

Submission of the Population and Climate Change Alliance (PCCA) to the Rio+20 Zero Draft Outcome Document Preparations

Mission Statement

The Population and Climate Change Alliance (PCCA) is a network of Non-Profit Organisations that works together on population and climate change issues through a loose umbrella coalition.

PCCA strives to advance Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) through active awareness raising and advocacy work on the linkages between population and climate change, and believe that increasing (universal) access to voluntary family planning can make a significant contribution to climate change both in adaptation and mitigation strategies and programmes.

The PCCA includes the following organisations:

[Danish Family Planning Association](#) (Sex & Samfund)
[International Planned Parenthood Federation](#) (IPPF)
[Marie Stopes International](#) (MSI)
[Population Action International](#) (PAI)
[Population and Sustainability Network](#) (PSN)
[Population Health Environment \(PHE\) Ethiopia Consortium](#)

The following additional organisations are signatories to this submission from the PCCA:

[Action for Global Health](#)
[AIDOS - The Italian Association for Women in Development](#)
[Association of Youth Organizations Nepal](#) (AYON)
[BioRegional](#)
[Blue Ventures](#)
[Change Mob, Brazil](#)
[Community Health Africa Trust](#) (CHAT), Kenya
[DSW \(Deutsche Stiftung Weltbevoelkerung\)](#)
[Ecopop, Switzerland](#)
[Family Health Options Kenya](#) (FHOK)
[French Family Planning Movement](#)
[Institute for Global Health, University College London](#) (IGH, UCL)
[Interact Worldwide](#)
[Partners in Population and Development, African Regional Office](#) (PPD ARO)
[Pathfinder International](#)
[Population Matters](#)
[Portuguese Family Planning Association](#) (APF)
[RFSU - The Swedish Association for Sexuality Education](#)
[Rutgers WPF](#)
[Sex og Politikk – The Norwegian Association for Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights](#)

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[Shirkat Gah- Women's Resource Centre, Pakistan](#)

[The Irish Family Planning Association \(IFPA\)](#)

[The Sustainable World Initiative](#)

[Väestöliitto – Family Federation of Finland](#)

[Women's Center, Georgia](#)

The PCCA welcomes the opportunity to contribute input to the preparation of the zero draft of the Rio+20 outcome document. In this submission we contribute predominantly to 'Specific Elements: Objectives of the Conference' and 'Sectoral priorities and initiatives that could contribute to integrate the three pillars of sustainable development that could be launched and endorsed at Rio+20.' We focus on the linkages between population dynamics and sustainable development, and the opportunities that must be seized to advance sustainable development through achieving universal access to sexual and reproductive health and rights; a cross-cutting theme significant to each of the three pillars of sustainable development.

1. Summary

- 1.1 Population dynamics, including growth, urbanisation and migration, interact with the environment to influence availability of natural resources, biodiversity, climate change and other key Rio+20 priorities.
- 1.2 Unsustainable population growth and lack of access to reproductive health services undermine development and poverty alleviation efforts, with implications for governments' capacities to make a transition to a green and fair economy.
- 1.3 Between now and 2100 the world population is expected to increase from 7 billion to over 10 billion. Consideration of population dynamics with a sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) focus must be included among other sustainable development initiatives, including those that address unsustainable and inequitable consumption, and will increase their effectiveness.
- 1.4 Addressing unmet need for contraception to enable all women and couples to plan and space their children as they wish offers scope to achieve population stabilisation and contribute to poverty alleviation, gender equality, environmental sustainability and other important aspects of sustainable development.

Focus for policy recommendations and Rio+20 outcomes:

- 1.5 Global population dynamics can and must be addressed in ways that respect and protect human rights.
- 1.6 Human health and well-being, including SRHR, are central components of sustainable development.
- 1.7 Integrated population, health and environment approaches have synergistic effects.

