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„Rotarians for Population and Sustainable Development (RFPD)” – an Action Group to reduce the increase of the world population.

The excessive increase of the world population within the last century is alarming in nearly all parts of the world – either active or passive. The limitation of our natural resources, the ongoing destruction of our environment, the danger for health and the lack of education for young people in third world countries will pose the question whether our culture, society and political systems will or will not survive. It is our generation that has to answer these questions, since the way we answer will have strong influence on the life and benefit of our children and grandchildren. The questions are so evident that one is surprised how little they determine our reasoning and action. Everyone in this room, everyone of our political class, every one in the scientific world can see and act – better to-day than in a few years time. Why?

Let me quote 5 figures that should help to understand my concern. RFPD with other NGOs are trying to cope with and to face:

1. **Nearly 6% of all humans** that lived on earth ever since 50.000 years are living to – day.
2. **The daily increase** of the world population is about 200.000 – net. This complies every year with the population of Germany, within 6.5 years with the population of the US and Russia collectively or within the next 7 years with the population of the EU 27 to – day.
3. We live in **a world that accepts** the death of 370.000 mothers every year due to the lack of medical care.
 - 2 Mrd. have no direct access to clean drinking water
 - 880 Mio. **have not enough to eat.**
 - Rd. 770 Mio. humans are illiterate, (12% of the world population, out of which 63% are women)
2. **Our world accepts** that a single man has a daily income between 0,27 € to 18.000.000 € per day!
3. **And finally:** we live in a world where 50 % of the people have a lower standard of living than their ancestors 100 years past.

This the world will no longer accept. If we continue not to help, the world will explode – the latest during the life time of our grandchildren.

The question I have is: how can we convince the world to agree in its own survival?

Many governments and international organisations do locally a very good job with remarkable success: In many countries the number of children per woman is decreasing, worldwide down to 2,7 per woman. But there are still regions in the world, where overpopulation changes the countries in a self - destructive society.

In 2000 the UN created with the agreement of 160 head of states and governments 8 “Millennium Development Goals (MDG)” **All 8 goals touch population issues.** Many government and NGO do since that time a very successful work.

Rotary is capable to play an important role to help these societies through its network and the potential and capabilities of its member – but are the Rotarians willing to act? My impression in my area of responsibility is that Rotarians need a permanent pain in the neck to start helping. And in the field of population issues it is the Action Group RFPD (Rotarians for Population and Development):

RFPD was founded in 1995 by three governors from Nigeria, US and Germany. It has to-day about 21.000 members from Rotary, Innerwheel and Rotaract in 62 countries and is the largest Action Group within Rotary. We operate under the rules of ROTARY but we are not dependent from RI, which respects our work. A year before the MDG where created the Board of RI stated in 1999 a recommendation districts and clubs should plan projects that have a direct influence on the increase of the world population. Therefore RFPD is trying to convince clubs and districts to add to every international project a “family planning” module or satellite - project.

RFPD is not an additional NGO to reduce poverty but we are an organisation within Rotary that helps districts and clubs in their international boarder crossing projects with information, networking and money.(3-5000 € per project and club, when the Rotarians are members of RFPD)

In-depth studies of the reasons for the world population increase propose remarkable solutions that change the traditional way of thinking and social attitudes completely.

That means: **We have to accept that the woman is the driving engine for social change and economic progress and not the man. Many countries, societies and individuals still have a problem to accept this.**

And RFPD supports families, girls and women

- to decide voluntarily and individually when they want to give birth to their first child and how many children they want in total to deliver.(child spacing at least two years)
- to have only the number of children they can raise and educate
- to be successful in a profession or business to earn enough money for a self determined life

Therefore we support 5 topics to offer solutions, but only with the agreement of the local tribal, political and religious leaders:

- „Responsible Parenthood Education“, that is information about family planning
- “Reproductive Health Education”, that is a wide range of activity around the welfare of women and their babies before, during and after they deliver.
- Education in literacy and profession for girls and women
- To preserve the health of mothers
- Professional activity of the women to earn and/or invest money p. e. through micro credits.

And now you want to do something?

In order to support RFPD actively we recommend 5 actions:

1. Be the RFPD officer in your club
2. Start a project with the mentioned targets.
3. Be a member of RFPD
 - Individually (20 € p. a. or lifetime (100 €)
 - With your club (10 € per person p.a.)
4. **Collect money.** If a member turns a decade it is our experience the result will be about 5000€ - funerals are less successful!
5. **Ask physicians** and medical specialists to help onsite

Closing remarks

If our generation does not succeed to get the population issue solved especially in countries next door, in Africa, the basis of living in our culture and our grandchildren here in Europe will collectively **be destroyed**

If it is not humanity and charity that stimulate us to help them it should be at least our self – interest. If the people in the overpopulated regions can't reduce the further increase of the

population, they will export their suffering from their countries into our countries. We will have conflicts of different kind. **Some might culminate in wars or an immigration Tsunami that will destroy all our culture that is worth to be passed on to our next generations.**

A German philosopher of the 19 th. Century stated:

Their is no need to see what others haven` t seen so far, but there is a need to think in a new way what nobody had thought so far about things we all see everyday.

Start thinking now to solve those problems everybody can see. Rotary has the means and power, the people and ideas, the time and the potential to help solving problems of world population, that are so important for the survival of our countries, culture, and grandchildren. But are we really willing to do something and share our wealth with the overpopulated countries? Or are we happy with the so called friendship within Rotary which in fact is in most of our clubs wining, dining, golfing, travelling, which covers more than 90% of our Rotarian budget. Or is some one here in the room who represents a club or district where these statements are wrong? I would be more than happy.

Thank you.