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Viewpoint

The World Population Conference

In Bucharest, Romania, from August 19 through 30, an event took place which should have been of fundamental importance to all of humanity. The occasion was the World Population Conference, the first meeting of its kind in which governments were to officially consider questions of global population policies. One might have expected that such a conference had been prepared and held—at great expense—because the nations of the world had finally recognized that a population crisis existed and that urgent international action was required if serious consequences were to be averted. However no such sense of urgency was apparent in the conference documents.

A principal aim of the conference was to consider and, hopefully, to adopt a Draft World Population Plan of Action. This plan had been prepared during two years of effort and was the result of "extensive consultations . . . by the Secretary General of the World Population Conference with Governments, with the Population Commission of the United Nations, with international organizations and with various experts, scholars and interested groups". It was a valiant attempt to achieve a compromise between diametrically opposed views, to offend nobody, to offer something for everybody. Despite its apparently innocuous nature, the plan appeared to bring out the worst in some of the conference participants, and was thoroughly denounced by some nations.

The draft plan stated as its primary aim the need to "expand and deepen the capacities of countries to deal effectively with their national and subnational population problems and to promote an appropriate international response to their needs by increasing international activity in research, the exchange of information, and the provision of assistance on request". The proposals for pursuing this aim were certainly modest and sought such seemingly well-intentioned goals as increasing life expectancy in the less developed countries, reducing infant mortality, and assisting those countries that wished to reduce their population growth rates to do so, while being careful not to interfere with the others. Perhaps the most extreme proposal was one urging all countries to make available by 1980, if possible, but not later than 1985, to all persons who so desire "the necessary information and education about family planning and the means to practise family planning effectively and in accordance with their cultural values". This is hardly a proposal for control of population growth, nor is it even suggested that such women's rights as abortion on demand might also be provided not later than 1985. Nevertheless it inspired more than a little opposition.

Opposition to the draft plan came from many directions. A viewpoint of some Third World countries was

that the plan diverted energy and attention from the existing serious global inequities, and from the need to provide much greater emphasis on economic development in their countries. The diversion of many millions of dollars to family planning was considered to be attacking a symptom, rapid population growth, at the cost of a lessened attack on the cause of distress, which was poverty. It was also stressed that the plan made little reference to the growth in population and rates of consumption in the developed nations, although these caused a greater contribution to the global imbalance between people and resources.

The Chinese delegation made it clear that it viewed over-population, shortages of food, and scarcity of other resources as creations of capitalist society. Its own population had increased from a pre-revolution level of less than 500 million to its present level of nearly 800 million. Previously, at the lower level, there was hunger, poverty, and privation. Now these had been eliminated. It was not emphasized that China now has one of the world's most comprehensive programmes for limiting population growth. Several other socialist nations also denied that they faced problems from population growth. Romania, for example, was actively encouraging large families because it sought a higher population level.

By contrast, India, Indonesia, and most island nations recognized that they had serious population problems, and wanted help in controlling population growth. Fiji pointed to the great success of its family planning programme, and offered assistance to other Pacific Islands. Interestingly, Cuba, which already has the lowest population growth rate in Latin America, and among the lowest infant and maternal mortality rates, became the first socialist country to sign an agreement with the UN Fund for Population Activity, to improve contraceptive services and health care for mothers and children.

Considerable opposition to the draft plan came from women's organizations, which pointed to the lack of emphasis on women's rights, and the tendency to relegate women to the status of child-bearers and housekeepers. Equal opportunities to education, employment, and social benefits were seen as important steps toward reducing population growth. Full access to the information and supplies needed for women to control the size of their own families, including contraception and abortion, was demanded by many women's groups. A world network of women was being formed to help women in various countries achieve their goals.

