

# **Globalization, Population Development and Sustainability: Challenges for Society and ROTARY's Role<sup>1</sup>**

F. J. Radermacher<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>*Paper presented to the Rotary Interdistrict Conference held on 24<sup>th</sup> June 2000 in Lucerne, Switzerland, and to the conference of the World President of Rotary International with UNFPA on "Population and Development" from 28-30th July 2000 in Zurich.*

*Parts of this text are derived from the publication by N. Affemann, B. F. Pelz, F. J. Radermacher "Globale Herausforderungen und Bevölkerungsentwicklung: die Menschheit ist bedroht" published by the Deutsche Stiftung Weltbevölkerung, 1997, and from the paper entitled "Sustainability, Human Dignity and the Population issue" prepared by B. Lindsay, E. A. Lufadeju, F. J. Radermacher, R. Zinser for the IFP&D-UNFPA Conference, New York, 8th Mai 1999.*

<sup>2</sup> *Prof. Dr. Dr. F. J. Radermacher, Chairman of the Board and Scientific Director of the Research Institute for Application-Oriented Knowledge Processing (FAW) in Ulm, Germany*

## **Introduction / Abstract**

The author of the present paper describes development trends, opportunities and risks for future international development, drawing on his experience in doing consulting work for European policymakers and in carrying out high-tech projects in the field of information and communication technology. One central observation is the assertion that the current worldwide processes **are not sustainable**, despite the enormous, new technical potential involved. This applies primarily to the topic of ecological and social stability in times of economic globalization under the conditions of a worldwide free-trade regime. Critical areas are primarily the overuse of important natural resources, mounting environmental problems and social exclusion associated with **continued economic growth and a growing world population**. The aspect of population growth is regarded as an especially serious topic.

This paper argues that sustainability requires in this context **social innovations** in addition to technical innovations. In particular, we need **a better world order** in the framework of a global contract, which would address the social, cultural and ecological aspects of sustainability -- including **ways to co-finance** international development -- in addition to the usual economic aspects. The involvement of **international civil society**, in particular, the major non-governmental organizations, will be absolutely necessary for achieving progress in this direction. The paper describes the enormous potential of Rotary as one of the most important organizations of this kind; and also describes the positive track record of the Rotarian Initiative for Population and Development (RIFPD). It then tries to organize all these thoughts into a **European perspective for sustainability** and into the context given by the motto of Rotary's new World President, Frank Devlyn, which lays down the challenge to **“Create awareness – take action!”**

## 1. Population development as a great challenge

One of the central challenges we face as we enter the new millennium has been -- and still is -- to **get human rights and sustainable development** observed throughout the world, as was discovered at the Rio Conference on the Environment and Development in 1992. Sustainable development aims at using the various resources of this world in social, cultural and ecological areas in such a cautious way that the living conditions that will remain for the following generations will be similar to those that we have today. Such long-range thinking, though, as announced on the top-level international agenda is not yet very widespread. Instead the world is threatened by **an accelerating growth of world population** – the cause of numerous problems – by the **unhindered consumption of resources**, the mounting environmental stresses and the changes in our private and social lives caused by faster and faster innovation processes, all of which **could make our societies ungovernable**. The hope that technical progress will solve the problems by itself through continuous reduction of environmental stresses and resource consumption per unit of value-added or individual service (an effect known as **dematerialization**) has not yet been fulfilled because, as experience has shown, the savings that are made possible by technical change immediately stimulate **more human activities** (more people and/or more activities per person), thus demonstrating the so-called **boomerang or rebound effect**. Typical examples are the **Green Revolution**, which paradoxically has contributed to the doubling of world population within only 35 years from 3 to 6 billion people, the **miniaturization** in the area of information and communication technology, which has given rise to unimaginable piles of electronic waste, the **“paperless office“**, which has turned out to be the scene of the most profligate paper consumption in the history of humankind and finally the observation that in the age of the Internet, mobile phones and traffic telematics we are **travelling more than ever before**.

Avoiding rebound effects is a very central topic because one of the most important consequences of technological progress has been thus far to be able to feed an increasing number of people which, in turn, has been a prime cause for a rapid **world population growth**. The huge number of **more than 6 billion people** live on our planet today, and this number is threatening to double again in a relatively short time. No one knows how to manage a world of 10 billion people or more peacefully. More people means more consumption, more mobility and greater environmental stress. In this way, since the beginning of the Late Stone Age, approximately 8000 B.C., i.e. since the taking up of field cultivation, the total load on the earth, induced by humans, has been increased almost by **a factor of 1 million** because of more people and ever-higher pro-capita consumption (such as energy consumption).

Taking this view, **economic globalization** is now causing great, additional environmental stress over the short run through **rapid economic growth in countries in transition**. We are witnessing now the impacts of the tremendous technical and economic power that is active today to give so many people an always higher standard of living, but which, as a bi-product, also generates **really extreme environmental stress**. The speed at which the stress is growing has become so fast that there is hardly any chance of getting control of these problems on the basis of technical innovations alone, even when taking into account modern-day findings from basic research and allowing for the well-known minimum times needed to distribute and apply such findings and new technologies. The situation is becoming all the more difficult now that the above structural change is causing a massive **drain of special categories of work** from the rich industrialized countries leaving greater unemployment in its wake and threatening social systems. Under these conditions it is hard to reach a broad political consensus that **investment in global development and in actions against the population problem** are necessary, feasible and sensible. The necessary means for global remedies have to be found, although the economic situation **for many citizens here is getting worse** rather than better.

Against the background described it is one of the **greatest scandals of world politics** that there are over 350 million couples in the world who do not have the human right to do family planning because they lack the information or access to contraceptives, and that there are **120 million couples** in the world who want to use contraceptives, but lack access to them -- a state of affairs with **terrible consequences for the health** of many young women, little children and their families. If the current trends persists and if we fail to start for an **“awareness offensive“** as regards the problems of rapid world population growth, we run the **risk of suffering divisive social conflicts and a climate collapse**.

