

Forum: General Assembly Three

Issue: The question of overpopulation

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Introduction

Today, due to the reproduction of the human kind, human population has radically increased compared to the past. As of July 2015, the human population has been estimated at 7.3 billion people. This number is three times larger than the population in the 1950s. Albeit the common public believes that human population itself is negative in respect of earth, solely the human population can not be judged critically. Instead, the eventual consequences that comes along with the drastic increment of the population, is intensifying the severity of the issue of over population.

The importance of the question of overpopulation is the complexity to solve the issue. Since this issue is interrelated with so much other issues, it is very hard to take any stance about this issue. In addition, there are a lot of perspectives on this issue. Some countries believe that the reduction of human population is crucial for the current situation and some countries think that the human rights issues that are occurring due to this issue is much more important and that the human rights needs to be considered the first priority.

The question of overpopulation is a vital environmental issue that is interrelated to the human rights problem as well. The United Nations started the discussion of population in the 1940s, eventually passing some resolutions and commissions regarding the overpopulation issue. It is now being considered as a crucial issue to the human-kind that could bring upon threats in the future. However, swift resolutions are pursued in order to refine the situation of on-going population increase and the ripple effects of the issue.

Definition of Key Terms

Overpopulation

The condition of having an excessive amount of population relative to the environmental capacity provided which acts to cause global issues such as the environmental pollutions and the infringement of human rights.

Poverty

The state of which one lacks of material possession or money that is necessary for livelihood.

The Justinian Plague

A historical plague that is originated from the Egypt in about the 8th century. Its symptoms were delusions, high fever, swellings of groin and armpit. Patients with deteriorated conditions experienced coma and serious delusions, eventually led to death. It has the same pathogen that has caused the black death later on in Europe.

The Black Death

Having the scientific name of *Yersinia Pestis*, it is a bacteria-borne disease that diffuses in many ways. It is a bubonic plague that affects the lymph nodes. Mortality rate of the black death broad, however the it has made numerous casualties by causing fever, headaches and the killing of skins, turning them into black color.

Commission on Population and Development

A population commission established by the economic and social committee that monitor, review and assess the implementation of the program of action from the international conference of pollution and development. It functions to inform the economic and social council on information and issues regarding to population.

History

Plagues and Diseases

Although the human population has been continuously increasing after the Last Glacial Period, often known as the part of Ice Age, , it occasionally dropped drastically due to the contagious plagues. These diseases had massive impacts on the human society by temporarily paralyzing the growth of human population. In addition, these are considered to be the very few and rare phenomenon that has diminished the exponentially growing population.

The Justinian Plague

The Justinian Plague a pandemic that dispersed through out the East Roman Empire around the 8th century. The disease has first out broke in Constantinople which is around the location of Istanbul of the modern times, and its origin was surmised to be the infected rats on the grain shipping boat coming from Egypt. The effects of the Justinian Plague were devastating. It

killed approximately 5,000 people per day at maximum, eventually resulting 25 million to 50 million casualties. The European population dropped by 50%, leaving the human population desolated.

The Black Death

The Black Death, also known as the Black Plague, is an infectious disease that has initially occurred at Kyrgyzstan in 1338-1339. After the outbreak, it spread through China and travelled along to silk road, eventually reaching Constantinople after 15 years. The epidemic had its genuine start once it reached the territory of Europe. It has reduced the world population by about 100 million people, including the 25million casualties from China and 75 million casualties from Europe. The black plague is still remembered as one of the most devastating pandemic that has greatly reduced the human history.

Involvement of the United Nations

The United Nations has been constantly considering the issue of population in the past century. Along with the Establishment of the Commission on Population and Development in October 3, 1946, UN has operated the United Nations Population Fund(UNFPA), United Nations Population Division and United Nations Statistics Division. By the harmony of the three organizations, UN has achieved to maintain to be in touch with the population issues with reliable resources. Throughout, they had three world conferences on population and their effort to ameliorate the situation on overpopulation is being continued.

Commission on Population and Development

In 1946, the United Nations made their first step to negotiate the issue of overpopulation by passing the Population Commission in the resolution of the General Assembly 3. This commission holds to monitor and assess the program on the population and inform the information and issues to the social and economic council. The commission is composed of 47 member states and they are elected by the social and economic council every 4 years. This commission has help support the council by indirect observation. It is usually done arranging the studies and advising the council on population related factors. In 1994, the General Assembly has decided to rename the the commission to Commission on Population and Development.