While agreeing with many of the objections mentioned above, I had further difficulty with the pre-conference papers and the draft plan. One objection came from the stress that was placed on the phenomenon of "demographic lag" or the demographic inertia that affects any growing population. This concept is important in that it shows that even with a reduction in birth rate, or fertility, populations will continue to grow, since the large numbers of children born during the period of high fertility will reach reproductive age and themselves have children. Thus, with a so-called "zero population growth rate" of 2 children per couple, populations in most countries will continue to grow until the age structure becomes such that births and deaths balance out at the new level. This view, however, gives a false impression of the inevitability of population growth and results in what I believe to be the misleading UN forecasts of population in the year 2000 and beyond. Thus, it is stated in some papers that the world population will reach 7 billion shortly after the year 2000 and cannot be expected to level off before a total of 12 billion is attained—even if family planning is available and birth control becomes a common practice.

It was not stressed in the UN papers that with a much greater reduction in fertility population growth can be halted quickly, and indeed has been halted in some countries. Furthermore it was not adequately considered that world population growth will be suddenly halted if means are not found to provide food to those who are now

desperately short. If 70 million die in Asia or Africa from famine and disease, and this is not improbable, there will be no world population growth this year. Such mass mortality would create conditions of instability likely to further disrupt already fragile economic systems, and become a chronic condition inhibiting further population growth for many years.

Those responsible for forecasting the future prospects for world food, energy, and mineral resources, seem to have been recruited from some pool of "technological optimists" that the UN keeps somewhere in reserve. Thus the statement in one background paper that we can certainly produce enough food for 30 to 40 billion people can only be considered irresponsible in a world that cannot provide sufficient food for its present 3.8 billion people. Until we can devise means for providing for those who are now alive, we should be very wary in claiming ability to cope with many more. The energy costs, environmental costs, and economic costs involved in even doubling world food production were not emphasized.

In the availability and inter-relationships of energy and raw materials the documents appeared excessively optimistic. The great increase in energy use that is involved in extracting minerals from increasingly dispersed sources is largely overlooked. Oil, coal and nuclear fission are pointed to as the energy pathways we must pursue. Solar energy development is postponed to the remote future. Energy conservation receives little attention.

In addition to the lack of holistic thinking in the preparation of the background papers, their more serious defect is the tendency to gloss over the severe problems that face humanity today which appear likely to become more severe. The World Population Plan of Action, even before being watered down, offered far too little, much too late, to be of any real help in facing these present realities.

The conference at Bucharest, like its predecessor at Stockholm, brought many representatives of countries together and exposed them to each other's thinking. This may be its greatest value. In the official conference, as in all gatherings of governments, the shortcomings of each government's policy, or its absence of policy, were glossed over or swept under the rug. Political expediency took the place of action directed toward real solutions of real problems. Truth only rarely found a place in the conference hall. We look forward next to the World Food Congress to be held in Rome in November. This is already too late. Will it also produce too little?

Raymond F. Dasmann

A further note on tropical rain forests

Next year the Tropical Rain Forest will be the centre of world-wide attention. The WWF/IUCN special appeal and a technical session of the IUCN General Assembly are devoted to it. These forests are the subject of a world conference in 1975 organized by FAO and they are one of the most important projects of the MAB programme of UNESCO. Earlier Bulletins have described why all this is so vital.

But, although such international attention is all concentrated in one year, this must not be a "flash-in-the-pan"; it must be the beginning of a sustained period of careful planning to ensure that this huge area of land and vast natural resource is used in the wisest way.

A big effort is now going into assembling all the information already available—about the total extent of the forest; about the very different types that occur in different continents, on different soil and at various altitudes; about the areas occupied by each of these; the kinds of plants and animals in each; the timber and other kinds of forest produce they contain; their capacity for continuing to produce a constant yield of timber; the potential for stable agriculture of the soils that underlie

them; and the areas, whether typical or unique, which have so far been unaffected by human exploitation and of which large samples should be safeguarded and protected as national parks or reserves.

It is quite clear, however, that far too little is now known for the best decisions to be made, little even about simple things such as the total extent of the forest. Information on the features listed above and many others that might be mentioned is hopelessly inadequate.

This is a clear case for cooperative international action. It is very much to be hoped that UNEP will treat this as one of its high priorities and will encourage all the agencies concerned to develop a well-planned programme. This should not only fill in the gaps in our knowledge about the present state of the rain forest but should keep under continual surveillance the changes that are taking place and will take place in the future.