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- 1.8 Population dynamics, including population growth, density, urbanization, migration and ageing, must be integrated into development strategies and environmental planning, with systematic use of population data and projections.
- 1.9 Rights-based sexual and reproductive health programmes, including family planning services, should be recognized as essential components of new global initiatives to increase resources for sustainable development and adaptation to climate change.
- 1.10 Rights-based sexual and reproductive health programmes, including family planning services, should be recognized as legitimate components of national climate change adaptation programmes and funding mechanisms, to increase the resilience of the communities most vulnerable to climate change.
- 1.11 Renewed commitment and greater investment is necessary to achieve the International Conference on Population and Development Programme of Action and the Millennium Development Goals.
- 1.12 Recognizing the links between population dynamics and sustainable development, governments should ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health, including family planning, empowerment of women, and investment in education, particularly of disadvantaged children and youth, and girls and young women, with programmes that respect and protect human rights.

2. Introduction

- 2.1 The UN Earth Summit in 1992 was a momentous international event, that stated “to achieve sustainable development and a higher quality of life for all people, States should reduce and eliminate unsustainable patterns of production and consumption and promote appropriate demographic policies”.¹ Recognising the significance of population dynamics and SRHR for sustainable development, Agenda 21 called for “programmes that promote demographic trends and factors towards sustainability”.² This included reproductive health programmes and services to “enable women and men to fulfil their personal aspirations in terms of family size, in a way in keeping with their freedom and dignity and personal held values”.
- 2.2 In accord with the 1992 Summit, the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in Cairo in 1994 recognised the interrelationships between population, development, the environment, and human rights, including the right to health.³ Moving away from demographic targets, the paradigm that emerged from Cairo endorsed a progressive vision of comprehensive sexual and reproductive health programmes, placing human rights and the individual needs and wishes of women at the centre of this approach. Empowering women and realising universal reproductive health and rights was recognised as a goal in its own right, as well as critical to achieving sustainable development.
- 2.3 These principles agreed at the 1992 Earth Summit and the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development are even more relevant today, yet over the last two decades they have not commanded the necessary attention at both the national and international level. While global environmental and sustainability issues are more pressing than before,

particularly with the onset of climate change, both the vision of the ICPD Programme of Action (PoA) and Millennium Development Goal 5b to achieve universal access to reproductive health by 2015 are far from realization. Since 1994 the world's population has increased from 5.5 billion to 7 billion, and until recently was expected to stabilize at 9 billion but is now expected to exceed 10 billion by the end of the century.⁴ Ninety-seven per cent of the growth in the world's population before 2050 will be in the developing nations.⁵ With these countries already struggling to meet their citizens' basic needs, such rapid population growth threatens to further undermine progress towards sustainable development.

- 2.4 Sustainable development will not be achieved until women's right to plan and space their pregnancies, enabling them to choose the number of children they have, is realized. Yet an estimated 215 million women in developing countries have an unmet need for contraception, meaning that they are at risk of an unwanted pregnancy and say that they do not want to get pregnant during the next two years, but are not using contraception, often because they do not have access to reproductive health services.⁶ Donor investment in family planning has actually decreased dramatically since the mid-to-late 1990s, at the same time that demand is increasing.⁶ In this submission the PCCA sets out the important links between population dynamics, sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) and sustainable development. We call for population dynamics and SRHR to be recognised as a critical aspect of sustainable development, and make recommendations for Rio+20 outcomes which have synergistic effects for the three economic, social and environmental pillars of sustainable development.

3. Population, consumption and sustainable development

- 3.1 Agenda 21, the Action Plan for 1992 Rio summit calls for "integrated environmental and development approaches at the local level, taking into account demographic trends and factors".² This approach acknowledges that population size, as a key determinant of use of the planet's finite resources, is a critical component of sustainability, and that additional demographic trends are also significant. As well as population size, density, migration, urbanisation and ageing influence are relevant to sustainable development as they influence consumption rates and have implications for economic growth, poverty reduction and governments' capacities to make the transition to a green and fair economy and adapt to climate change. We outlined above the rate and scale of population growth that has taken place since 1992, and that projected for the future. Given such growth, the success of sustainable development initiatives which fail to address the consequences of demographic change for sustainability and do not encompass the necessary focus on SRHR, will be considerably limited.
- 3.2 We welcome the recognition in the May 2010 report of the Preparatory Committee for Rio+20 that addressing both population and consumptions issues is critical to achieving sustainable development. The report acknowledges that demographic transition must be achieved in the global South in order to raise living standards in poor countries, at the same time as addressing the impact of inequitable and unsustainable patterns of consumption, particularly in the global North.⁷ We strongly support this approach which we hope will be advanced at Rio+20. It is sometimes perceived that consideration of the role of population dynamics in determining environmental sustainability distracts from the pressing problems of unsustainable and inequitable patterns of consumption by developed countries. We believe, however, that this either / or approach to 'population' and 'consumption' issues is simplistic and the absence of population dynamics from sustainable development approaches will

