

PART II, SECTION VI

DEMOGRAPHIC DYNAMICS

AND SUSTAINABILITY

Introduction

Chapter 5 of Agenda 21 emphasizes the relationship between population issues and sustainable development. The environmental impacts of demographic change are not a significant domestic issue in Canada given its relatively low birth rate and population density.

Canada's principal demographic policy focus has been its support for population and reproductive health efforts in developing countries. Canada recognizes, however, that effective social and economic development policies are the key to achieving demographic targets. Canada's ODA programming has assisted national governments, international agencies, nongovernmental organizations, and community organizations to address demographic issues for many years.

This section describes developments in Canada's demographic policies and programs since UNCED.

Canada's Evolving International Population Policies

Canadian foreign policy recognizes the importance of population issues. Demographic issues can have an impact on the achievement of sustainable development goals and global security. These and other factors have all led to population issues attaining a higher public profile in recent years. The significance of population issues was reflected in Canada's 1995 foreign policy statement, which identified family planning as part of Canada's commitment to make basic human needs a core ODA priority. Demographic issues also play a part in other ODA priorities, such as women in development and the environment.

Population issues were a significant part of the agenda of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in Cairo and the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing. Canada participated actively in both conferences in an effort to ensure effective outcomes.