

DECLARATION ON POPULATION AND ECONOMICS

We are young people of diverse ethnic, religious, cultural, and economic backgrounds from every region of the world. Many of us are from the developing world, which has large, young populations capable of innovation and creativity, a driver of economic growth. Some of us are from the developed world, which currently has lower fertility rates, ageing populations and in some cases stalled economic growth. As young people, we are concerned about the relationship between population and economic prosperity. A proper understanding of this relationship is necessary in order to propose policies that will reduce poverty and lead to both human and economic flourishing.

The economy is the system of production and management of material wealth in a given society. Proper social and cultural development is a necessary condition for, rather than a result of, a thriving economy. When societies are built upon respect for human dignity and the family, sustainable economic growth follows, demonstrating that cultural and human capital are the primary resources driving overall human development.

The intangibility of human capital makes the relationship between population and economics complex. The potential of the human person to generate wealth using knowledge, skills and creativity is unique and reflects an aspect of human dignity. Therefore, investing in the human person, in a climate of freedom and respect, leads to integral human development and economic growth. Investing in the human person requires investing in healthcare and education, as healthy and educated persons can reach their potential in the workplace, engage civilly and raise healthy families, thus contributing to the economy. A society that recognizes, supports, and encourages the value of occupations that respect human dignity, including informal care-giving, allows for the maximization of human capital and economic growth.

Since human capital is our most important resource, responsible stewardship is a necessary condition of sustainable economic development. Population management programs categorize human beings, especially vulnerable populations, as burdens instead of essential participants in long-term economic development. The premise that fixed resources and equitable distribution require fewer individuals is not only flawed but inconsistent with human dignity. Population management programs ignore the real causes of economic growth: anti-corruption policies, protection of basic human rights, access to education and investment in infrastructure.

Human capital is first and best developed within the family, the basic unit of society. It is within the family that children first understand their dignity, realize their potential and are prepared to be responsible agents of economic and social development. We recognize that both the role of the mother and the father are significant to the child's development. Civil society, governments, and international institutions can play an important role in the development of human capital by creating supportive environments in which families thrive.

We call on civil society, governments and international institutions to invest in the human person, and to work with us to build societies which foster economic and human flourishing.