One word of caution should be sounded. It is very easy, with all the advantages of modern technology, to collect truly enormous quantities of not necessarily useful facts and figures. In this instance the uncritical use of remote sensing from satellites and the computer would make this all too simple. These are valuable and probably essential tools to establish proper surveillance of the changes in rain forest; but any plan that is developed should be most carefully designed to give the kind of information that is really needed for wise decisions in the most direct and economical manner. The means must not be allowed to run away with the end. IUCN will be deeply concerned with the result and will wish to be intimately associated with the planning.

Programme Activities

Future of the Alps

A temporary halt to all new development in the alpine regions of Europe except such traditional activities as agriculture, forestry and grazing were among the measures called for at an international symposium on the Future of the Alps in order to permit planning and conservation to catch up with run-away urbanization.

This and a host of other protective guidelines designed to bring accelerating degradation of the Alps under control were adopted by delegates from Austria, France, the Federal Republic of Germany, Italy, Switzerland and Yugoslavia—more than 400 in all—who met at Trento, Italy, from 31 August to 7 September.

IUCN and WWF were among the sponsors of the symposium on the Future of the Alps, which, for the first time, brought scientists and planners together with politicians, administrators, lawyers and decision-makers to consider alpine problems.

The recommendations in form of an action plan were far-reaching and widely based, dealing with all aspects of the Alpine problems which have developed with increasing population, economic expansion and technological growth.

Discussions produced a long list of specific directives or guidelines under three headings: planning, resource management and use, and protection of nature and natural resources. Stress was laid on the urgent need for cooperative action and involvement of alpine peoples; for careful respect of fragile ecological factors in all developmental planning, and limiting the proliferation of man-made works of all kinds, particularly badly conceived tourism complexes; for protection of flora, fauna, additional natural areas and the landscape; for efforts to reverse the trend of abandonment of mountain settlements and traditional living patterns which have existed for centuries in balanced human-environmental relationships.

The long list of guidelines and specific recommendations is to be published in the conference languages: French, German and Italian.

A final section of the plan concerns implementation. This calls for a broad information and education programme using common texts in the languages of the region, increased research efforts, harmonization of legal and administrative measures and adoption of standard procedures, maps, etc., involvement of the public and, of course, close intergovernmental cooperation.

National non-governmental organizations concerned with nature and environmental conservation were urged to set-up national committees, with a view to promote and follow the progress of the action plan. These national committees should be coordinated at the international level by the International Commission for the Protection of Alpine Regions (CIPRA), and periodic consultations are expected to take place through this organization.

The plan is considered only a first step since, to be truly effective, it will depend on cooperative efforts of the countries concerned to develop the programme and put it in force.

IUCN and the Italian Alpine Club (CAI) were the main organizers of the symposium. The organizing committee included of WWF, the Commission internationale pour la protection des régions alpines (CIPRA), Euregion Alpina, the Union internationale des associations d'alpinisme (UIAA), and the International Festival on Mountain and Exploration Films, Trento. UNESCO and the International Federation of Landscape Architects were sponsors, with cooperation by the Secretariats of the Economic Commission for Europe and the Council of Europe.

Education seminar held in East Africa

In cooperation with the World Confederation of Organizations of the Teaching Profession (WCOTP), IUCN sponsored a Pilot Seminar on Environmental Education Methodology in East Africa at Mombasa, Kenya, from 27 August to 4 September.

Thirty African experts took part. Seminar participants included senior civil servants from ministries of education, teacher educators and leaders of national teacher organizations from Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda. Observers included representation from UNEP, UNESCO, and the Science Education Programme for Africa (SEPA); consultants represented the Association for Teacher Education in Africa (ATEA), and a US organization, Total Education in the Total Environment (TETE).

The Seminar systematically examined an approach developed by TETE which describes and interprets man's interactions with his local environment in order to develop an understanding of his impact on the total environment. Ample opportunity was provided for content presentation, demonstrations, film showings, small group sessions, questions and informal exchanges of views among participants.

