

Children in the News:  
Birth Rate 'harms poverty goals'

Black, Richard, "Birth Rate harms poverty goals." BBC News on the Web 8 Dec. 2006. 29 March 2007 <<http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/science/nature/6219922.stm>>.

A group from the UK parliament said that the UN's Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are going to be hard to meet if the population growth is not curbed. It is forecasted that the global population will reach nine billion by the year 2050. Richard Ottaway MP said at a population seminar that "no country has ever raised itself out of poverty without stabilizing population growth."

Over the last century, the global population rose from about 2 billion to 6 billion. The majority of the world's growth has come from developing nations. The Millennium Goals are global goals made by the UN in the year 2000 to help developing nations become more independent. These goals are:

1. The eradication of extreme poverty and hunger.
2. The achievement of universal primary education.
3. The promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women.
4. The reduction of child mortality.
5. The improvement in maternal health.
6. To help combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other life threatening diseases
7. To ensure environmental sustainability.
8. The development of a global partnership for development.

The population growth in most of Asia, Latin America, and the Middle East is leveling off; however, in the sub-Sahara Africa population growth still remains high. The average birth rate in Asian countries is about two children per family, but in some African nations it is about five children per family. Ottaway did admit that the population growth at this time is not contributing to global warming, because the fastest population growth is occurring in nations with the lowest emissions. However, these developing countries do contribute to the strain on water resources, fish, farmland, forests, and wildlife.

His plan to attack the population issue is to provide education for women, and to make family planning available to them. He says that it is not a difficult solution, but will people follow it? That is the question.