## **2. On the role of the world economic order in times of economic globalization**

The challenges described, can only be met in a peaceful way through worldwide solutions, i.e. through agreements between the North and South, East and West, that promise **all people** on this earth a **positive perspective** for the future. This will require eliminating the unbearably great differences between the rich and the poor, as well as establishing **environmental and social standards** and financing cooperation between the North and South. However, such visions have to be followed while taking into account the concrete conditions of the status quo, **existing development trends and**

**the powers-structures in times of globalization.**

**Globalization** today denotes the change processes, leading to an integrated **world economy**. In particular, the job market is one of the things converging. This state of affairs came about due to political decisions on how the **world trade order and world financial markets** were to be designed, and **GATT/WTO** in particular. We see that the **economy** has been the first of the four great societal forces to undergo globalization, while **politics, science and religion** stay behind. Globalization of the economy is undermining now the primacy of politics over the economy, for a nationally organized policy can ultimately do very little to counteract the power of a global market. Globalization of the economy also **destroys the previous good match between value-added structures and distribution structures**, as we are starting to feel keenly in Europe as we attempt to continue financing a modern social state.

The fact that globalization is taking place as we are seeing it in the realm of the economy today has deeper causes in an extremely rapid technological development which has set off an array of persistent repercussions. Perhaps the most important driving force is the **innovation taking place at a breath-taking pace in the area of information and communication technology**, the fastest ever observed in the history of technology. This technology is so powerful that already today it is making round-the-world communication possible at a low price, thus **canceling out dimensions of time and place**. This development, for instance, has created the condition for transmorphing money into a product that is now essentially information on transaction rights, making it **virtual and practically impossible to control**.

Another consequence of these changed conditions is that it has become no longer possible for those industrialized countries aiming at a very equitable social distribution to carry out the degree of **taxation needed to finance a highly developed social system of the kind we had previously**. This loophole is related to the fact that globalization has given global companies the option of producing profits in low-tax Malaysia and losses in e. g. high-tax Germany, if this is advantageous to their own purposes; actually globalization forces companies to do so under conditions of harsh competition. **Thus any national policy today has to subjugate itself more and more to the free order logic of the present world economic system**. Nothing other than a worldwide political structure that we cannot today yet imagine would make it possible **to reestablish the primacy of politics over economics and balance some of the dangerous development trends described**.

Changes similar to those going on the area of taxation are happening in labor markets. Like taxes, **labor is becoming increasingly distributable worldwide**. This is related to the fact that we in Europe today can integrate a smart young person in India or elsewhere into the world market for about EURO 15.000 per year on the basis of a **completely individualized infrastructure** (multimedia workstation, satellite connection).

And because EURO 10.000 look like a good salary to many of these smart young persons in many parts of the world, companies can even **write off** the technical configuration described above **every year**, often giving our competitors even better technical equipment than domestic workers -- an untenable condition under competition aspects.

It is under competition such as this that we in Europe are trying to keep jobs. The answer of our companies is to slim down, cut costs, standardize, virtualize, cut more jobs, introduce technical solutions like intranets and the Internet. But with each such step, we are also making it easier to move the remaining jobs offshore. For this reason we must achieve **another significant improvement in the cost/ benefit ratio**. Consequently, competition causes a situation in which those companies that reduce their labor force especially fast – as companies often have to do in this situation on the world market – have the largest profits and **are given the best valuations on the stock market**. Thus our troubles today are primarily a result of the changes in the technical and political frameworks described and not that of any somehow “unethical“ motives on the part of individual companies or persons. We are all “prisoners” of the existing situation, where the **rules of the game** are being determined essentially by open markets, through **GATT/ WTO, the logic of the world’s financial markets** and the **change potential of the new technologies**.

The above remarks, by the way, are not intended to deny the necessity of having a worldwide economic order or its ongoing expansion and further development. However, in times of globalization and the **transition into a uniform world market**, such a world order must **be more than a pure trade regime**. Instead such a world order has to address social, cultural and ecological aspects as well as trade aspects, much the same as our **social ecological market economy does here in Europe**. **In the future, a design of this type has to be developed for the whole world**. Such a better world or-

der would have to in-cooperate the long overdue attention **to ways to co-finance international development** in a truly worldwide perspective. For instance, there should be thought given to levying a **moderate (world) tax** on world trade, the use of international communications infrastructures and on speculative or all financial transactions on the world financial markets (**so called Tobin Tax**).

Another interesting thought model is to reach a worldwide agreement on establishing upper limits for **CO<sub>2</sub> emissions to get the climate problem under control**. Such emissions rights could be assigned according to a certain rate per capita. Starting with an initial distribution, which still would have to be agreed upon, people in the North would probably have to be given - oriented around the status quo - higher emissions rights than those in the South. Such emissions rights would be distributed each year worldwide and before long eventually each person would be entitled to **equal emissions rights**. The yearly **emissions permits could then be traded**. The actual trading would be between countries. Countries would then incorporate their planned /available emission needs into the market by means of eco-taxes on natural gas, oil, petrol, coal, etc.

This model would aim technical progress in such a direction that we would generate a maximum of added value and welfare from the resources available – **while observing the stringent environmental requirements** in the form of a worldwide upper limit on CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. At the same time it would **transfer money and know-how / resources into the South**, because the economically stronger North would buy a substantial quantity of emissions permits from the South. These revenues would make it possible for the South to buy the most modern environmental technology from the North under appropriate agreements, to advance its own development further and to invest in social systems. Still, the South would be able to generate significantly more energy for its own use than today by virtue of the modern energy-generation technology and even despite the sale of its unused CO<sub>2</sub> emissions permits, and nonetheless the emissions goal set globally would be reached. The international instruments of the **Kyoto Protocol**, especially the **Clean Development Mechanism (CDM)**, aim right in this direction. In Europe, we only have to give up taking purportedly moral positions and seeing these sensible instruments as something wrong (as “buying one’s way out“), instead of using them constructively.

