

# Man and Nature

## “Exploding human population growth threatens many other species and eventually man himself.”

**Norran E. Borlaug**  
Nobel Peace Prize, 1970

Director, International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center, Rockefeller Foundation, Mexico

The past several decades have seen a growing polarization of the world into the affluent and the poor nations—the have and have-not peoples. While one third of the world's population today lives in luxury inconceivable a generation ago, half of the globe's total human population often lacks even adequate food, the first necessity for life.

The affluent nations, in most cases, draw heavily on many of the “non-renewable” resources of the underdeveloped nations for their continued economic development. The affluent nations, thereby, inadvertently contribute to widening the gap between rich and poor nations. It is, therefore, obvious that the affluent nations cannot continue to remain aloof and isolated from the problems of the developing nations.

### For A Decent Life

The basic moral and survival issue for mankind for the next several generations is to find a way to assure that all who are born into this world will have an opportunity to acquire the basic necessities for a decent life. Unless this is achieved, there will be increasing numbers of national and international social and political disorders—with world civilization in jeopardy—as biologic man competes for the basic necessities of life. There will be no peace.

It should be obvious to all educated people that the first step towards providing a decent standard of living to all who are born into this world is to slow the increase in human numbers to manageable levels, and to stabilize populations as soon as feasible. Certainly, to do nothing and to rely upon the Malthusian principle to stabilize human numbers through starvation is immoral. Moreover, inaction is both irresponsible and unnecessary, considering that man, unlike other species, has a brain and mind which can analyze our present population predicament and project ahead and see the consequences for man and his civilization of the continued reckless increase in human numbers.

In recent years many studies of wild species of animals, birds, and fish have shown that there

are natural laws which restrict growth of their populations long before shortage of food and starvation limits increase. Undoubtedly, man's increase in numbers long ago was governed in part by these natural laws. In the process of the development of his religious, ethical and humanistic philosophies which, in turn, contributed to the development of his cultures and civilization, these devices have been made ineffective and resulted in our present dilemma.

Man today must face up to the multi-faceted, many-headed population monster if he is to avoid disaster. Exploding human population growth threatens first the survival of many other species, but later, of civilization and eventually the survival of man himself.

### No Simple Answer

We must avoid seeking a simple answer to the complex and interrelated problems resulting from astronomical human numbers. It is unwise to continue to develop imbalanced attacks on single aspects of these complex problems, as has been done by some extremist environmentalists in the past. All too often this approach has led to alienating some segments of society—especially the underprivileged low income groups—both in the USA and the developing nations. The campaign by privileged people living in non-malarial areas of the world to ban the use

of insecticides—including DDT—for controlling this disease is questionable both from an ethical and tactical viewpoint, until other methods of control are available.

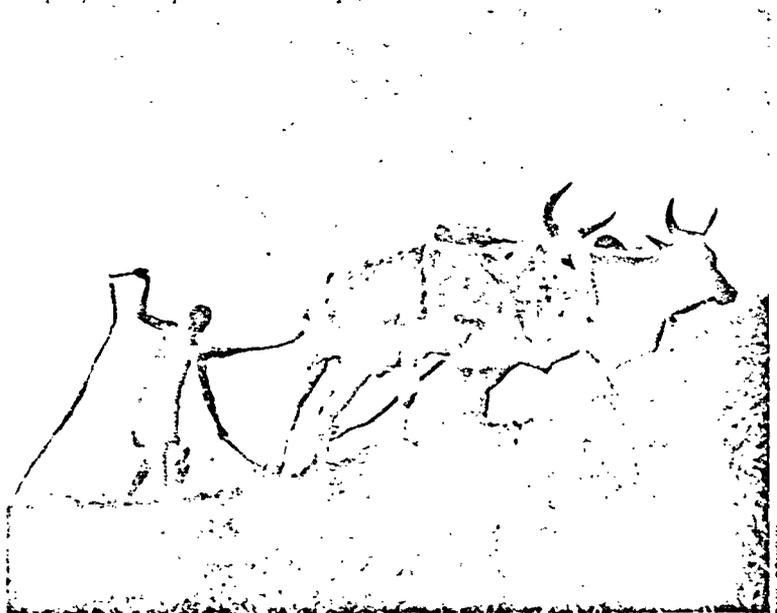
On the food production front, we can hold the line for the next 30 years—while hopefully population growth can be slowed—if agriculture is given the proper priority and support.

If the world is to be fed, however, more, rather than less, agricultural chemicals—including chemical fertilizers and pesticides—will be needed. To deny the developing nations their use is to abandon them to hunger and disorder. It goes without saying they should be used judiciously, just as with medicines.

Time is late and the obstacles are many to overcoming the problems which confront mankind. But when one looks back over the short span of 10,000 years since man first cultivated plants and domesticated animals, which made possible the development of modern civilization, one must be amazed at the progress. There is, however, no time to be lost in preening over past achievements. Instead, man must face up to the many growing problems caused by the wild increase in human numbers.

