and population in the 21st century. Recognizing that his insightful presentation of defining “sustainability” and making the case for seriously reducing world population is still very much on target in an era where the debate over climate change is dominating national conversation, NPG has re-released this valuable publication.

In [\*An Essay on a Sustainable Economy\*](#), Mann focused on the steps that must be taken in the decades ahead to create a livable future. Mann makes clear from the very beginning that “A short definition of sustainability is the management of environmental and resource systems so that their ability to support future generations is not diminished.”

With population size crucial to achieving a sustainable economy, Mann answers the question as to what would be the best size of world population by reviewing major recent studies done on this topic and stating: “We at NPG believe that it is in the range of 1.5 to 2 billion, based on the assessments of the major population and resource scientists most concerned with the limits of economic growth.”

In his paper, Mann embraces the view of Economist Herman Daly who “has defined sustainable development as development without growth beyond environmental carrying capacity, where development means qualitative improvement and growth means quantitative increase.”

For Mann, population holds the key to sustainability. “Without a gradual but drastic reduction in the size of world population a major reduction in the size of the global economy would be impossible.” He follows the thinking of Cornell University Professor David Pimentel and others who “have argued convincingly that an optimal and sustainable world population would be no greater than 1.5 to 2 billion.”

NPG presently promotes that goal as Mann explains: “Their arguments can be briefly summarized as follows: The natural resources needed to sustain human life—ample fertile land, water, energy, forests and

diverse natural biota—are finite. Population growth is reducing their per capita availability, and forcing greater reliance on diminishing fossil fuels. Trade and technology have masked these natural limits, but cannot compensate for the shrinkage of natural resources per capita.”

Such thinking bolsters Mann’s belief that “Only by achieving a far smaller world population can we have any hope of eliminating forever hunger and poverty, and of creating a society that will be sustainable indefinitely in a sound and healthy environment, with a base of material prosperity that will minimize human suffering and allow civilization to flourish.”

As to how we get to that point, Mann proposes: “We need a specific goal or target for fertility just as we need a specific target for world population size. I suggest that a fertility of 1.5 is needed for at least several decades in order to halt and reverse world population growth.” He notes: “Family planning, the provision of contraceptives, is essential. Other vitally important measures include improving the status of women, and their education and job opportunities. But all such measures need to be supplemented by non-coercive incentives and disincentives to reduce desired family size by encouraging couples to have no more than two children. Examples of non-coercive incentives and disincentives would include tax and financial incentives, and preferences for employment and housing for couples with not more than two children...Family limitation, not just family planning, must become the order of the day.”

Looking to the future Mann puts forth a call to action to address overpopulation now, before it is too late. He states: “We must stop pretending that a global economy with a world population of 10-12 billion could possibly be sustainable. Our already overstressed ecosystem cannot provide, for the long term, an adequate standard of living for our present huge world population of six billion, much less for the even vaster numbers awaiting us unless we take action now.”

In conclusion, Mann holds forth that mankind is at a crossroads.

“Earth is truly in the balance as the third millennium opens” Mann suggests. “The United States has the opportunity to lead the world by its example and its support for family limitation toward a smaller, ecologically sustainable population and economy in the 21st century. The task before us, because of its size and complexity, is an awesome one. But the alternative to our goal of a sustainable world economy is unthinkable—widespread poverty and misery in a dreary and depleted environment inhospitable to human life.”

Mann wraps up his presentation with the warning: “We are living at a momentous time in history. We still have the power—if we can only develop the will—to halt and reverse population growth. That power, if not exercised, may no longer exist even a few years from now.”

He states, “Mankind today stands at a crossroads. One road, that of further population growth, leads

inevitably to starvation, poverty, social chaos and war. It leads to the certain destruction of all that we hold dear, including personal freedom and political liberty, peace and security, a decent standard of living and a healthy environment. The other road leads to population stabilization at a sustainable level after a transition period of population decrease. That is the road humanity must start down now. It leads to a world population in balance with its environment and resources, thus creating the condition that will allow the human race to live in peace and prosperity for as long as spaceship earth shall continue to exist.”

Founded in 1972, NPG is a national nonprofit membership organization dedicated to educating the American public and political leaders regarding the damaging effects of population growth. We believe that our nation is already vastly overpopulated in terms of the long-range carrying capacity of its resources and environment. NPG advocates the adoption of its *[Proposed National Population Policy](#)*, with the goal of eventually stabilizing U.S. population at a sustainable level – far lower than today’s. We do not simply identify the problems – we propose solutions. For more information, visit our website at [www.NPG.org](http://www.NPG.org), follow us on Facebook @[NegativePopulationGrowth](#) or follow us on Twitter @[npg\\_org](#).