significantly compromise the effectiveness of other interventions. It is important therefore, that the summit holistically addresses the whole range of factors relevant to sustainable development.

- 3.3 It is sometimes assumed that addressing population growth requires coercion and restrictions on individual rights and freedoms. On the contrary, global population dynamics can and must be addressed in ways that respect and protect human rights, through advancing SRHR to fulfil women's rights to plan and space their pregnancies according to their wishes. Our submission recommendations focus on this approach. Many of our messages and recommendations echo the recent Civil Society Declaration of the 64th Annual UN DPI/ NGO Conference focusing on preparations for Rio+20.⁸ This demonstrates the considerable support that exists from civil society for advancing SRHR, gender equality and empowerment of youth as vital strategies for achieving sustainable development and the transition to a green and fair economy.

4. **Population, environment and biodiversity**

- 4.1 A focus on demographic trends and SRHR is critical to sustainable development, because it is the ways that population and society interact with the natural environment which determine environmental sustainability. Population growth, density and migration can place extreme pressures upon the natural environment. Acting in tandem with climate change in many developing countries, rapid population growth increases demand for natural resources and results in intensified agriculture and use of land and water supplies. This in turn can exacerbate environmental problems, including deforestation, land and water shortages and degradation, and loss of biodiversity due to habitat destruction, depleting the natural resource base upon which the health and wellbeing of populations, and overall sustainability, depend.⁹ Demographic trends are increasingly being identified as significant for the global conservation of biodiversity, with high rates of population growth contributing to loss of biodiversity. A study found that population growth rates in twenty-five areas of the world identified as 'biodiversity hotspots', are significantly higher than the population growth rate of the world as a whole, and above the average for developing countries.¹⁰
- 4.2 The detrimental impacts of population dynamics upon the environment are felt the greatest by society's poorest populations, including women and children, deepening poverty and increasing their vulnerability to climate change. As a result of rapid population growth, overcrowding and increasingly climate change, poor communities can be forced to inhabit or migrate to the most ecologically fragile areas which are particularly vulnerable to environmental degradation. The need to feed growing populations is causing deforestation and more intensive use of natural resources, further jeopardising food security. This issue is particularly critical in some parts of Africa, where the population is set to more than triple by the end of the century, at the same time as communities and governments will be struggling to cope with the effects of climate change upon agricultural output. Given the links between demographic pressures, environmental degradation, conflict situations and vulnerability to climate change and natural disaster, integrated approaches to population, health and environment issues have synergistic effects, benefiting the health and well-being of communities, and the ecosystems upon which they depend. Ensuring that women have the means to plan and space their pregnancies as they wish is critical for increasing the resilience of poor communities, in the face of scarcity of natural resources, climate change and increasing frequency of natural disaster. SRHR programmes must also be considered a vital

component of the response to emergency situations, including natural disaster and conflict situations.