The Seminar agreed that the total environment approach, as developed in North America, seems to provide some common denominators applicable to developing nations, noting that this is, in fact, being used in part at almost all levels of East African education.

Participants also agreed on the need for teaching about man and his relationships with the environment as a whole. This, too, is being done and in some cases at an advanced stage, citing, among examples, ATEA's integrated education scheme; environment recommendations of the 1973 Ethiopian curriculum seminar; successful application of education for self-reliance in Tanzania, and the highly innovative Namutamba pilot project in Uganda. The Seminar recommended that an inventory of these related practices be made by one of the African professional organizations in the countries concerned.

TETE, using a total environment approach, showed what could be accomplished by integrating the school with its environment. Participants were quick to grasp and absorb this and discussed it in relation to their own situations.

It was recommended that teaching about and within the environment, regardless of which approaches were used, must not be simply another overlay on the already cumbersome educational structures. Rather, it should be clearly integrated with the work being done by government and university curriculum research units, with the best practices found in institutes of education as well as actively involving the organized teaching profession at each stage.

The Seminar called on each government Ministry of Education to draw up clear and specific guidelines for teaching about man and the environment that contribute to the country's national development plan, pointing out that only with recognized leadership can truly coordinated efforts be expected at the local level.

Follow-up action by UNEP was suggested. The Seminar asked that UNEP be prepared to give serious consideration to (1) specific action proposals from ministries of education; the proposals, emanating from Mombasa, aim at complementary and long range goals; (2) one coordinated African regional proposal at the non-governmental level, jointly submitted by African-based professional organizations; and (3) one comprehensive proposal for an environmental sciences research and teaching unit to be established at an African university. UNEP was also suggested as sponsor of a training programme for teachers.

Ungulate Symposium in print at last

In November 1971, an International Symposium on "The Behaviour of Ungulates and its Relation to Management" was held at the University of Calgary, Alberta, Canada, under the joint sponsorship of IUCN, IBP, UNESCO, the National and Historic Parks Branch of the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, and the Environmental Sciences Centre, University of Calgary. This was widely discussed, subsequently, as being of the greatest significance to the advancement of our knowledge of ungulates and to their conservation and management. However, those of us who could not attend the symposium have had to be content with hearsay evidence. For a variety of reasons, publication of the transactions was delayed.

It is a pleasure to announce that the papers of the Calgary symposium are now available in two volumes published jointly as No. 24 in the IUCN Publications New Series. They may be purchased from IUCN, Morges, for US\$15.

The symposium volumes have been scientifically edited by V. Geist and F. Walther, with final copy editing by Sir Hugh Elliott assisted by Linda Jones. Following a short introduction by the scientific editors, the two volumes contain the texts of the 56 papers presented at the symposium, and end with an index of authors and of ungulate species for a total of 941 text pages. The subject matter is diverse with an emphasis on ungulate behaviour, but includes some papers that refer primarily to ecology or management.

The behavioural papers range from general considerations of social behaviour and organization to a more detailed consideration of sexual and maternal behaviour, communication, locomotion, bedding, marking, territory and movement. Papers relating behaviour to ecology and management are principally grouped in Volume 2.

The papers presented are drawn from five continents, and the list of ungulate taxa discussed fill 5 pages of the index. It is impossible to summarize them or even to indicate the highlights of the symposium since there are far too many. My special fields of interest are well covered and I suspect that anyone with a broad interest in ungulates will find much of value among the papers. Congratulations are in order to the organizers and editors of the symposium for having completed a monumental task.

R. F. Dasmann

Conservation notes

SCIBP terminates

The Special Committee for the International Biological Programme, which has been functioning since July 1964, ceased to exist on 30 June. All committees terminated on that date.

A new IBP Publications Committee, established 1 July, will operate until the end of 1976. This will consist of Prof. F. Bourlière, the Conveners of Sections PT, PP, PFF, PM and HA, Dr. E. B. Worthington, Dr. R. W. J. Keay, and the Secretary-General of ICSU. Its address will be c/o Linnean Society of London, Burlington House, Piccadilly, London, W.1.