The **costs** that are to be borne by the industrialized countries in such a model would help to protect the environment by limiting the **boomerang effect in the North**. At the same time they would aim technical progress still more in the direction of **increasing resource productivity**. Revenue from the sale of emissions permits would **be a legitimate development resource, and not only development**

**aid**, in the developing countries. It would merely be legitimate payment for the fact that the South is stressing nature much less per person at the time than the North is doing.

Payment of the revenue should be made contingent on the **introduction of standards** in the South. The obligation to fulfill such standards in social and ecological areas would prevent the money flows from being consumed mainly by local elite or Mafia-like structures. It would mean better food, education, health care, social security systems, **equal rights for women**, etc. while protecting the environment and avoiding boomerang effects, which could otherwise counteract sustainable development.

Such forms of cooperation as these would make it possible to establish **global infrastructures** and **secure sustainable development in a market-compatible way**. It would also create jobs sure of a future (in environmental industry, education systems, financial services for this global, social, ecological market, for instance) and at the same time make it possible to stabilize our social security system for a long time as a result of the **greater homogeneity of the world's social and economic conditions** and tax levels. Making social investments in better food, education, health care, social security systems and **strengthening the role of women** are also the most effective instruments for **reducing birth rates over a long time**. Finally, suitable framework conditions are also the prerequisite **for returning to more slowness** and for making sustainable regional initiatives possible along the lines of **“Thinking globally while acting locally“**.

### **3. The potential of information and communication technology**

**Information and communication technology (ICT)** is essential for the processes of globalization described above; it permits people everywhere to become involved in the global economic process. Via **the elimination of distance**, ICT comprises the actual basis for globalization. ICT is also the real driver behind the continuous acceleration in our lives, as **it doubles its benefit/price ratio every two years**, and it is also an essential new factor for an economical worldwide organization of value-added chains. However, ICT is also indirectly an important cause for the drift of work out of the industrialized countries and for additional enormous threats to our environment. Thus the two worldwide paradigmas of a “way into the Information and Knowledge Society“ and “sustainable development“ are not automatically in harmony with one another.

By the same token, information and communication technology has to be part of any conceivable solution to current problems, because it makes possible especially far-reaching effects of **dematerialization through technology** (telework, teleshopping, teletraining, ...) and it opens the opportunity for long-range sustainable solutions through appropriate framework conditions (limiting CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by means of a permit system) **while preventing rebound effects**. It has never before been possible to integrate people everywhere in the world in ongoing development on an equitable basis at such low cost and in a manner so compatible with the environment as it is with ICT.

One especially interesting approach is to use modern **multimedia-based and network-assisted education systems** as a basis for making possible a **worldwide revolution in education**. Education namely has become relatively low-cost and environmentally friendly for the first time in history throughout the world thanks to the new media. They will make it possible to set off an enormous development thrust, as education comprises an indispensable prerequisite for establishing **human resources** and human resources comprise about **60 % of the wealth of nations** according to a study by the World Bank, and at the same time comprise an important prerequisite for efficient business. Work in education creates the prerequisites for getting across to people the necessity of **worldwide and future-oriented politics (global governance)** and for setting off enormous thrusts in the direction of **smaller family sizes**. Particularly important is better education for women and the strengthening of their rights that is usually associated with education. Thus education serves to slow down population growth and over the long run to **reduce the size of the world's population**.

In order to master the future, the **tension** existing among business, social requirements, cultural conditions and environmental protection has to be balanced off better than it has been. Such a balance can no longer be achieved on a national or regional basis because of the globalization of the economy, but instead **has to be brought about globally**. Social and ecological **minimum standards** have to be imposed worldwide because they guide the economy towards sustainable development and towards more social harmony and thus towards **gaining more respect for human rights**. Of course, such standards can under some conditions cause a trade-off with economic growth (at least over the short term), but they do improve the quality of life, the degree of social justice, the ecological situation and the **respect for human rights**.

Apparently solutions of the type outlined above can only be successful if they are funded on a **worldwide basis and fairly**. A **pleasant future** can only be reached on the basis of agreements be-

tween North and South (**a global social contract**) and they will ultimately have to offer a positive perspective to all people on this earth. The new strategic approach is **to co-finance measures and agreements in ecological and social areas** as part of **ongoing development of the world economic order (GATT/WTO)**. In the area of ecology, that means introduction of the **CO<sub>2</sub> emission permits** mentioned above that would make it possible for the South to purchase the most modern environmental technology and to create a financial basis for funding social standards there. Funding would also flow towards better health, social security systems and education, furthering closer economic cooperation with the North. The whole arrangement could then be completed by signing a global agreement about **the rights of workers, the avoidance of child labour and the imposition of a minimum taxation level**.

#### 4. A European model of future developments

The thoughts expressed here, as they have been developed in the Information Society Forum of the EU, for instance, and in the Forum Info 2000/ Information Society of the German federal government, which also form one of the core messages of “The 21<sup>st</sup> Century“ Thematic Area at the EXPO 2000 world exposition, all call for basing any future perspective on the following two principles:

##### 1. Market orientation

Here the topics are open markets, worldwide growth processes, innovation, technological progress, improved resource productivity and dematerialization;

##### 2. World order issues

Here we need a clear commitment to a better world order for this globalized world with its many economic, ecological, cultural and social concerns.

Whereas today’s globalized economy has concentrated on the first of the two aspects above very successfully, with some concentrating on it alone in their **technoeuphoria**, it is the intention of this text to make it clear that at the same time we have to invest in a better world order if we are to tackle social cultural and ecological needs and **counteract the rebound effect**.

Today’s global economic order (GATT/WTO) is **much too short-range**. It is worsening the chronically unequal **distribution of wealth**, bringing with it **great financial risks, creating too many loopholes for capital to escape** from its social and environmental responsibilities and **weakening the force of the market through excessive concentration processes**. It is threatening **the tax bases** of

more and more governments, causing **child labor**, making our **cultural life too uniform** and **failing to supply a solution to the population problem** or **to securing world peace**.

