



Issue - 35 16th May 2014

Population | Family Planning

Japan Taking Notice About Fertility Issue

Japan is finally starting to sit up and take notice of its fertility dilemma. A Japanese government panel investigating solutions to the problem released its proposals this week. The proposals reflect fears among the business community that unless urgent measures are actioned Japan could face an economic crisis. Akio Mimura, the panel's head, prominent Japanese businessman, and chairman of the Japan Chamber of Commerce and Industry stated that he hoped "the government will share our sense of crisis". He further warned that Japan's population will decline by 1 million per year in the early 2040s, a sharp drop that the country has never experienced before. The panel proposed setting a goal to maintain a population level of about 100 million 50 years from now – a specific target thought to be the baseline from which Japan would still be able to provide basic government services at current levels. The population is currently 127 million, and is projected to fall to about 87 million in 2060 if the birth rate remains low. (Mercatornet)

Warren Buffett has Donated \$1.2 BILLION to Population Issue

America's second richest man has shown his support for abortion by donating more than \$1.2 billion to pro-choice groups in the last decade, it was claimed today. Billionaire Warren Buffett, the so-called 'Sage of Omaha', has pumped cash into a series of trusts and charities offering family planning advice and care between 2001 and 2012. Planned Parenthood, NARAL and Buffett's own charity, The Susan Thompson Buffett Foundation, which is named after his first wife who campaigned for women's rights, were among the beneficiaries. (Dailymail UK)

Divisions over Population & Gender Complicate 2015 Development Agenda

As the U.N. focuses on refining its Post-2015 Development Agenda, divisions

surrounding issues of population and development continue to plague consensus on a universal way forward. “People have to be at the centre of development,” Dr. Babatunde Osotimehin, executive director of the U.N. Population Fund (UNFPA), told IPS. “I think we are beginning to see a greater commitment [of governments] to deliver on gender parity, girls rights, issues of gender-based violence and girls education.” Following the 2014 U.N. Commission on Population and Development (CPD), an annual gathering where member states, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and other members of civil society discuss and define goals on population and development, serious divisions emerged regarding issues of sexual health, sexual education and gender. (IPS)

Innovative Game Changers in Population Control: Indonesia

If everything goes as planned, the family planning approach — which for decades has had a largely female emphasis — will move toward men. Airlangga University in Surabaya, East Java, Indonesia is currently developing non-hormonal male contraceptive pills, using an extract from the Gandarusa plant (*Justicia gendarussa*), while the University of Indonesia is researching a hormonal contraceptive injection for men. The methods currently available for men include the use of condoms, invasive vasectomy procedures or the conventional withdrawal method (*coitus interruptus*). The National Population and Family Planning Board’s (BKKBN) said the new contraceptive options would promote male participation in preventing unintended pregnancy. “It would surely change people’s perceptions of family planning. Women already have to take care of being pregnant and giving birth. It is time for husbands to take over birth control,” Since the adoption of the decentralization policy in Indonesia in 2000, the top-down approach to population control has hit rock bottom. The Indonesian Demographic and Health Survey (SDKI) in 2012 revealed the country’s fertility rate remained high, at 2.6 children per woman. Figures showed some women could have given birth three times in a five year time span. (Jakartapost)

Large Families Worsen Poverty in Rural Areas: Vietnam

Most ethnic families in the northern mountain province of Bac Kan still prefer to raise many children, even though local authorities say this is negatively affecting family finances and creating employment, education and health problems. However, at the same time, authorities admit that there have been funding problems for even the simplest medical care, adding that the road networks were often so bad that pregnant women, or anyone seeking care, found it difficult to reach a district clinic or hospital. Pac Nam District has had the highest population increase in the province. Statistics from the area’s Centre of Population and Family Planning show that 307 boys and 249 girls were born last year. More than 100 of them were the third child in the family, an increase of 9 per cent over 2012. In Boc Bo Commune, the central one in the district, many villages are poor and the rate of bearing third child is high. Typically, in Khau Vai Village, where most residents are Mong, each family has at least five children, and many families have 9-10 children. (Viet Nam News)

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Message for Leaders

“I don't think that many of these big problems are going to be resolved by exchanging documents and meeting at conferences. It's going to be what we do on the ground.”

Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, UN Women Executive Director



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