5. Population dynamics and climate change

- 5.1 Consideration of the links between population dynamics and climate change is complex and sensitive, because it is consumption rates and patterns in the global North that is driving climate change, yet it is the countries of the South, where the majority of population growth is taking place, that are the most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. While discussion of the links must acknowledge these complexities, as well as the responsibilities of the global North to address the unsustainable consumption patterns driving climate change, the links are too important to ignore. Population growth and lack of access to reproductive health in many of the poorest communities hardest hit by climate change is exacerbating their vulnerability and undermining adaptation capacity, meaning that advancing SRHR offers opportunities to increase climate resilience. These links are increasingly being recognized by developing countries themselves.
- 5.2 In the National Adaptation Programmes of Action (NAPA) reports in which the forty least developed countries set out their most pressing climate change adaptation issues and priorities as part of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, ninety- three per cent of the countries identified population growth as one of the factors confounding their attempts to adapt to the effects of climate change. The most frequently mentioned climate change adaptation issues identified as being exacerbated by population growth are: soil degradation and erosion, fresh water scarcity, migration, deforestation and shortages of farm land. Additional vulnerabilities linked to population growth include loss of biodiversity and natural habitat, desertification and diminishing fish stocks.¹¹
- 5.3 As recognised by the recent Civil Society Declaration of the 64th Annual UN DPI/ NGO Conference focusing on preparations for Rio+20, attainment of MDG 5, including universal access to reproductive health, offers opportunities to strengthen the resilience of people and communities to the consequences of climate change and environment degradation.⁸ Integrating SRHR programmes into climate change adaptation plans would enable women to determine the size of their families and make adapting to the effects of climate change easier. It would increase resilience at the individual household level, and have wider effects for society as the resulting prevention of unplanned pregnancies would lead to reductions in population growth and the associated pressures upon resources.⁹
- 5.4 One analysis determined that globally there are 26 population and climate change “hotspots.” These are countries with low climate change resilience that are experiencing rapid population growth and high projected declines in agricultural production.ⁱ In hotspot countries, an average of one in four married women would like to avoid pregnancy, but is not using modern family planning. The average number of children born to each woman in hotspot countries is

ⁱ Analysis based on Population Action International’s *Mapping Population and Climate Change* website: http://www.populationaction.org/Publications/Interactive_Databases/climate_map.shtml. “Low resilience countries” are those in the lower two quartiles of the Vulnerability-Resilience Indicators Model. “High population growth” is defined as above the median population growth rate of 1.33%. “High projected decline in agricultural production” are those where the projected declines in relative terms are above the median of all countries expected to experience decline between 1990 and 2020.

4.6, and the average population growth rate is 2.2 percent. If unchanged, this rate of growth would result in a doubling of the population in 31 years.¹²

- 5.5 Migration presents another important adaptation issue, both in terms of migration resulting from scarcity of natural resources, and the mass migration that is likely to take place in the future due to the sea level rises expected to result from climate change. One third of the world's population lives within 60 miles of a coast, and 13 of the world's 20 largest cities are on a coast.¹³ The necessary migration will be easier to achieve if women and men are able to exercise their right to plan and space their pregnancies, both because of reductions in the average family size and greater per capita availability of land due to reduced population growth. Achieving universal reproductive health is also a critical intervention for promoting gender equality and reducing the particular vulnerabilities of women and girls to the impacts of climate change.

6 Population dynamics, poverty and a green and fair economy

- 6.1 The Rio Earth Summit recognised that “human beings are at the centre of concerns for sustainable development.”¹ This recognition is important because it acknowledges that without ensuring human well-being and rights, sustainable development will not be achieved. As well as being significant to the environmental pillar, population dynamics and SRHR are critical to the social pillar of sustainable development, and a focus on these aspects of sustainable development also has synergistic effects for the economic pillar, with implications for transition to a green and fair economy.
- 6.2 We use the term ‘green and fair economy’, because the current economic model that promotes growth at all costs must be replaced by a new model based on fairness and equity, thereby both promoting environmental sustainability and addressing the social inequalities inherent in the current model. It is crucial that the term “economic growth” is not simply replaced with “green growth” or a “green economy”, with business as usual. Strengthening the social pillar of sustainable development at Rio+20 is vital for ensuring progress towards a truly green and fair model of development, and one which values, and measures dimensions of, both human and environmental well-being.
- 6.3 Population dynamics and SRHR are linked to key determinants of poverty and other critical aspects for sustainable development, including health, education, gender and economic development. Increasing access to comprehensive sexual and reproductive health services that respect and protect human rights, is critical to realizing the human right to health. These services include not only family planning programmes but the full range of services and information necessary for individuals to enjoy sexual and reproductive health and well-being, including those benefiting maternal and infant health, as well as HIV/AIDS treatment and prevention. At the individual level, the agency, equity, health and resilience of women are strongly influenced by women's ability to exercise reproductive choices. Increasing access to education, particularly of girls and women, must also be a strong focus for advancing the social pillar of sustainable development, and will have synergistic effects with health and gender equality. Empowering women to plan and space their pregnancies as they wish increases women's opportunities for education, employment and political engagement, and resilience, in turn contributing to prospects for a green and fair economy.
- 6.4 Rapid population growth is associated with high levels of poverty and low levels of human development. In countries with low levels of economic development it places pressure on