Therefore we need a better world order, as the **Global Ethics Foundation**, guided by **Prof. Hans Küng** has been demanding for a long time now. Two **main principles of universal ethic** are particularly important for a better global order, which aim in a direction similar to **Rotary's**; both are closely connected to the population issue, namely

- (1) concern for the **dignity of all humans** and
- (2) concern for the **integrity of the ecosystem**.

The second element of the overall strategy described above, i.e. the requirement of a **better global order**, is far-reaching. It would ultimately lead to a type of **world citizenship** and thus significantly change the whole situation. It is surely this aspect, which represents the greatest challenge intellectually; it is **humanitarian in its worldwide orientation**. Attaining a better world order is a point that the **UNFPA** (United Nations Population Fund) and other players have been discussing for a long time now on the world stage. Stated briefly, we will have to link the World Trade Organization (WTO/GATT) and the world finance systems with social and ecological causes in a global perspective much better than we have been doing thus far, if we want to attain sustainability. A **worldwide social and ecological market economy in the European tradition** could be one of the central ideas.

On the way to such a better world order, we urgently need contributions from **civil society, non-governmental organizations (NGOs)**, corporations, scientists, the media, governments and from far-sighted international organizations such as UNFPA and UNEP. One central event in this context was the **attempt to start a millennium round of trade talks at the WTO in Seattle towards the end of 1999** with the **determined protest of worldwide organized NGOs and international civil society** against the current orientation of the WTO, aimed one-sidedly at deregulation -- and thereby against the current orientation of the basic order of today's world economy.

Since the **events in Seattle** it has become general knowledge that the future development of the WTO can no longer only be a question of technical issues of trade regulation, but rather decisions with fundamental repercussions for the basic social, cultural and ecological concerns of humankind. Fortunately politicians have taken their cue in the meantime. The meeting of 14 heads of state in Berlin towards the beginning of June 2000 on the topic of **"Progressive Governance in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century"** has been a good example of a development in the right direction.

To repeat it once more, the central message of the “**European Way**“ to a long-range sustainable strategy for this world is that the World Trade Organization and the world’s financial system must be developed further into a future-oriented set of regulations for a global order in the framework of a market based “**Global Contract**“. This has to be achieved by integrating the trade regime closely with existing global social and environmental agreements, such as the Kyoto Contract. Attaining sustainable development by means of such an improved world order means **connecting an enormous technological progress and high dematerialization** with a **market-oriented, but socially and ecologically oriented regulation framework**. This framework would limit the use of resources to the resulting **carrying capacity of the earth**, while at the same time real investments are being made in **human capital and social systems** in the North and South of this planet.

Rules must be drawn up to co-finance international development on the basis of development-dependent standards in social and ecological matters, with clear advantages for all nations (**a win-win situation**). “Development-dependent standards“ here means standards that are different depending on the level of a country’s development, i.e. highly developed countries have higher standards. The absolutely necessary **co-financing of standards in the South through contributions from the North** – a politically delicate, but unavoidable topic – could, for instance, be organized through a modest taxation of financial speculation or of world trade or – especially effectively – through trade in scarce CO<sub>2</sub> emission permits, as described above.

Thoughts of the type presented here are being engendered by various institutions, groups and NGOs. There has developed quite an active discussion in Europe recently aimed at having **the European business model**, which has traditionally incorporated social, cultural and ecological aspects into the framework of the economy, represented more strongly than before in international debates as an alternative to a certain U.S. view of society. The European model displays **a stronger “stakeholder“ orientation** as opposed to a primarily “stockholder-value“ orientation; the Rhine or Continental European market economy on the one hand, contrasts sharply on the other to a model primarily driven by world financial markets and short-term earnings expectations, relying on **more and more deregulation**. Thoughts of the type presented here are being discussed, for instance, in the **Information Society Forum of the European Union**, in the **Information Society Forum of the German federal government**, in **publications of the Club of Rome**, in **thoughts of the Ethics Global Foundation**, in the **international microcredit movement** and e.g. the work of the **German Foundation for World Population (DSW)**.

What progress is really being made in putting these approaches into practice that focus on the potential inherent in modern information and communication technologies? When the G-7 states started cooperating on establishing a global information infrastructure; the developing countries and countries in transition demanded that they too be involved in the process, which offers enormous opportunities from their point of view, but could also cause a further **deepening of the gap** between North and South (**the Global Digital Divide**). The European Union supports their position energetically. The **ISAD conference in South Africa in 1996** made the great gap apparent, but also revealed initial points at which existing problems could be overcome and opportunities could be better utilized, some of them involving the potential of modern information and communication technologies. Attention is also always paid to the European business model, especially its social and ecological orientation. Worldwide agreement on ecological and social standards is still too weakly developed, though, as are the aspect of co-financing such an agreement, the idea of a worldwide education revolution and massive investments in such framework conditions that could lead to a reduction in world population.

As a position element the **recent Okinawa G 8 meeting** with strong leadership by Japan has started a new initiative in this direction. Also, **EXPO 2000**, the world exposition, currently taking place in Hanover, Germany, with the title "Humankind, Nature, Technology" is one more opportunity to come up with answers to the burning issues humankind is facing in the new millennium. It is a great opportunity for EXPO to reconcile the positions that are so controversial today between industry and environmentalists. One approach exhibited there is the proposal just described above in this paper, which firstly calls for adding to the world economic system (GATT/WTO) new models to co-finance social and ecological mechanisms in such a way that we find a solution to issues such as limiting worldwide CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and protecting forests, soils, water and biodiversity; secondly, it calls for setting off a worldwide education revolution in human resources that would make a significant contribution towards raising the education level and literacy of all people. All these measures would induce trends which would ultimately make it possible **to reverse population growth**. Then with the aid of other advances in the dematerialization of goods, functions and processes, it would ultimately be possible for **all people on this globe** to enjoy a standard of living on a level comparable to what is now common in industrialized countries, while avoiding rebound effects, and at the same time reducing worldwide the total stress on the environment in a sustainable way. **The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Thematic Area of EXPO 2000** hints at such ideas as these. There one can also view a large, artistic multimedia object created under the direction of the author with funding from the Cologne Savings and Loan Association under the motto "**Money Makes the World Go - Where?!**". Also, the **Rotarian Initiative for**

**Population & Development** is represented at EXPO 2000 with its **Nigeria Project**, which is discussed later in this paper.