Establishment of the United Nations Population Fund



Caption #1: The United Nations Population Fund Logo

The United Nations has gone forth to improve the situation on population by establishing the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). The UNFPA, formerly the United Nations Fund for Population Activity, is an international UN organization and was found in 1969. The UNFPA has successfully generate data on the population and achieved to create various program to improve the population problem. Of all their work, the two of major campaigns that they did was to end female genital mutilation and to end fistula. In 2015, they have successfully reduced the custom by 40% in 16 countries and the campaign to end fistula is still progressive in 40 countries. Although the UNFPA is an organization that revolve around the issues of what the population is concerned of, their aims and programs are closely related to the issue of overpopulation. For instance, one of their aim is to make every pregnancy is wanted, so in order to achieve that, they would initially need to deal with the circumstances of overpopulation.

Key Issues

Poverty

Poverty is an issue that has been around the world for centuries. Tracing back to the history of poverty, due to the development of the technology and the industrial revolution, the poverty rate around the world has decreased by 20% between 1947 to 2012. However, around 2011, the poverty rate was shown to be rising again. This was not because of diseases or corruption like in the 1947, but instead it was because of the overpopulation. Poverty is happens when there are not enough economic income and environment for the person to live. Therefore, when the population has greatly increased while the environment and economic income that could be made is limited, it has caused many people to be insufficient of money, food and work space to themselves or their household.

Violation of Human Rights

The population has been continuously expanding and the importance of human rights has rose. However, the overwhelming population has made the world in a condition which it is so challenging to ensure equal human rights for every single person. Among all the human rights issues that have been

recognized, the issue on the freedom of birth and the mother's protection is the major human rights violations regarding to overpopulation. The rapidly rising population makes it harder to nurse the tremendous amount of mothers in the finest and protective facilities, and some families are even restricted to give birth due to overpopulation. This is a on-going issue which will be more serious as the population increases.

Freedom of Birth

As the population increases overwhelmingly, some countries are having difficulties in observing their citizens and keeping them in their own country borderline. Therefore, some of the countries are experiencing difficulties. For instant, legal entry and exit to a country is increasing since the security can not hold the amount of people trying to do such action. In addition, the population is making significant amount waste products which is polluting the country. Therefore, there were some countries that have made a policy regarding to the birth. For instance, the Republic of China has implemented one child policy in 1979 to alleviate the overpopulation problem. This made having more than one child illegal. However, this was considered as a violation of human rights so it began to phase out in the 2015. Like this the contradiction between alleviating over population and violation of human rights is making the problem of overpopulation a very difficult issue to solve.

Mother's Protection

Overpopulation also means that the amount of women giving birth has increased. However, these women's lives are threatened because they can not afford to go to good facilities to give birth. This is deeply connected to poverty which is also the victim of overpopulation. In May 25th, The UNFPA has reported about the Burundi refugees giving birth in hazardous conditions. The refugees are risking their life to give birth in this situation and they are even in danger of sexual violence due to the exposure to the other refugees. Moreover, more than 1000 women in most of the African countries are dying due to giving birth. Because poverty is one of the main consequences of overpopulation, the effects that poverty give can not be overlooked. The ripple effect of overpopulation is currently threatening the population's health as well as people's fundamental rights.

Environmental Issues

As the world population increase, the demand for energy and resources have also increased correspondently. However, because there are limited amount of resources and energy that can be produced on the Earth, the increasing demand for these needs are causing severe environmental issues. The burning of coal for the production of electricity is causing maleficent gasses that would contaminate the atmosphere and cause global warming. Also, the increasing demand for wood has caused the forests, lung of the Earth, to be rapidly cut down. Cutting down trees are very serious matter since they are the objects that lessens the air pollution and converts Co2 into Oxygen for us to breathe. According to the

statistics, Indonesia which is one of the countries with most forests, has lost approximately 50 million acres of forest. The uprising environmental issue is dispersing rapidly and it is an issue that needs the world's immediate attention, since this will be affecting the world in a pretty short time.

Depletion of Natural Resources

Natural resources have been used to create electricity, fire and materials that are needed for human to maintain their lives. The important thing to emphasize here is the fact that the natural resources are used for human's need. Therefore, if there are more people, the population requires more natural resources in order to fulfill their needs. However, the world's natural resources are limited and they are being used in fast tempo. Forest area has decreased about at least 5% in Cambodia, Malaysia and Myanmar. In addition, it is estimated that we can use oil for only 41 years more before it's depletion. Currently, the world is wasting and overusing natural resources which makes it a huge problem for the future generations to find other energy resources.

