

## SUMMARY

Trends in population change and movement are alarmingly clear in general but unpredictable in detail. They will increasingly impinge on Canadian interests.

World population, now at 5.8 billion, will continue its rapid growth. Although the rate of increase and of fertility has begun to taper off slowly, thanks in part to past international efforts, the total will very probably reach 10 or 11 billion late in the coming century.

Developing countries are still growing much faster than developed ones, but with wide variations among them that must be closely followed. Sub-Saharan Africa, followed by the Middle East, has the highest rates; the lowest are in Japan and Europe, where actual declines are imminent or have begun. Further urbanisation of the developing world and the youth of its expanding population will have serious political and migration consequences. Women as individuals, so often deprived of all choice, bear the heaviest burden, in terms of sickness and mortality.

Movements of people, forced or otherwise, are becoming larger and more complex, in the fluid, turbulent post-Cold War situation. Factors include population growth, gross inequalities within and between countries, economic change and globalization, environmental degradation, ethnic conflict, better communications. If there are now slightly fewer recognised "refugees", this is largely because of stricter Western controls on asylum; instead there are many more "illegals" or "irregulars" as they are called. The huge numbers of "internally displaced" in developing countries and places like Bosnia are a particularly distressed and vulnerable category.

The complexity of causes and effects of population change is increasingly realised. Rapid growth, racing ahead of development, is actually reducing GDP per capita in much of Africa; more generally it has a corrosive effect on institutions, can overwhelm governments struggling with the challenges of development, and holds back desperately needed improvements in women's status and quality of life. Reproductive health measures thus contribute indirectly but substantially to Canada's priority of alleviating poverty and meeting basic needs.

Population growth will further increase malnutrition and also environmental stresses. Combined with—and often intensifying—a deterioration of socio-economic conditions, it can trigger mass migration, which in turn can impose severe strains on poorer receiving countries.

The 1994 Cairo ICPD, central to current international population policy, placed major emphasis on the relatively new concepts of reproductive health and rights, addressed for the first time sensitive issues such as female genital mutilation, made numerous references to ways of empowering women (thus paving the way for the Beijing conference), reached broad agreement on key migration and refugee issues, and gave specific estimates of the resources needed to achieve reproductive health (including family planning) for all by 2015. Canada and other donors accepted these as a commitment, reiterating it later in the OECD. Over opposition, subsequent major UN conferences, particularly Beijing, reaffirmed ICPD language.