## **5. A social development program aimed at population development: the vision of world citizenship**

There is a general consensus that a **social development program** is the best strategy to stop further population growth worldwide on the medium term. Such a program would be in harmony with the UNFPA and the Cairo position of the United Nations on the topic of world population. A social development program combats the threatening trends which can cause further population growth in two critical areas, in that it

- (1) affirms the **right of all couples in the world to determine for themselves the size of their families**, including the provision of all necessary information and practical means for implementation, and
- (2) **neutralizes most of the social factors** that are influencing “**involuntary**“ decisions today in the direction of higher numbers of children, namely the lack of social security, old-age support systems, etc. especially in poorer countries.

In fact, such an approach can even lead to a **decreasing world population** over the medium range, although it might come down from an interim maximum of ten billion people, leading, on the longer run, to perhaps only 1 billion. If we take this path and develop a new world order, that would ultimately mean a type of **world citizenship**, with corresponding mutual responsibilities between those who already enjoy a higher standard of living and those who want to catch up. This is necessary in a world in which we ultimately are all **united by a global economic system**, in the framework of which each person is able to harm the other and in the framework of which **we can never have sustainability all to ourselves; instead sustainability only comes internationally. We will either reach peace, sustainability and human dignity for all people on this planet together, or for no one at all.**

## 6. The Rotarian Initiative for Population & Development (RIFPD)

The Rotarian Initiative for Population & Development had its origin in the year 1995. In the year before that, 1994, an important **world population** conference had taken place in **Cairo, where all governments and religions agreed for the first time to create access to voluntary family planning for all people on this earth by the year 2015. Many non-governmental organizations such as Rotary also participated in the world conference in Cairo for the first time.** Then in 1995 at the initiative of an American past-governor of Rotary International, a **Peace Conference on “Population and Development“** was held in Dakar, Senegal, and funded by the Rotary Foundation. Some 400 African Rotarians met there with a few other Rotarians from the USA, Great Britain and Germany, in order to discuss the topics in several workshops after lectures. The participants approved unanimously a resolution sent to Rotary’s central board to put the topic on the official Rotary program.

In order to support these effort, a small group of fervent Rotarians consisting of an American, a Nigerian and a German Past-Governor founded a **Fellowship on Population & Development**, which was last year renamed into the “Rotarian Initiative for Population & Development“ (RIFPD). This **fellowship rapidly developed into the largest of all of Rotary’s fellowships.** In 1997 this initiative met with representatives of UNFPA, the United Nations World Population Fund in New York. In 1998 the initiative brought a resolution to **Rotary’s World Parliament** in Delhi, which meets every 3 years, suggesting again that Rotary’s central board issue a program containing it. This resolution was accepted unanimously, quite a rare experience in Rotary’s world parliament. The delegates from all countries in the world did not discuss very long, but had agreed beforehand that this topic should not be postponed again as it had been three years earlier.

Since 1998 each of **Rotary’s World Presidents** has appointed a Committee on “Population and Development“ to advise him on population issues.

In August 1999 **Rotary International’s Central board** took the advice of the Committee “Population and Development“ and published a statement on “Population and Development.“ That statement expressed Rotary’s position on the topics population growth and sustainable development. At the same time activities and guidelines for projects have been recommended to Rotary Districts and Clubs throughout the world.

In 1999 the initiative met with UNFPA in New York again. This time the President-elect 1999/2000 and President-nominee 2000/2001 of Rotary International participated in the event. Both were convinced of the necessity that Rotary should get involved in this topic.

The current World President, **Frank Devlyn from Mexico**, with his Steering Committee "Population Growth and Development" and his working group relies on the experience of RIFPD and is working together closely with this initiative. The board members of RIFPD are all members of his committee.

The initiative's membership is growing all the time, especially recently in several countries of Africa by a total of around 5,000 members and gradually in India as well; most recently also in a number of European countries, after members there were supplied with informational material by the initiative's German Section, which has taken a leading role with its currently more than 6,000 members. **World-wide the number of members is now more than 18,000.** In a large campaign this core group is now to be expanded again substantially.

The next step is to raise awareness on the **principle of multiplication** in all districts of Europe by means of lectures to be held before Rotary, Rotaract, Interact and Inner Wheel Clubs. Furthermore, the desire for activity on the part of individual members of the Rotary family is manifesting itself in the **Co-financing of concrete projects**, as listed on the Website

<http://www.worldpopulationgrowth.org>.

Also, individual members are getting involved in the multiplication itself. Lecture texts, background information and PowerPoint presentations (also available on CD-ROMs) can be downloaded from the Website in order to reinforce the activities of the initiative and to improve general knowledge on the world population problem.

The main goal is to **start numerous new projects** designed on the basis of the Nigeria Project, described below in more detail. Ultimately this is to become the basis for a possible new **international commitment on the part of Rotary International**, which could build on the **powerful and tested infrastructure and experience** of our current world activity, namely **PolioPlus**, mentioned below.

**The activities of the new President of Rotary International 2000/01, Frank Devlyn**, are playing a central role in this context, as is the big event at the beginning of his period of office in Zurich, from 28<sup>th</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup> of July 2000, on the topic of "**World Population and Sustainable Development**" in co-operation with RIFPD and UNFPA. Coming from 100 of Europe's total of 125, or of the world's 529

Districts, more than 700 participants (Rotarians, Rotaracters and Inner Wheels) will demonstrate in Zurich, that Rotary in Europe is aware of the responsibility it has for these central problems. Two further conferences will be held on the same topic in the coming months in Delhi and Brasilia, as can be seen on <http://www.worldpopulationgrowth.org>.

