Adopted as a resolution in a Conference of the Nature-Human Centric Peoples Movement at Jaipur on 25-27 November 2005

Unprecedentedly Increasing Human Population And Depleting Environmental Resources Pose An Immediate Grave Threat To Human Community

The above-stated two facts represent the existing two-sided reality of our world.

1

As regards increase in human population, it has become a highly serious problem of our times. This is evident from looking at over one million old history of human population growth

For over a million years, the human population grew at a snail's pace. It reached only a billion mark in 1800 AD. Next, it doubled itself in 130 years (i. e.,1930); the third billion was added in 30 years (i.e.,1960); the fourth in 15 years (I.e., 1975) and the fifth in 11 years (i.e., 1986). Today the world population numbers over 6 billion (1.3 billion in developed and 4.7 billon in the developing countries). Over 90 million people are being added to it per year. The estimate is that the world population is growing by 179 people a minute (for every 100 addition, 97 are added to the population of developing countries). By this speed, it is expected to double itself (i.e., 12.5 billion) by the year 2050. The world's carrying capacity is believed to be eight billion people. If the present population growth rate continues, human beings will get only a sleeping space on the globe by the end of this century.

A peculiar feature of the present state of human community is that, despite its unprecedented increase in numbers, its quality has got seriously degenerated. Mentally, it has become too much self-indulged, discarding its social feature. Physically, one-third of human community is suffering from newly-arisen deadly diseases, like HIV, Cancer, bird-flu, etc., one-half is in the grip of traditional heart, lungs, liver and kidney troubles, while the remaining 20 percent has fallen a victim to neurotic ailments.

The specific point worth considering in the above-stated human population growth process is that, while it remained very slow and halting for over one million years, (reaching one billion only in 1800 AD), it had suddenly made an unprecedented leap reaching six times in 200 years under the corporate capitalist rule.

2

As to the environmental resources, all of them have become degraded.

(a) Taking up the environmental component of air, which is an essential requisite for all forms of bio-existence and forms an envelop over our atmosphere surrounding planet earth, it has become polluted due to the trebling of greenhouse gases during the past 30 years when the first conference on environment and development was held at Bucharast in 1975.

(b) Turning to the environmental element of water, which is the number 2 essential need for bio-survival, over 50 percent of our ground water resources have been consumed, while 60 percent of wetlands and one-fourth of the fresh water species have become extinct.

(c) Our productive land, which is essential for our food production, has been damaged due to the degradation of its two-third farming area. Half of world's grasslands suffer from degradation and over 50 percent world's forests have been destroyed.

(d) 70 percent of bird species, and 75 percent of marine species have declined in numbers. 1,000 wildlife species have become extinct and 12,000 are under threat.

3

Recent scientific and technological advances, despite having some beneficial results in agriculture, manufacturing and IT industry, have in many cases adversely affected our environmental resources.

How the over-increase in human numbers and a decrease in his essential resources will henceforth affect our productive resources is not difficult to understand. For instance, if a farmer, who has pasture land that will produce grass only for 10 cows, puts 20 cows to grazing on that land, they will consume not only the whole grass, but, in their efforts to survive, also eat the grass-roots until the whole resource of grass is finished for ever. What happens thereafter is not difficult to visualise. The cows themselves would have to suffer starvation which can lead to their extinction.

Our world, with a current population in excess of the world's ability to support it, has been destroying the environmental resources at an alarming rate. Just as a simple farmer not knowing the technology of grass puts 20 cows to graze on a pasture which can sustainably feed 10 cows, our corporate capitalist rulers of the world have put more people on this planet than it can support and, they (i.e., the corporate rulers), in their strive to maintain their system, have been destroying the very resources which might have maintained us and supported our children and grandchildren.

The greedy rulers of the present corporate system are earning billions of dollars by destroying the environmental resources through their specific form of overgrazing. Unhappily, it is not merely mankind's environment that is being destroyed. It is their too. Evidently, we are going to live or die together.

4

The world became conscious of the growing population menace in the late 1960's. Since then, three international population conferences—Bucharest 1974, Mexico 1984 and Cairo 1994—have taken place The first conference made development, i. e., the role of woman, education, health-care, etc., as the focus for population control, relegating the social factor to the secondary place. The second conference laid more emphasis on economic factor and made "eliminate mass hunger" in the interest of peace, security and environment as the central issue, again laying less stress on social factor.

The recently-held Cairo Conference stressed certain social issues as the basis of its strategy but left out the question of social and economic security. It mainly emphasised the following points:

(a) Woman as the most important component of the population policy, aiming at the empowerment of woman, gender equity or equal family partnership (not confrontation), reproductive rights, reduction of infant and maternal mortality, higher marriage age, increasing birth-spacing, etc.

(b) Universal primary education, particularly for girls, in 20 years.

(c) Universal access to family planning, information and services.

(d) Concept of reducing fertility even in poverty conditions.

(e) Futility of some of the traditional family conceptions held by the religious orthodoxy as revealed in the debate on abortion.

(f) Need for a dialogue between the North and the South on the sharing of world resources now being overused and abused by the Western development model and living style.

Three contentious issues—i. e., abortion, adolescent sexuality and reproductive health—consumed much of the conference time due to the stubborn opposition from the Christian and the Muslim hardliners. Finally, it was decided that abortion was not to be promoted as a family planning measure and should be made safe in countries where it is legal. The passage concerning the other two issues was suitably amended to the satisfaction of all.