Netherlands decision on Dollard canal

The Netherlands Government has decided to route the proposed Dollard canal in the Wadden Sea behind the dyke and not through the Dollard area itself, which is a waterfowl habitat of international importance. This undisturbed tidal area is dominated by brackish water, resulting in a plant and animal community found nowhere else.

University of Costa Rica plans school of environmental sciences

Over the last few years a revolution in awareness of conservation and other environmental matters has been taking place in Costa Rica and this is now bearing fruit. One of the two universities is planning to establish a faculty or school of environmental sciences in 1975 which would be heavily involved in nature conservation, pollution and related matters.

Sabah has a new national park

The Government of Sabah, Eastern Malaysia, has established the island of Pulau Gaya as a National Park to protect the last remaining primary rain forest in the area.

The Park, which has been named after the former Malaysian Prime Minister, Tunku Abdul Rahman, contains a rich flora, including one species of *Quassia*, belonging to a sub-genus formerly only known from South America. The island also has an undisturbed beach flora, which is rare along the coast of Sabah, and extensive coral reefs.

Italians increase park protection

An area of about 2,400 ha in the high Valle d'Orco between Gran Paradiso National Park in Italy and Vanoise National Park in France has been closed to hunting by the Region of Piedmont. This increases to about 14 km the protected border across which wildlife can safely cross.

This was the second welcome action in recent months by Regional authorities in Italy to benefit wildlife in Gran Paradiso. Earlier the Region Valle d'Aosta closed 1,200 ha of the Valsavaranche to hunting.

IUCN and World Wildlife Fund headquarters at Morges were featured on a parade float prepared by a local organization, Equipe Char fleuri de Prelionnaz, for the 25th Fête des Vendanges held in Morges on 29 September.

New wildlife research centre

A new wildlife research centre has been established in Venezuela.

The centre will presumably function within the Rancho Grande National Park, about 120 km east of Caracas, where an important research centre and a small museum are already located.

Gonzalo Medina Padilla, a well-known biologist who is considered to be a foremost authority on tropical American wild animals, will head the centre.

He died for the vicuña

Not long ago a group of vicuña experts and guards of the Forest Service of Peru was attacked by vicuña poachers. Timoteo Pineda Quilca, who had been working for the Pampa Galeras Vicuña Reserve, was mortally wounded.

Wildlife guards and wardens, rangers and other public servants who protect national parks and reserves, forests and other natural resources around the world frequently risk injury and death in the line of duty.

Conservationists will recall sacrifices by wardens of parks and wildlife reserves. In the US, a Park Service officer was killed recently, presumably by a deer poacher at Point Reyes National Seashore. In Zaire some years ago seven men died in what is now Virunga National Park, giving rise to the eloquent book in French by Dr. Jacques Verschuren entitled "Mourir pour les éléphants" (To die for the elephants).

This most recent incident in Peru was given wide publicity, and subsequently the Government officially decreed that a special contribution be paid to Mr. Pineda's widow and children. We applaud this action.

Unfortunately, not all countries recognize that civil servants who risk their lives should be entitled to extra compensation or insurance against injury or loss of life in the performance of their work.

In an increasingly violent world, when publicly-owned wild resources are often exploited illegally, it seems high time indeed that these unsung guardians of parks, forests and wildlife be indemnified against the growing risks they face in doing their jobs. R.I.S.

Charles A. Lindbergh

Charles A. Lindbergh, a champion of nature conservation and an aviation pioneer whose exploits helped change the world, died in August in the United States at the age of 72.

An occasional visitor at Morges, Mr. Lindbergh was an active member of IUCN's Survival Service Commission, and an International Trustee of the World Wildlife Fund. Although he was associated with aviation throughout his life, conservation of nature was one of his principal concerns, and in this effort he made exceptional contributions toward saving endangered species including the Javan rhinoceros in Indonesia; the tamaraw wild buffalo and the monkey-eating eagle in the Philippines; and the great whales.

IUCN and WWF mourn a distinguished colleague whose words live on as an inspiration—"I do not think there is anything more important than conservation, with the exception of human survival, and the two are so closely interlaced that it is hard to separate one from the other."

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