

## **Sierra Club Global Population Policy**

### **Vision**

The Sierra Club envisions a world where every person has a good quality of life, with access to education, basic and reproductive health care, and economic and social opportunities. We envision a world where women participate equally in every facet of daily life and in family, community, and national decision-making. We also envision a world where human beings live in harmony with nature and protect it.

Population pressure causes environmental harm, but so does the excessive use of resources associated with Western consumerism. Any call to reduce stress on Earth's resources by slowing global population growth must include an equally energetic call to stop destructive consumption and create environmentally responsible societies.

The Sierra Club therefore welcomes non-coercive, culturally sensitive policies that will help women choose the timing and spacing of their children.

Evidence shows that a three-part program works. Those three parts include the following:

- A range of voluntary family planning services and information, so that people can learn about family planning and avoid unwanted pregnancy;
- Basic health care for all; and
- Education, social and economic opportunity and empowerment, especially for women.

Where nations have widely instituted such a program, birth rates have decreased sharply as couples have more access to health, and education. In contrast, more coercive approaches not only have generally proved counterproductive, but are not based in human rights. The Sierra Club rejects any and all policies that promote or condone coercion or targets.

### **II. Sierra Club Support for the ICPD Approach**

To address population growth, the Sierra Club urges greater support for the approach ratified by 179 country governments and thousands of nongovernmental organizations from around the world, including the Sierra Club, at the United Nations International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in Cairo in 1994. This approach, reaffirmed in 2014, calls for universal access to voluntary family planning, allowing people to decide the number and spacing of their children. The Sierra Club calls for increased support, including funding by both government and the private sector for the full range of ICPD goals. Working toward these goals with partners from around the world, the Sierra Club seeks a sustainable planet where all living beings have a clean, healthy environment. (SEE TEXT BELOW)

### **III. Other Issues**

Beyond the ICPD goals, the Sierra Club is a pro-choice organization. We endorse and work for comprehensive, voluntary reproductive health care for all. We encourage wider opportunity for women as well as men, particularly education. We help to educate people on the linkages between population growth and environmental stress. We advocate stronger policies and support increased domestic and international funding to meet these goals. We promote environmentally sustainable development strategies that keep families and environments healthy, as well as improved maternal and child health care, improved labor and environmental standards in all trade agreements, and the education and empowerment of women.

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**Revised and adopted by the Board of Directors on May 21, 2017**

## **ADDENDUM**

### **International Conference on Population and Development Goals [from 1994]**

1. **Eradicate Extreme Poverty and Hunger.** Smaller families and wider birth intervals allow families to invest more in each child's nutrition and health, and can reduce poverty and hunger for all members of a household. At the national level, fertility reduction may enable accelerated social and economic development. Smaller families allow women to engage in more income-producing activities.
2. **Achieve Universal Primary Education.** Families with fewer children, and children spaced further apart, can afford to invest more in each child's education. This has a special benefit for girls, whose education may have a lower priority for families than that of boys. Preventing early pregnancy can help keep adolescent girls in school who may otherwise be forced to leave.
3. **Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women.** Controlling whether and when to have children is a critical aspect of women's empowerment. Women who can plan the timing and number of their births also have greater opportunities for work, education, and social participation outside the home.
4. **Reduce Child Mortality.** Prenatal care and the ability to avoid high-risk pregnancies (e.g., those to very young women and those spaced closely together) help prevent infant and child deaths. Children in large families are likely to have reduced health care, and unwanted children are more likely to die than wanted ones. They are also more likely to be deprived of nutrition and attention.
5. **Improve Maternal Health.** Preventing unplanned and high-risk pregnancies and providing care in pregnancy, childbirth, and the postpartum period save women's lives.
6. **Combat HIV/AIDS and other Diseases.** Sexual and reproductive health care includes preventing and treating sexually transmitted infections, including HIV/AIDS. In addition, reproductive health care can bring clients into the health care system, encouraging diagnosis and treatment of other diseases and conditions.
7. **Ensure Environmental Sustainability.** Providing sexual and reproductive health services, and avoiding unwanted births, may help stabilize rural areas, slow urban migration, enhance women's role as resource managers and balance natural resource use with the needs of the population.”

### **Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) - Beyond 2014**

The evidence presented by the review overwhelmingly supports the ICPD consensus that the respect, protection, promotion and fulfilment of human rights are necessary preconditions to improving the development, dignity and well-being of all people; and that sexual and reproductive health and rights, and an understanding of the implications of population dynamics are critical foundations for sustainable development. Protecting and fulfilling the human rights of young people and investing in their quality education, effective livelihood skills, access to sexual and reproductive health services and information, including comprehensive sexuality education, as well as employment opportunities, are necessary for the development of their resilience and create the conditions under which they can achieve their full potential.

The path to sustainability, outlined in the framework of actions, demands better leadership and greater innovation: to extend human rights and protect all persons from human rights abuses, discrimination and violence, in order that all may have the opportunity to contribute to and benefit from development; to invest in the capabilities and creativity of the world's adolescents and youth for their own sake and to

ensure future growth and innovation; to ensure the protection, inclusion and equitable participation of older persons in society; to strengthen health systems to provide universal access to sexual and reproductive health, so that all women can thrive and children can grow in a nurturing environment; to build sustainable cities that enrich urban and rural lives alike; to harness the benefits of migration and address its challenges; and to transform the global economy towards one that will sustain the future of the planet and ensure a common future of human rights, dignity and well-being for all people in the years beyond 2014.