

Even if we completely abandoned air travel for the 4.5 billion passengers taking flights every year, temperatures would be reduced by just 0.03°C / 0.054°F by the end of the century.

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Newsletter Bjorn Lomborg



Why family planning is a smart investment

The United Kingdom recently announced that it will spend £600 million (\$779 million) to provide 20 million more women and girls in the developing world with access to family planning. Their decision – based on research by the Copenhagen Consensus Center that shows family planning is one of the smartest possible development investments – is a vitally important one.

FERTILITY CONTROL IS AN ECONOMIC BONANZA

Family planning can transform our poorest nations

BJORN LOMBORG



Political chaos, instability and dysfunction dominate headlines news agencies. Unsurprisingly, therefore, many people assume that a family planning announcement last month that it would spend £600 million (\$779 million) to provide 20 million more women and girls in the developing world with access to family planning.

But the British government's decision, based on research by the Copenhagen Consensus Center that shows family planning is one of the smartest possible development investments, is a vitally important one. Hundreds of millions of women are unable to choose the number, timing and spacing of their children – sometimes with fatal consequences, because unmet reproductive needs claim the lives of 20 million women and girls each year. (Overall US development spending, however, has remained steady.) But the Trump administration's policy may fail to achieve its intended goal, according to a Stanford University study, a similar US law under George W. Bush resulted in more abortions because it cut funding to non-governmental organizations that provide contraception.

The Copenhagen Consensus Center research shows why we should strive for universal access to modern contraception. In the study, Hans Peter Kohler and Peter Bratsberg of the University of Pennsylvania estimate that it would cost about \$15.5 billion (US\$2.4 billion) to provide family planning services to those 20 million women who lack them.

Closely spaced and ill-timed pregnancies and births contribute to high infant mortality rates, while evidence suggests that women who have more than four children face an increased mortality risk. Kohler and Bratsberg estimate that achieving universal access to contraception would result each year in 640,000 fewer newborn deaths, 150,000 fewer maternal deaths and 600,000 fewer children losing their mothers. Quantifying these health benefits in economic terms, Kohler and Bratsberg find that every dollar spent on improving access to contraception generates \$15.60 worth of good to society.

That is impressive enough, but poor countries with greater access to contraception of a family planning service typically see the rate of working-age people to dependents.

In least developed countries, more than 40 percent of the population typically is under the age of 15 and depends on working-age adults for financial support. But when women can choose when and how often to become pregnant, they are likely to have fewer children and are better able to achieve their desired family size.

When fertility falls, the number of dependents declines relative to the working-age population. With fewer people to support and, eventually, more working-age people, a country has a real chance of opportunity for rapid economic growth. Furthermore, having smaller families allows parents to invest more in each child. Children with fewer siblings tend to stay in school longer, for example. And with fewer children in each household, each child should be able to use more of society's capital, making them more productive.

In short, these demographic benefits add up to \$15.60 for a year, according to Kohler and Bratsberg. When we add the demographic dividend to the health benefits, every dollar spent on improving access to family planning generates \$15.60 worth of social good. That represents an absolutely phenomenal investment. In fact, an expert panel of economists assembled by the Copenhagen Consensus Center, including two Nobel laureates, concluded that universal access to family planning – along with better trade, better nutrition, immunization and investment in pre-school education – is one of the most powerful development goals that the world could pursue.

Now it is incumbent on other governments and private donors to make their financial commitment to making family planning more widely available. Following universal access to contraception would save and improve millions of lives, and put nations on a fast track to shared prosperity. With so much at stake, the world should devote far more attention and resources to this goal.

Photo: iStockphoto.com

Bjorn Lomborg, a visiting professor at the Copenhagen Business School, is director of the Copenhagen Consensus Center.

Lomborg on social media:



[New York Times wrong: Southern Vietnam won't disappear in the floods](#)

[Do we want to "shut down" society to get to 1.5°C?](#)



['Plastic recycling is a myth': what really happens to your rubbish?](#)

[The Bigotry of Environmental Pessimism](#)



[Electricity price in the EU will at least double by 2030](#)

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[Should frequent flyer programs be banned?](#)
 (starts at the 51:45 min mark)
 BBC Radio 4 (UK)

[Polluters and Scapegoats](#)
 Hoover Digest (USA)

[Solange gnadenlos übertrieben wird, ist eine pragmatisch-vernünftige](#)

Achieving universal access to contraception would save and improve millions of lives, and put societies on a faster track to shared prosperity. Each year we would see 640,000 fewer newborn deaths, 150,000 fewer maternal deaths, and 600,000 fewer children losing their mothers. With so much at stake, the world should be devoting far

more attention and resources to this goal.



