





## *Family planning and the environment*

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Population growth continues to contribute to environmental degradation. It is not surprising that we find many environmental experts who believe that population growth is the main cause of environmental problems. This is because the world's population has increased from about 1.6 billion in 1900 to over 6 billion today. The world's population is still growing at a rate of about 1.3% per year.

However, there are other important factors that contribute to environmental degradation. It is important to remember that people have different needs and different ways of meeting those needs. In some countries, people live in poverty and have to struggle to meet their basic needs. In other countries, people live in relative comfort and have more resources available to them. The difference in living standards between rich and poor countries is reflected in the different levels of environmental degradation. Rich countries tend to have higher levels of environmental degradation than poor countries. This is because rich countries have more industrial activity, more energy consumption, and more waste production. They also have more resources available to them, which they can use to pollute the environment.

Environmentalists often claim that population growth is the main cause of environmental degradation. However, this is not always true. There are many other factors that contribute to environmental degradation, such as economic development, technological progress, and political decisions.

The World Bank's Environmental Performance Index (EPI) is a good way to measure the environmental performance of countries. The EPI measures various environmental indicators, such as air quality, water quality, energy efficiency, and waste management.

The EPI shows that there is a strong correlation between environmental performance and economic development.

**Pauline van der Valk is Vice-Chair of the International Population Environment Research Foundation.**

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