Global Warming

Global warming is one of the biggest problems that our world is facing. The global warming is the heating of the atmosphere which destroys the ozone and raises the sea level. The global warming's major cause is the pollution done by human. Due to the increment of population, human population have been using more and more fossil fuels to power electricity plants and to fuel the car. However, the burning of fossil fuel forms tremendous amount of Co₂. The increase in the emission of Co₂ has changed the temperature of the atmosphere. The greenhouse gasses in the atmosphere traps the some of the heat from infrared that is transferred to the Earth through radiation. Therefore, the global warming is one of the side-effects that is originated by overpopulation.

Major Parties Involved and Their Views

United Nations (UN)

The United Nations dealt with this issue since the establishment of commission on population and development in 1946. The foundation of United Nations Population Fund(UNFPA) has contributed to a better observation on the population and the UNFPA has been continually keeping their eyes on the situation of world population. However, the UNFPA and the United Nations is more concerned with the immediate effects of the overpopulation such as the violation of human rights and the safety of human. They are opposed to solutions that violates the human rights like the previous attempt done by the Chinese government; they are looking for a universalistic solution that could alleviate the situation.

United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)

The UNFPA is an international UN organization that was founded in 1969. Using the population data collected in accord with the United Nations Population Division and United Nations Statistics Division, the UNFPA creates programs to reduce poverty and solve the issues in minority populations. Their primary purpose is to promote the right of every woman, man and child to live in healthy and equal opportunistic environment. The UNFPA aims to make a world where “poverty is reduced, every pregnancy is wanted, and every birth is safe.

The UNFPA is concerned primarily to the human rights and on-going poverty that is increasing due to over population.

Timeline of Relevant Resolutions, Treaties and Events

Date	Description of event
1830	The human population reaches 1 billion people.
1916	There was the first attempt to fight the population growth done by an American birth control activist.
1927	The human population reaches 2 billion people.
1946-1964	America experiences greatly increased birthrate. It is estimated that 76 million babies were born in this period.
1946	The United Nations General Assembly 3 passes the commission on population and development. This commission was to monitor and inform the situation on the social issues on overpopulation, and assess the programs on it.
1960	The human population reaches 3 billion people.
1969	The United Nations Population Fund starts operating. It manages to create programs to alleviate poverty and other issues regarding overpopulation.
1979	Mao Zedong, China’s leader during that time period, starts the one-child policy. His purpose was to reduce to exponentially increasing birth rate, so he illegalized the families from having more than 1 child.
1987	The human population reaches 5 billion people.

1999	The human population reaches 6 billion people. By now the rate of population clearly shows that the human population is rapidly increasing.
2015	The one child policy in the Republic of China starts to phase out as the citizens gained their rights to have freedom in birth.

Evaluation of Previous Attempts to Resolve the Issue

The previous Attempts to alleviate this issue has been mostly one sided. The United Nations have been committed solely into the effects of the overpopulation such as violation of human rights and poverty. This only solves the issue that revolves around overpopulation, while it is not very effective towards solving the overpopulation. On the other hand, countries like China and Vietnam pursue the reduction of population so they advance child policies. Often times, these child policies are considered to be a extreme violation of human rights, such as freedom of birth or right to live in equal opportunistic environment. Most of the solutions suggested to resolve this issue was extreme and both perspectives were not thoroughly understood. This makes the previous solutions to be effective on one side while having a great negative impact to the other side. Therefore, a realistic resolution with good insight of both perspectives needs to be suggested.

Possible Solutions

Keeping in mind that the issue of overpopulation has serious side effects, the resolution will need to approach this issue through solving both the overpopulation itself and the problems that it causes. While the previous attempts to resolve this issue was extreme, the resolution would need to alleviate issues in both perspectives in an effective way. In addition, following the purpose of the United Nations, the solution needs to reach a consensus between all countries since this is an issue that many countries have diverse opinion on. The resolution would need to resolve the critical issue of child policy which some countries have. It should not overlook the fact that more population can bring more economic power to the country. The nations would need to work on reducing the wasted natural resources and ensure their citizens fundamental rights. Overall, the resolution will need to be realistic and well-rounded by acknowledging the following elements: Human rights, Environment and Economy.

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