The Rotarian Initiative for Population & Development has over the 6 years of its existence made it clear, of what kind of performance Rotarians are capable, when the topic is right and the networking happens. That gives us hope for the future.

## **7. Entering into partnerships between NGOs and the great religions**

The challenges lying before us require a lot of energy from many areas of society, on many levels and in many areas. They challenge **governments, transnational corporations** and most of all **global civil society**, especially the big **non-governmental organizations (NGOs)**. This applies especially to such a powerful non-governmental organization as **Rotary** with its strong ethical and social orientation, integration into business and into an international network of clubs and members.

When one considers the long-range perspectives and the great challenges that lie before us, then partnerships are a decisive factor. All positive forces for global development have to work together, and that includes especially the world religions. Let me mention again in this context briefly the beneficial effects of the **Global Ethic Foundation** inspired by **Prof. Hans Küng**.

Even if it is not self-evident, we in RIFPD, for instance, see our activities as not being in conflict with religions, but rather we actively **seek partnerships with religions**, in order to cope with the tough problems that are pressing us to act. In this connection we regard the **ethical and moral positions of the world's religions as an important component of any promising way into the future**. For instance, we see a lot of correspondences between the RIFPD approach and positions of the Christian churches, and even with principles of the Catholic Church in reaching "**responsible parenthood**", although there are some differences still, especially in parts of certain official church positions concerning the question as to how sexually active couples can practically implement such responsible parenthood.

From the point of view of the author, this is **a matter for one's personal decision**, whereas of course, this decision will be strongly influenced by one's religions, beliefs and personal relationship and loyalty to one's own church. Still, in some **Catholic countries such as Italy or Spain**, we have today the lowest population growth rates, worldwide. The activities of the Rotarian Initiative for Population & Development aim at nothing more than giving personal choices to all couples worldwide **that would be comparable to the ones we take for granted in the developed world**. We don't want poor families to lack such choices, just because of missing information or missing material opportunities. For discussions **with churches**, this means that, instead of concentrating on more technical matters of how practically to implement a 'responsible parenthood' concept, we should rather concentrate on what is most important, namely our common care for **human dignity, worldwide, and for the integrity of nature**.

Aiming for partnerships in this sense has consequences concerning the other "hot" issue of debate, namely **abortion**. In order to make partnerships possible, **RIFPD does not regard abortion as a legitimate means of birth control within its own projects**. On the contrary, all efforts of the initiative as regards the provision of information, medical advice, **making child spacing possible (increasing the space between successive births)**, etc are aimed at avoiding situations in which abortion could even become an issue, namely as a last resort for people in an emergency, whether real or subjectively felt to be such.

## **8. Experience from the pilot project for "Responsible Parenthood and Healthy Families" in Nigeria**

A clear position against abortion as means of population control in our projects has also been a main pillar of our good experience with religious partners in the largest Rotary project thus far on "responsible parenthood", namely the common project of Districts 1860 and 9120 (Nigeria) in Kaduna State, Nigeria. This project serves as a **pilot project for the intentions of RIFPD** and also for the **RI Task Force "Population and Development"**. The project in northern Nigeria is called **"Child Spacing and Family Health"**. This project is situated in an area of Christian and Moslem population and is being sponsored by church personalities of both religions. They have also welcomed the fact that this work for "responsible parenthood", namely Child Spacing Methods, is being extended to a much larger region in Nigeria than previously. The responsible Emir has even literally requested this and

put his wish to the **Rotary Foundation**. With aid from the Rotarian Initiative for Population & Development, District 1840 applied in the previous year for a large 3-H project from the Rotary Foundation, which the trustees of the Foundation approved with a grant of US\$ 500,000. The **U.S. Packard Foundation** noticed the pilot project and announced a grand total of US\$ 1.2 Million for the new 3-H project. The former **Nigerian federal president Chief Shonegun**, Chairman of the countries' Vision 2010 Committee recognized that the existing infrastructure of clinics and health centers is being used better than before as a result of the project, and that the health workers are much more motivated than before to do their jobs in the areas of family planning and preventative health after training in the pilot project. Therefore the former state president has suggested the pilot project to the current government as a model for reputation.

The pilot project demonstrated both that Rotarians can carry out such projects professionally and successfully and that a model worthy of reputation has been given. Consequently the **international jury at EXPO 2000** has put this project into its EXPO catalogue as exemplary and worthy of reputation. The project is presented in the **Global House at EXPO 2000** in a so-called "experience room".

The new initiatives of the RI Task Force 2000/2001 "Population and Development" and – in association with it - the RIFDP are now aiming at initiating and executing **many new project activities** with similar goals in many other developing countries of this world with partners there. This program is thematically not focussed too narrowly, but rather works together with many other Rotarian activities ranging from poverty reduction to development projects in slums, training programs, measures against disease, anti-landmine programs, water supply and solar cooker programs, etc. **Only networked with one another and in a multi-thematic approach** can these problems affecting the future be coped with. In this way, many humanitarian programs directed at emergencies should be associated with issues of a better world order, as discussed above. This issue is dealt with in more detail in the next section.

## **9. Networking various activities at Rotary as the key to higher efficiency**

It is a wonderful sign of the variety and power in Rotary that **humanitarian projects can be tackled in a wide variety of thematic directions**. There are projects to combat poverty, develop slums, water projects and the drilling of wells in Africa, promoting training in Nepal, activities against hunger after

droughts, work for refugees of civil wars, homeless people after earthquakes, activities against the desuffrage and for the equal rights of women, work for the handicapped and for landmine victims, and children especially. Rotarians' work to improve the situation regarding population development, implement child spacing programs, create awareness and help with the provision of contraceptives can also be cited in this context.

