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World Population Aging 2006

Dear Colleague:

World Population Day 2006 witnessed calls for more of the same globally destructive programs.

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Few of you likely noticed, but July 11 was World Population Day 2006. On that day, the United Nations, its various agencies and allied organizations, and those in the mainstream media who cared celebrated the need for fewer human beings and more left-wing social engineering in the Third World. I never cease to be amazed at how ideology blinds people to obvious realities, such as the coming population aging crisis and the failure of sex education and condom distribution to halt the AIDS epidemic.

Just last fall, the United Nations Population Division (UNDP) released another comprehensive report on rapid aging in the First World and on an even worse upcoming trend of population aging in the Third World. That’s correct, the UNDP believes that population aging in the developing world will be even more precipitous than the aging currently afflicting Europe, Japan, Canada, and the United States, where social security and health care systems are already starting to go bankrupt though population aging is just getting started. The UNDP expects the aging predicted to begin in earnest mid-century in Asia, the Middle East, and Latin America to happen more dramatically than it is happening now in Europe, where the elderly already outnumber children—and this in countries which will have a fraction of the financial resources to deal with the problem.

Sub-Saharan Africa still has high birthrates, but unless the AIDS epidemic is brought under control there, it could suffer the same fate.
A few statistics to illustrate the trend: The proportion of those 80 or older will go from 1.3% of the world population today to 4.3% by 2050, when those under 14 (the world’s future workers) will decline from 28.2% to 20.2%. The number of elderly dependents per 100 working-age people worldwide will go from 17 today to 37 in 2050. In less developed countries, the figures are 13 today to 34 in 2050. Can the Third World afford to support almost triple the proportion of old people? But working-age people will get a break at the other end of the dependency spectrum, however. The UNDP helpfully notes that the overall dependency ratio will not triple by 2050 because there will be so few children. Of course, in the years after 2050, when those few children grow up to be the few working-age people with an ever greater number of elderly.

The UNDP puts the biggest aging crunch in the Third World as a whole (individual countries vary in their demographic profiles, of course) after 2050 only because it assumes that birthrates in all nations will stabilize around 1.85 children per woman. There is no reason to believe that and every reason to believe that, barring dramatic changes in cultural priorities and government policies, birthrates in most nations will continue their downward plunge to well below 1.85. Many nations in both developed and less developed regions have already experienced such a plunge, and until-recently-fruitful nations such as Mexico, Brazil, and even India will soon join them. China is already at 1.7, but likely to hold steady since her largely poor and rural population would prefer to have more children but is kept artificially unprocreative by force. Replacement rate fertility in a stable society is around 2.1.

One important statistic to note: The idea that the world population experienced a dramatic boom in the proportion of young people after World War II due to decreased childhood mortality and other improved living conditions, necessitating population control measures that saved us from an unsustainable infestation of rugrats, is not true. “At the world level, the population in 1950 was relatively young, having 34% of its members under age 15 and barely 8% aged 60 or over,” says UNDP. This was despite the fertility decline of the Great Depression and the massive loss of young lives in World War II. “Between 1950 and 1975, as mortality decline accelerated, particularly in the less developed regions, both the proportion under age 15 and that aged 60 or over increased, to reach 37% and about 9% respectively. Overall, therefore, the population of the world became slightly younger from 1950 to 1975.”

So the world remained in demographic balance, and major demographic changes did not take place until after 1975-after population control and feminism had begun to take firm hold in most of the world.

And now population control has lead to the specter of rapid population aging and attendant
social and economic decline as fewer and fewer workers attempt to support more and more elderly, first in the First World, then globally. The UNDP urges that action be taken soon, before the crisis gets out of hand. What did those at the pinnacle of the international community in influence and funds have to say on World Population Day 2006?

“This year on World Population Day, the focus is on young people,” said Thoraya Ahmed Obaid, Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). Everything she suggested to solve the world’s problems would reduce childbearing, the UNFPA’s main goal for decades. She advocated more ‘family planning’ and less ‘risks of pregnancy and childbirth.’ UNFPA issued documents calling for more ‘gender equality’ (that is, more women working instead of caring for children). UNFPA wants more education for girls because “girls who are educated are likely to marry later and to have smaller, healthier families.’ In fact, one of the primary UNFPA talking points for World Population Day is, ‘Universal access to reproductive health, including family planning, is the starting point for a better future for the 1.5 billion young people (ages 10 to 24) who live in developing countries.’

Where is the recognition of population aging? Where is the encouragement for people in countries with falling birthrates to have more children to avert the coming crisis? Nowhere. Hopefully, before it is too late, the warnings of the UNDP and others will eventually penetrate into the elite circles where ideology and policies are made.

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