Lomborg's new column for [Project Syndicate](#) (available in five languages) was published by newspapers around the globe, including [The Australian](#), [Shanghai Daily](#) (China), [Irish Examiner](#), [Berlingske](#) (Denmark), [My Republica](#) (Nepal), [Jordan Times](#), [Telegrafi](#) (Albania) and [Acento](#) (Dominican Republic).

Climate activists are focused on the wrong solutions



As it is becoming obvious that political responses to global warming such as the Paris treaty are not working, environmentalists are urging us to consider the climate impact of our personal actions. Don't eat meat, don't drive a gasoline-powered car and don't fly, they say. But these individual actions won't make a substantial difference to our planet, and such demands divert attention away from the solutions that are needed.



Lomborg argues in [New York Post](#) that the solution to climate change cannot be found in personal changes in the homes of the middle classes of rich countries. Instead,

[Klimapolitik ein Ding der Unmöglichkeit](#)

Neue Zürcher Zeitung (CH)

[Cómo las políticas climáticas afectan a los pobres](#)

El Tiempo (Colombia)

[La verdad del impacto de nuestras acciones](#)

El Comercio (Peru)

[¿Por qué Greta está equivocada?](#)

La Prensa (Nicaragua)

[Las políticas climáticas afectan a los pobres](#)

La Capital (Argentina)

[Una visión contestataria: 'Reducir emisión de CO2 es inviable'](#)

El Tiempo (Colombia)

[O zmianie klimatu: ludzkość nie jest „nikczemna”](#)

Listy z naszego sadu (Poland)

[Syryjskiej wojny domowej nie wywołała zmiana klimatu](#)

Listy z naszego sadu (Poland)

[Como as políticas climáticas prejudicam os pobres](#)

Jornal de Negocios (Portugal)

[Wollen wir „das Klima retten“ – oder doch lieber Menschenleben?](#)

Die Presse (Austria)

[Der Journalist als Missionar: Beim Klima ist Skepsis plötzlich verboten](#)

Focus (Germany)

[Why fortified rice is a game changer](#)

Devex

[Scaling up nutrition in Nepal](#)

we need to focus on technological solutions that will bring forward the day when green-energy alternatives are cheaper and more attractive than fossil fuels not just for the elite but for the entire world.

Finding the best policies for Ghana



We are helping set priorities for Ghana. Recently, 25 teams of economists presented the initial findings in Accra to almost three hundred sector experts from across the country — in fields such as health, education, gender, environment, poverty, agriculture, and infrastructure. The project essentially seeks to find out where each cedi (or dollar) spent can yield the greatest economic, social and environmental benefits.



The project has full support from the agency advising the president. The Director General of the National Development Planning Commission, Dr Mensah-Abrampa, is excited to make this "an ongoing and continual process." He added: "So if we get new resources coming into the national budget, we will know where exactly to put these resources so we can make the most gains."

Over the coming months, researchers from Ghana and abroad will assess the costs and benefits of more than 80 policy proposals, which will be presented to an Eminent

Kathmandu Post (Nepal)

About Bjorn Lomborg and the Copenhagen Consensus

Dr. Bjorn Lomborg researches the smartest ways to improve the environment and the world, and has repeatedly been named one of Foreign Policy's top 100 public intellectuals.

He is the author of several best-selling books, an adjunct professor at Copenhagen Business School and works regularly with many of the world's top economists, including seven Nobel Laureates.

His think tank, the Copenhagen Consensus Center, was named Think Tank of the Year by *Prospect Magazine*, in US International Affairs. It has repeatedly been top-ranked by University of Pennsylvania in its global overview of think tanks.

Lomborg is a frequent commentator in print and broadcast media, for outlets including the New York Times, Wall Street Journal, The Guardian, CNN, FOX, and the BBC. His monthly column is published in 19 languages, in 30+ newspapers with more than 30 million readers globally.



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Panel that includes some of Ghana's most accomplished economists, the Finance Minister, the Minister of Planning and a Nobel Laureate in May 2020.



The project is receiving great interest from local media, with many of Ghana's leading newspapers such as [Daily Graphic](#), [Daily Guide](#), [Ghana Business News](#) and [News Ghana](#) as well as multiple TV channels reporting.

Help people get rich to defuse the 'population bomb'



During a recent visit to New York City, Bjorn Lomborg was interviewed by Stuart Varney on the [Fox Business Channel](#). He argued that exaggerations about the consequences of global warming are leading to poor policy proposals such as the Green New Deal, and explained that the answer to global population growth is contraception and lifting people in the developing world out of poverty.

The limits of 'leapfrogging'

Many western donors love the idea that instead of dirty, coal-fired power-plants, poor nations should 'leapfrog' straight to cleaner energy sources such as off-grid solar

[illegible]

Forbes

Lomborg writes for [Forbes](#) and the two Australian newspapers Daily Telegraph and Herald Sun (print) that telling the world's poor to live with unreliable, expensive, weak power is an insult.

Best wishes,
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