I would like to make clear here how important it is that the various activities **be made to work together**, just as is the case with the activities **for microcredit programs, exchange programs, getting involved in Agenda 21 processes, etc.** The great problems on this earth have complex causes and can only be solved with widely based approaches. Here **activities against acute emergencies** are just as important as **changing reproductive behaviour** and finally even **efforts to improve worldwide framework conditions**. We need all this at the same time and networked with one another; the more we can approach these problems in a simultaneous and networked way, the more effective we will be. The **synergy potentials** of all these activities take advantage of **overproportionately large positive effects** of working together and therefore have to be used.

Therefore it would be a great mistake in this context to play off one activity against the other. That happens sometimes, when an individual or exclusive perspective is connected with projects. "That's my project; it has to be finished in a few years and it is so important that we can't take notice of, or do -- much less sponsor -- anything else!" Such an attitude often blocks off new projects because other projects have to be finished. Although I am a friend of focussing one's energies, that is not the right attitude to take.

So, although we may have to watch out for splitting up our energies too much, since we need networking, it is especially important to reinforce our activities in their synergistic effects. We must let our plans reinforce each other. Often we don't have to do much extra to help others. Anyhow, **we are all capable of much greater achievements than we think at first**. Sometimes we think that a project is almost too much. But when we regard the situation right, it looks much different. We just have to recall how well we are living, how much reserves we have left, how laughable the things sometimes are with which we have to work and by which we let our power be taken, in order to see that in reality much more potential and power are available than we thought. When one considers that many more than one billion people have to live **off less than one dollar per day**, that many people **do not even have access to clean water**, then many of our problems look small; then we notice that we can do much more and **that our work makes sense**. In particular, it makes sense to support others, when

they want to start a new activity and to put our hopes on networking, and in such a way we ultimately help our own cause best.

There is one thing else left to say, which is perhaps more important than all the rest: When one looks back, when one takes everything into account, **then the only thing that really has permanence is what one has helped to accomplish.** The negative things, preventing good work - for whatever reason - only make scars on one's soul. **Ultimately they kill.**

We all know that it is infinitely easy to prevent something and incredibly difficult to get anything accomplished. That's why that which is really important and really makes sense is to have contributed towards **getting something accomplished.** Very often it requires only a little effort on our part to accompany an initiative until it reaches its goals. It is often enough to raise one's voice against those who always find a reason why something is not possible today. Almost always, even when a new challenge looks like a heavy load at first - if understood properly and seen from the future - it turns out as another **contribution towards the fullness of life,** towards enriching one's experience and **giving purpose** to one's life - it is something that has permanence and really matters.

Therefore I wish to now make an appeal to Rotary and to all Rotarians to be conscious of **their incredible power as a non-governmental organization** and to take up **the motto of our new World President , Frank Devlyn,** and to put it into reality, I mean, to **spread consciousness** about the state of the world, as it is, and what it requires of us, and then **to act,** to do something and to make something possible with and for others:

### **Create Awareness - Take Action.**

There is the opportunity for making the most valuable of all personal experiences in the context of this motto. But it has to be clear that it should be secondary for every Rotarian whether positive activities in the perception by others are associated with one's self or not. Quite the contrary, bringing dynamics into group processes often presupposes that one holds one's self back, and lets it be enough to see that others are making a contribution too and regarding the project as their "baby". Not forget that the only thing that counts ultimately is the positive development that has been brought about – independently of whatever person it is attributed to. Therefore the motto is clearly and without further subtleties: **Create Awareness – Take Action.**

## 10. The question of responsibility

Let me close this text with a few remarks about the question of responsibility, in particular, our responsibility as Rotarians. This is mainly a question of:

### (1) Responsibility for one's immediate location

**This is a question of the responsibility of every Rotarian around him/herself.** Any change has to start at home with one's self. This aspect aims at one's own location and our activities to eventually change our own attitudes, thoughts and behaviour patterns.

### (2) Human responsibility for needs and emergencies around the globe

**This aspect involves our responsibility** for apparent necessities. This is the basis of our humanitarian approach to various project activities and applies to our work on the population issue, our fighting against poverty and carrying for human dignity, for instance.

### (3) Responsibility for questions of order above us

This last aspect is derived from systems theory and affects our ethical responsibility for superstructures of which we are all parts, be they states, or even the entire world community.

This aspect involves the larger contexts which have been dealt with in this text such as **sustainability, world peace, the population issue, the topic of the future world order**. It is not possible as a matter of principle to compensate for faulty designs on the system level (e. g. a world order that gives the wrong social and ecological signals, for instance) on an individual level. Consequently there is the third great responsibility of the individual to join together with others, when the case requires this, and to contribute towards a better world order.

This responsibilities, especially the last type, the 3<sup>rd</sup> aspect, sometimes appears too difficult to be mastered and may cause discouragement. But there is no need for that. Improvement of the world order is not a hopeless enterprise: **civil society and non-governmental organizations have always contributed to the change of framework conditions**, when they had the right connections and made

alliances with scientists, the media and business, and exchanged views with politicians, especially in cases when **the time was ripe for it and action was called for.**

Just consider the following **extrapolation:** if one person changes the belief of only one other person, and both affect a change in two others each month, and so forth in a snowball system, it would only take 33 months before the whole of humankind shared a common ideal (e.g.  $2^{33} \approx 8$  billion). And even if it were only one change of mind per year instead of month, it would still only take 33 years. So the change process is not such an impossible task. Rather, it is an imperative, a task from which successful results will provide a solid foundation for a better life for future generations on this earth.

If this is the base line, changing one mind a month/a year, how much more can Rotarians do as individuals, or in their clubs, or in their districts or statewise and in partnerships with Rotarians in other countries? How much can the Rotary Initiative for Population & Development do? How much can Rotary International do as one of the most influential global NGOs? Rotary succeeded in having 500 million children vaccinated against polio in one day (149 million in India alone on a single day ) as part of our worldwide **Polio Plus Program**. This is an **impressive proof of determination, logistics and ability** that we should build on. There is probably **no other non-governmental organization worldwide that possesses a potential like Rotary's. And that also goes for the difficult topic of world population** that can only be channeled deeply into society by an organization, networked so well as Rotary in coordination with partners such as the responsible UN suborganization UNFPA, the World Population Fund of the United Nations. The fact that our new **World President Frank Devlyn** has chosen to focus on this topic makes it a matter of special dimension and perspective.

