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Linkages of Population, environment & development

1. We are used to deal with population, environment and development as separated issues. At the most, the relation between each 2 of them is looked upon in a direct cause/effect perspective.

However, here at the IAC, we are called to call upon these 3 areas as 3 inter-related areas and to determine their linkages. The question comes then: which is the key factor to the others? Or, even, is any of them the key factor to the others? In other words: how to come to an integrated & balanced view of society where people can live freely & happily in their own environment? How can human & natural resources be deployed, through development, for the well-being of all, without exception?

2. The facts are well known. (The document prepared by the expert group gives some of these facts.) Whatever the angle of approach - may it be population, environment or development - we all realize that those facts speak of very acute problems.

However, it should be noted that there are different perspectives on those facts. For instance, in what concerns population, there are no opposite views. For



some, we are still in the asymptotic curve (with indefinite growth in population) and the future carries with it a total population explosion. For others, population growth rate has led us now to a "plateau" - like any other living organisms in a closed milieu, mankind is reaching a stable level, designing a curve, with population having already passed the reflexion point.

Likewise, for some the resources available are not enough to keep the human population adequately nourished & sheltered. For others (cf. report by Donella Meadows to the IAC "A short summary of the state of the World's resources") achieving sustainable, high-productivity resources use does not require more wealth, new technologies, or tremendous sacrifices."

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It is, therefore, very important, to make a clear assessment of the world situation regarding population, environment and development. A tabulation of all the available data is necessary, establishing the basic matrix of the correlation between the 3 areas.

3. My concern at this session of the IAC is most of all to find the linkages between population, environment and development.

The IAC cannot satisfy itself with the mere juxtaposition of "solutions" and "measures" regarding each of the 3 areas. The fact concerning those areas and the problems raised by each of them cannot be seen in isolation. The 3 areas are not only inter-related, but closely interdependent. They form a system.

It has been stated by the UNEP (cf "The State of the Environment 1985") that that interdependence can be spelled out, at the outset, in simple form.

The pace, content, location, distribution of benefits of development determine:

- the preservation of environment;
- the growth and distribution of population.

The preservation of environment, is understood as a socio-economic factor, its integrative value in terms of management of natural resources, determine:

- the medium and long-term efficiency of development;
- the increase in quality of life of population.

The growth and distribution of population determine:

- the degree of preservation of the environment;
- the pace, the reliability and the composition of development.

From these simple statements, it can be seen that there is no way out if each area is taken separately.

Indeed, development cannot be seen only as economic and technological initiatives and projects but rather as the all-embracing goals, strategies and actions

necessary for the adequate management of human and natural resources.

Likewise, population growth is not only a matter of fertility, a family planning and women's education but a matter to be included in the concept and *prachce of* ~~practivegies and actions necessary for the adequate~~ *development* management of human and natural resources.

Likewise, population growth is not only a matter of fertility, a family planning and women's education but a matter to be included in the concept and practice of development of human ressorces

And, finally, environment is not only a mere question of preservation but it is one decisive factor in the design of each technological endeavour. Hence its basic role in agricultural and industrial policy, which is key to the managmeent of natural ressorces

4. Though the relatedness between population, environment and development can be formualted in other terms, let us pick up what has just been mentioned.

While attempting to establish the linkage between the 3 areas, we notice that we are dealing with the human and natural ressorces in their *autonomy/* as well as in their interplay and interdependence



Two factors play a decisive role in such interdependence : technology and political decision-making

Technology is often taken as a "natural" element in the progress of society. The inter-related ~~ness~~^{ness} between population, environment and development makes clear the case for technology as carrying with it a political dimension of the utmost importance.

It is therefore of the utmost important that bussiness, technicians and researchers be fully aware of the political impact of technological choices, priorities and investments. They are at the core of development, they are decisive to the changes in environment, they conditon the socio-economc basis of the people's lives.

Political decision-making is most oftern seen as relating separately to the issues of population, environment, and development. Few politicians in today's world seem^{able} to encompass the giant steps made in the complexity of the above issues. To a great extent this is due to the fact that the technical dimension of the political decison-making has been missing. For the political decision-making to come to grips with the problematique of population,

environment and development as one inter-related issue, it is essential the knowledge or, at least, the openness to the technical factors which are present in such issue.

It is therefore of a decisive importance that the political leaders be alerted to the logics inherent in the technical implications of their decisions for development, environment and population, taken both separately and as a whole.

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5. Among the necessary steps necessary for the InterAction Council to suggest in its appeal, I would stress the following:

5.1. Information at all levels

There is a fundamental requirement for better information: first, more widespread awareness of the actual resource situation and of the ways all the earth's resources interact; second, familiarity with workable technologies for efficiency and sustainability.

The governments and the business world should undertake the following responsibilities, through the institution they will deem adequate:

- monitor and communicate regularly the state of the region's resources and the degree to which the population's basic needs are met;
- provide a meeting ground and systematic tools for integrating expertise on individual resources to generate an overview of the resource system as a whole;
- establish mechanisms capable of designing and demonstrating management techniques that can produce high, sustainable yields from its total resource endowment.



5.2 Comprehensive development policy

There is a basic pre-requisite for tackling the population question and the environment question namely, the establishment of clear and comprehensive development policies.

All the decision-makers, either from the developed world or from the developing world, should consider, the following responsibilities towards mankind in the discharge of their specific tasks:

- to create the conditions for a process of development which will aim at the fostering of human resources and at the use and preservation of natural resources;
- to include, in all technological undertakings, provisions for the safeguard of the environment and to elaborate the necessary legislation;
- to assess present and future resources in such a way as to lead to the population policy through which all human beings may be reasonably assured of the satisfaction of their basic needs.

5.3 International co-operation

If we want to go beyond mutual reassurance, international co-operation must urgently take new forms, most of all through support of joint action by adequate bodies of UN system, namely through a conference integrating UNEP, MAP, UNFPA, etc.,

attended by political decision-makers, businessmen,
researchers and local activists in the realms
concerned.

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