national resources and public services, reducing governments' capacity to meet the basic needs of their citizens and undermining development.¹⁴ By the end of the century the population of the countries in the world with the highest fertility rates (concentrated in the poorest countries) is set to triple.⁴ Without urgent investment in SRHR programmes, including voluntary family planning, this rate of growth will outpace poverty alleviation and undermine other sustainable goals, at the same time as reducing the capacity of governments to undertake initiatives aimed at making a transition to a green and fair economy.

- 6.5 Due to the links between high rates of population growth and poverty, achieving demographic transition in developing countries has been recognised as an “urgent goal” for Rio+20.⁷ We fully support this goal, which offers considerable opportunities to advance the social goals of sustainable development. These include poverty alleviation, health, education and empowerment of women, and other issues of social inequality which must be addressed for a successful transition to a green and fair economy which offers development prospects for all. But we urge that it will not be achieved without advancing SRHR and ensuring that voluntary family planning services are available to all. We also emphasize that while the increased number of young people entering productive years that results from demographic transition offers opportunities to drive growth and development, if this potential is to be realized governments must increase investments in basic services, including health and education, and other means for empowering youth.
- 6.6 Demographic transition is also an urgent sustainable development goal because of the environmental limits humanity faces, at the same time as seeking to promote prosperity for all human beings now and in the future. Taking population dynamics into account will help to focus the sustainable development agenda on planning for the composition, distribution and movement of the population in the long-term, which in turn shapes areas vital to the green economy, including food security, employment, health, social protection and environmental protection.¹⁵

7. Conclusion: Advancing sustainability through sexual and reproductive health and rights

- 7.1 In this submission we have outlined the many reasons why advancing SRHR is essential for achieving sustainable development and the need for a focus upon population dynamics if the effectiveness of other sustainable development initiatives is not to be undermined. In conclusion we wish to bring to the attention of the international community the substantial opportunities that exist to advance a wide-range of sustainable development goals, by meeting the need for sexual and reproductive health programmes that respect and protect human rights; a proven and highly cost-effective development intervention.
- 7.2 Worldwide there is a vast unmet need for contraception in developing countries, meaning that real opportunities do exist to reduce world population growth, by reducing unplanned pregnancies. As discussed, 215 million women in developing countries have an unmet need for contraception, meaning they are at risk of an unwanted pregnancy, say they do not want to have a child in the next two years, but are not using contraception, often because they do not have access to reproductive health services.⁶ Women who have an unmet need for effective contraception account for 82 per cent of all unintended pregnancies in developing countries.¹⁶ At the same time as demand for contraception is increasing, donor investment in family planning is decreasing, despite international commitments made to achieving universal reproductive health as part of the ICPD PoA and MDGs.⁶

7.3 Meeting the unmet need for family planning in developing countries while simultaneously fulfilling unmet need for maternal and newborn services would require an estimated doubling of current global investments. This investment would deliver dramatic achievements for maternal and infant health: averting an estimated half of all newborn deaths and two-thirds of all maternal deaths in developing countries. Furthermore it would support considerable progress towards other development goals, averting two-thirds of all unwanted pregnancies and easing population pressures.⁶ Cost-benefit analysis shows just how cost-effective investing in family planning is. For every dollar spent in family planning, between 2 and 6 U.S. dollars can be saved in interventions aimed at achieving other development goals, including education, maternal and child health, HIV/AIDs and environmental sustainability.¹⁷

8. Recommendations

8.1 Global population dynamics can and must be addressed in ways that respect and protect human rights.

8.2 Population dynamics, including population growth, density, urbanization, migration and ageing, must be integrated into development strategies and environmental planning, with systematic use of population data and projections.