If we take all these aspects together, the challenges lying before us and the necessity of forming partnerships, attending to the population question, caring about human rights, and caring for the intactness of nature, Rotary and RIFPD have the inestimable advantage that they can act **as respected ambassadors of necessary changes** to the current, general world view, even against the somewhat egocentric and ignorant view which often characterizes the public debate in industrialized countries. This change would lead to a view that would concentrate much more than today on the responsible use of resources, including support for appropriate social conditions, and would aim at a type of **world citizenship** over the medium term. If we take up such a way, it would lead to a better world order, including a reversal of the trend of population growth that is probably **the most important individual topic today** in which we must invest.

**Rotary is regarded highly throughout the whole world as a “middle-of-the-road“ organization that doesn’t support any extreme positions, but instead creates values through its international humanitarian and peace-making work. Therefore Rotary is a very high-credibility ambassador of the changes that need to be made.**

**Who, if not we? When, if not now?  
Rotary can make the difference!**

## **Acknowledgement**

The author wishes to thank Frithjof Finkbeiner and Robert Zinser for their support in preparing this text, both of whom are from RIFPD.

Likewise thanks go to Governor Josef Roos (District 1980) and Governor Remo Quarella (District 2000) for inviting me to the Interdistrict Conference in Lucerne and for publishing this paper.

Finally, I thank Thomas Ruddy, Olten, for his help in producing the English version of this document.

## Supplementary Literature

Berkel, S.: Evaluation of the Quality of Family Planning Services Provided by a Pilot Family Planning Project in Northern Nigeria, A Quantitative and Qualitative Field Study, Dissertation, Universität Heidelberg, 1998.

Die Deutsche Stiftung Weltbevölkerung (Hg.): Weil es uns angeht. Das Wachstum der Weltbevölkerung und die Deutschen. Balance Verlag, Hannover, 1995

Der Gynäkologe, Fortbildungsorgan der Deutschen Gesellschaft für Gynäkologie und Geburtshilfe, Band 30, Dezember 1997:

K. Beyrer, T.M. Fliedner, C. Greiner, F.J. Radermacher, Gesundheit im globalen Vergleich, Bevölkerungsentwicklung und Nachhaltigkeit, S. 897 ff;

R. Zinser, Das Projekt 'Population and Development' von Rotary International, S. 926 ff;

K. Friese, S. Berkel, Verantwortete Elternschaft, Erste Ergebnisse aus Nigeria", S. 934 ff.

Information Society Forum der EU: A European Way for the Information Society, 2000

Küng, Hans: Weltethos für Weltpolitik und Weltwirtschaft, München (Piper), 1997

Milde, R., Radermacher, F.J.: Last Exit 2050. Kathy, George und die Sehmaschine oder Der Klang der Welt am Ende des Jahrtausends. J. Ebner Graphische Betriebe GmbH & Co KG, Ulm, 1999. (Broschüre direkt beim Verlag zu bestellen unter Telefax 0731-2056-297.)

Morath, K. (ed.): Welt im Wandel - Wege zu dauerhaft-umweltgerechtem Wirtschaften. Frankfurter Institut - Stiftung Marktwirtschaft und Politik, 1996

Neiryneck, Jacques: Der göttliche Ingenieur. expert-Verlag, Renningen, 1994

Rotary Deutschland (Hg.): Weltbevölkerung - Weltproblem. Der Rotarier, Heft 4, Hamburg, 1996

Rotary: further information at [www.rifpd.org](http://www.rifpd.org), [www.rifpd.de](http://www.rifpd.de), [www.rifpd.de/rotaract](http://www.rifpd.de/rotaract)

Rotary International, Rotary, Navigating the Global Network, Today's News: Solutions to Population Dilemma in Nigeria, Vol.1, Issue 2.

- Rotary International Handbook for Population and Development, Emmanuel Adedolapo Lufadeju und Robert Zinser, Methodology of a Rotary Pilot Project "Child Spacing and Family Health" in Kaduna State/Nigeria, 2000.
- Radermacher, F.J.: Globalisierung und Informationstechnologie. In: Weltinnenpolitik. Internationale Tagung anlässlich des 85. Geburtstages von Carl-Friedrich von Weizsäcker, Evangelische Akademie Tutzing, 1997 (U. Bartosch und J. Wagner, eds.) S. 105-117, LIT Verlag, Münster, 1998
- Radermacher, F. J.: Informationsgesellschaft und Nachhaltige Entwicklung. Ergebnisband der Stuttgart Konferenz, 2. Juli 1998, Universitätsverlag Ulm GmbH
- Radermacher, F.J.: Hoffnungen - Zukunftsfragen der Menschheit: Problembereiche, Lösungsansätze und 20 hoffnungsmachende Initiativen. Manuskript, FAW Ulm, 1999
- Radermacher, F.J.: Brauchen wir einen weltweiten Gesellschaftsvertrag. In: Der Themenpark der EXPO 2000, Band 1, S.74-76. Springer Verlag, Wien New York, 2000
- United Nations: Revision of the World Population Estimates and Projections", Population Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, United Nations, 1998
- van Dijk, A.G.M., R. Pestel, F.J. Radermacher: Sustainability in Times of a Global Information Society: the Promise of a European Way. In: Germany - Global Visions, MVV Medien Vertriebs- und Verlagsgesellschaft mbH, Düsseldorf, to be published in 2000
- Geld bewegt die Welt – wohin?! Ein Exponat der Stadtparkasse Köln im Themenparksegment der EXPO 2000 „Das 21. Jahrhundert“, <http://www.sk-koeln.de/expo.htm>