On the question of funding, a broad-based agreement was reached in the estimate $17 billion that the programme of action was going to cost. Many developed countries, e.g., US, Japan, Germany, European Community, etc., promised to increase the amount for population-related activity.

5

What have been the significance and the direction of the above-stated population Conferences? Have their recommendations and suggestions helped in the process of population control?

The facts show that, despite the high-sounding action plans proposed by the said conferences and their implementation by various governments all over the world, the state of population problem has

gone on worsening. There is not even a single region in the world where the process of population growth has shown any sign of relaxation or halting.

Why did the techniques and the methodologies of the three above-stated population conferences failed to work? The simple answer is that their understanding of the nature of the population problem and the cause of this problem lacked realism. Hence their solutions, not in conformity with reality, failed to work.

The first conference made development as the focus for population control. The second made the slogan of the elimination of mass hunger as its central issue. The third emphasised women as the most important component of the population problem and thus mainly touched women-related issues, like empowerment of women, gender-equity, reproductive rights, higher marriage age, etc. None tried to look into over a million year historical experience of the human population problem under various social systems.

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Looking at the entire historical experience of the human population problem, our view is that the reason for low population growth rate in the past rested with the joint family system prevailing in the pre-capitalist times (i.e., the clan, tribal and feudal societies lasting for one million years), which (i..e., the joint family system) guaranteed social security to everyone in times of distress. This deduction is further substantiated by the post-1950 behaviour pattern of population growth

The post-1950 problem of population growth provides us five types of experience.

The first experience, coming from the developed countries, shows that both the high birth rate and the high death rate declined in an improved state of material and psychological development where man begins to feel certain degree of social security in regard to insecure economic life and old age.

The second experience available in the former Soviet Union, Germany, Japan and some Scandinavian countries indicates that, in the conditions of full social security and better medical-care, the population growth rate even drops to zero.

The third experience, obtained from the South-East and the East-Asian countries, shows that the movement towards economic development combined with education, health-care and family control, also brings down the population growth rate.

The fourth experience, drawn from Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal, etc., shows that an effective programme of family planning too causes some fall in the population growth rate.

The fifth experience, arising from the more backward countries located in Africa and South Asia, shows that ineffective system of birth-control in low economic conditions keeps the population growth rate at a higher level.

From the above experience, it is evident that, with the guarantee of a certain degree of social security in regard to insecure socio-economic life and old age and better medical-care, it is possible to achieve a balanced population growth rate. The experience further demonstrates that, under conditions of full social security, man does not much bother about producing his own children.

7

However, the fundamentals of corporate capitalist system do not reconcile with the concept of zero population growth as well as the norm of universal social security. The concept of zero population growth represents a disproportion in the working of the corporate fundamental market law of supply and demand where the stagnant population demand will continue to lag behind the vibrant corporate capitalist supply factor—thus making the whole system inoperative.

Similarly, the norm of universal social security shows another inconsistency in the working of another corporate capitalist fundamental market law which enables the powerful to devour the weak. If all the weak get the right to social security why should they engage in market competition with the powerful. Obviously, the norm of universal social security adversely affects the capital accumulation capacity of the rich—thus lowering the capital rate of growth. However, corporate capitalist system can accept the norm of social security on a limited basis, confined to certain developed countries, while keeping the overwhelming number of under-developed countries out of its purview and thus bound to the market for sale and purchase.

Further, the concept of zero population growth and the norm of universal social security weaken the rationality of other fundamental principles of corporate capitalism, such as, selfishness as the

basic nature of humankind, individualism as the main characteristic of a human being, inequality as the law of capital development, and so on and so forth.

From the above perusal, it can be safely presumed that corporate capitalism, like any other dominant social phenomenon, cannot compromise with any proposition that can ultimately result in its liquidation. Hence, whatever the risks, corporate capitalism will pursue its own strategy to manage the problem of burgeoning population—a strategy that, on the one hand, meets the basic food requirements of the additional population, and, on the other, adjusts the additional hands in its social and productive fold. But, both these corporate objectives are likely to end in a fiasco.

8

The existing state of world environmental resources, particularly those related to world agriculture, (i.e., land, water, climate, bio-diversity, forests, etc.) shows that any further additional burden on them would, whatever the further new technological innovations, make them unfit for any immediate productive use—thus resulting in a serious agricultural crisis not only for the newly-added mouths, but also for the entire human population. The additional population, finding no space in the social and productive fold, will further add to the prevailing confusion. This will be not only an unprecedented food crisis for the human community (reaching its culmination point around 2050 when the world population is expected to reach 12.5 billion, while our planet's carrying capacity is believed to be 8 billion people), but also a highly dangerous unmanageable occasion for the world corporate capitalism. Inevitably, there will be a howl of cries by the starving public for a systemic change.

Will there be a rational force for the proper managing of things, leading to a smooth transition or will the prevalence of total chaos overtake everything, resulting in an inevitable collapse of human and other bio-species. Only time will tell.

9

The immediate solution rests with establishing a justice-based society on the basis of five principles, i.e., (1) supremacy of environment and people at all times and climes, (2) establishing of a strong bond of brotherhood among the people, (3) empowerment of the people in place of corporate capital supported political parties and business circles, (4) social security to every deprived and needy person, and (5) the rationalisation of irrational income differences in the proportion of 1:5.

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The long-term solution resides in the replacement of present corporate capitalist system by the Nature-Human Centric system.

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The present task is to raise the peoples awareness about the problem of "unprecedentedly increasing human population and the depleting environmental resources", its cause & solution.

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