8.3 Rights-based sexual and reproductive health programmes, including family planning services, should be recognized as essential components of new global initiatives to increase resources for sustainable development and adaptation to climate change.

8.4 Rights-based sexual and reproductive health programmes, including family planning services, should be recognized as legitimate components of national climate change adaptation programmes and funding mechanisms, to increase the resilience of the communities most vulnerable to climate change.

8.5 Renewed commitment and greater investment is necessary to achieve the International Conference on Population and Development Programme of Action and the Millennium Development Goals.

8.6 Recognizing the links between population dynamics and sustainable development, governments should ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health, including family planning, empowerment of women, and investment in education, particularly of disadvantaged children and youth, and girls and young women, with programmes that respect and protect human rights.

9. Response to additional questions

9.1 *General content question a): Expectations for the outcome of Rio+20 and the Outcome document*

Rio+20 presents a critical opportunity for international leaders to agree and commit to urgent action required to promote a new, sustainable model of development which reflects environmental limits and seeks to deliver prosperity for all. We wish to see international agreement on a politically-binding outcome document that commits governments to wide-ranging actions aimed at strengthening each of the three pillars of sustainable development,

ensuring that the social pillar is not neglected, and that human rights including sexual and reproductive health and rights are at the centre of sustainable development initiatives.

9.2 General content question b): Comments on existing proposals, including a green economy roadmap and sustainable development goals (SDGs).

Regarding the proposals for SDGs, we believe it is important that there is a greater focus upon environmental and sustainability issues by the international development agenda, and one which reflects the responsibilities of the global North to address unsustainable and inequitable patterns of consumption. At the same time the important focus on poverty reduction must not be lost, and for this reason we recommend that the MDGs are encompassed within the SDGs or any other possible post-2015 international development framework. For the reasons outlined in this submission, achieving MDG 5 on reproductive health must be considered central to the achievement of sustainable development. We support the recommendation of the Civil Society Declaration of the 64th Annual UN DPI/ NGO that an SDG on health includes “achieving universal access to health care and services, and wherever feasible free at the point of use for women and children, and including sexual and reproductive health.”⁸ Furthermore, in 2014 the original deadline for implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action will be reached, which provides a more detailed framework for achieving universal SRHR, and one which acknowledges that its realization is critical for sustainable development. Reflecting the importance of achieving the ICPD PoA, its timeframe has already been extended by the UN,¹⁸ and we recommend that the goals it sets are also encompassed with the SDGs. Please refer to section 6, particularly para. 6.2 for views on the green economy.

9.3 General content question c and d): Implementation and Cooperation Mechanisms

We endorse the calls in the Civil Society Declaration of the 64th Annual UN DPI/ NGO, for full engagement and involvement of all stakeholders, and with particular attention to the views and participation of civil society in the global South, including girls, women, young people and other marginalised social groups.⁸ This includes preparation for the summit, involvement in the summit and full participation in implementation of the agreed outcomes and sustainable development governance.

9.4 Specific elements question a): Sectoral priorities and initiatives

Our overall submission focuses on the sectoral priority of population dynamics and SRHR, and one which as a cross-cutting issue offers important scope for integration of the three pillars of sustainable development.

9.5 Specific elements question b): Green economy

Please refer to section 6.

9.6 Specific elements question c): Institutional Framework for Sustainable Development

Please refer to section 6 in particular for proposals to strengthen the social pillar, and throughout this submission we have focused on the synergistic benefits of a focus on population dynamics and SRHR across each of the three pillars of sustainable development.

9.7 Specific elements question d): Refinement of the two themes

We urge that sufficient space is awarded at Rio+20 for population dynamics and sexual and reproductive health and rights as a thematic issue and a cross cutting theme, within the focus upon a green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication.

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