I have the feeling that if the people of the world are given the facts concerning the seriousness of the population problem man will show that his specific name *Homo sapiens* was not ill-chosen, and he will build a better world.

*Ethiopian farmers use primitive methods on poor soil.*



PAUL CONICIN

# Man and Nature

## “Exploding human population growth threatens many other species and eventually man himself.”

**Norman E. Borlaug**  
Nobel Peace Prize, 1970  
Director, International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center, Rockefeller Foundation, Mexico

The past several decades have seen a growing polarization of the world into the affluent and the poor nations—the have and have-not peoples. While one third of the world's population today lives in luxury inconceivable a generation ago, half of the globe's total human population often lacks even adequate food, the first necessity for life.

The affluent nations, in most cases, draw heavily on many of the “non-renewable” resources of the underdeveloped nations for their continued economic development. The affluent nations, thereby, inadvertently contribute to widening the gap between rich and poor nations. It is, therefore, obvious that the affluent nations cannot continue to remain aloof and isolated from the problems of the developing nations.

### For A Decent Life

The basic moral and survival issue for mankind for the next several generations is to find a way to assure that all who are born into this world will have an opportunity to acquire the basic necessities for a decent life. Unless this is achieved, there will be increasing numbers of national and international social and political disorders—with world civilization in jeopardy—as biologic man competes for the basic necessities of life. There will be no peace.

It should be obvious to all educated people that the first step towards providing a decent standard of living to all who are born into this world is to slow the increase in human numbers to manageable levels, and to stabilize populations as soon as feasible. Certainly, to do nothing and to rely upon the Malthusian principle to stabilize human numbers through starvation is immoral. Moreover, inaction is both irresponsible and unnecessary, considering that man, unlike other species, has a brain and mind which can analyze our present population predicament and project ahead and see the consequences for man and his civilization of the continued reckless increase in human numbers.

In recent years many studies of wild species of animals, birds, and fish have shown that there

are natural laws which restrict growth of their populations long before shortage of food and starvation limits increase. Undoubtedly, man's increase in numbers long ago was governed in part by these natural laws. In the process of the development of his religious, ethical and humanistic philosophies which, in turn, contributed to the development of his cultures and civilization, these devices have been made ineffective and resulted in our present dilemma.

Man today must face up to the multi-faceted, many-headed population monster if he is to avoid disaster. Exploding human population growth threatens first the survival of many other species, but later, of civilization and eventually the survival of man himself.

### No Simple Answer

We must avoid seeking a simple answer to the complex and interrelated problems resulting from astronomical human numbers. It is unwise to continue to develop imbalanced attacks on single aspects of these complex problems, as has been done by some extremist environmentalists in the past. All too often this approach has led to alienating some segments of society—especially the underprivileged low income groups—both in the USA and the developing nations. The campaign by privileged people living in non-malarial areas of the world to ban the use

of insecticides—including DDT—for controlling this disease is questionable both from an ethical and tactical viewpoint, until other methods of control are available.

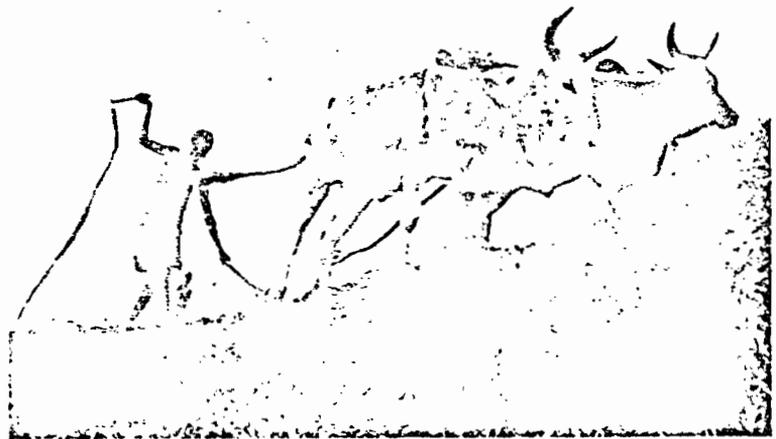
On the food production front, we can hold the line for the next 20 years—while hopefully population growth can be slowed—if agriculture is given the proper priority and support.

If the world is to be fed, however, more, rather than less, agricultural chemicals—including chemical fertilizers and pesticides—will be needed. To deny the developing nations their use is to abandon them to hunger and disorder. It goes without saying they should be used judiciously, just as with medicines.

Time is late and the obstacles are many to overcoming the problems which confront mankind. But when one looks back over the short span of 10,000 years since man first cultivated plants and domesticated animals, which made possible the development of modern civilization, one must be amazed at the progress. There is, however, no time to be lost in preening over past achievements. Instead, man must face up to the many growing problems caused by the wild increase in human numbers.

I have the feeling that if the people of the world are given the facts concerning the seriousness of the population problem man will show that his specific name *Homo sapiens* was not ill-chosen, and he will build a better world.

*Ethiopian farmers use primitive methods on poor soil.*



PAUL CONKLIN