

Intentional Childbearing and Sustainable Development

Robert Engelman, rengelman@worldwatch.org

Worldwatch Institute, <http://www.worldwatch.org>

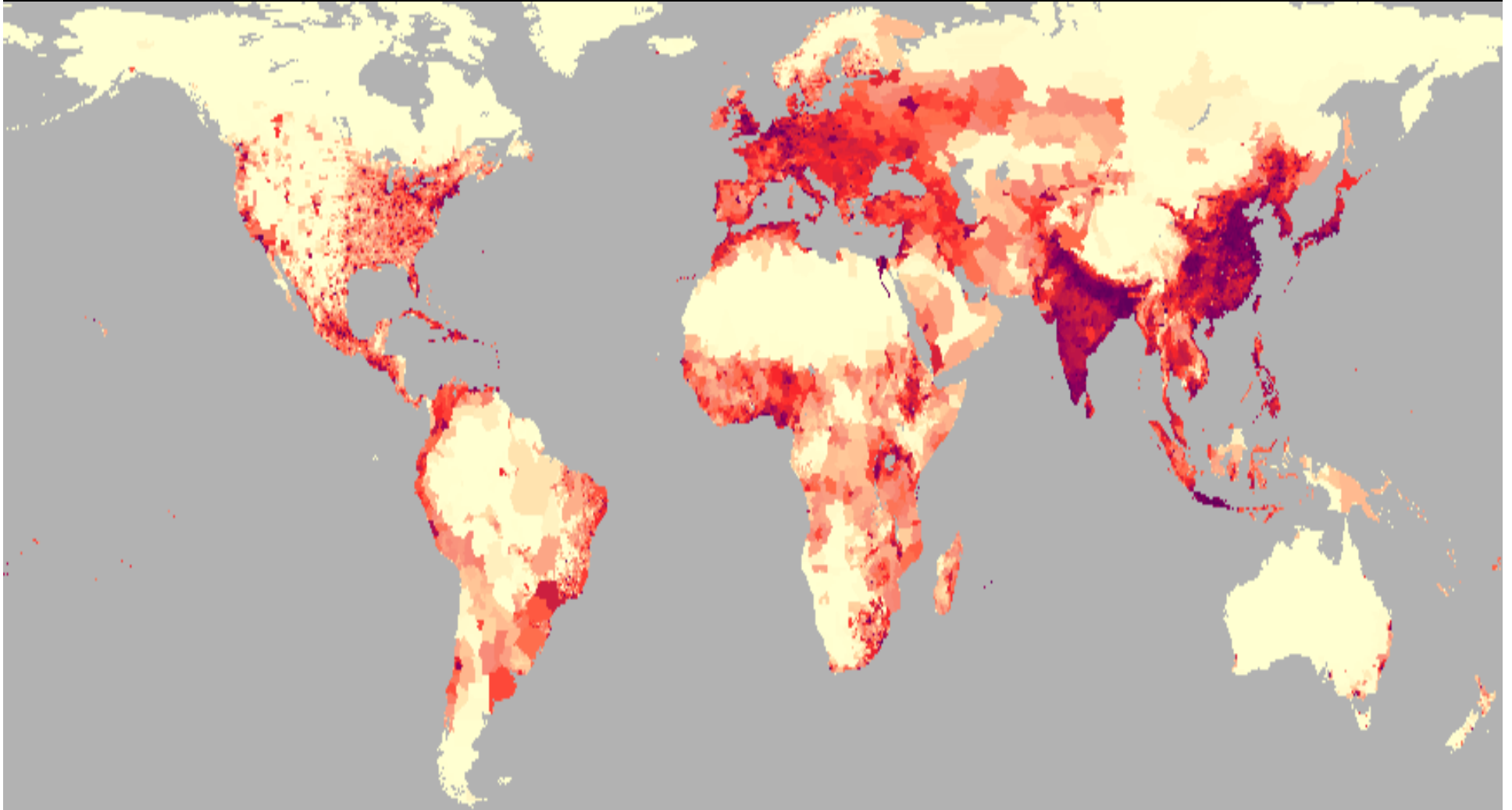
2011 International Conference on Family Planning

Dakar, Senegal, November 30, 2011

Session 1.1.13: Reaching Out at Rio:

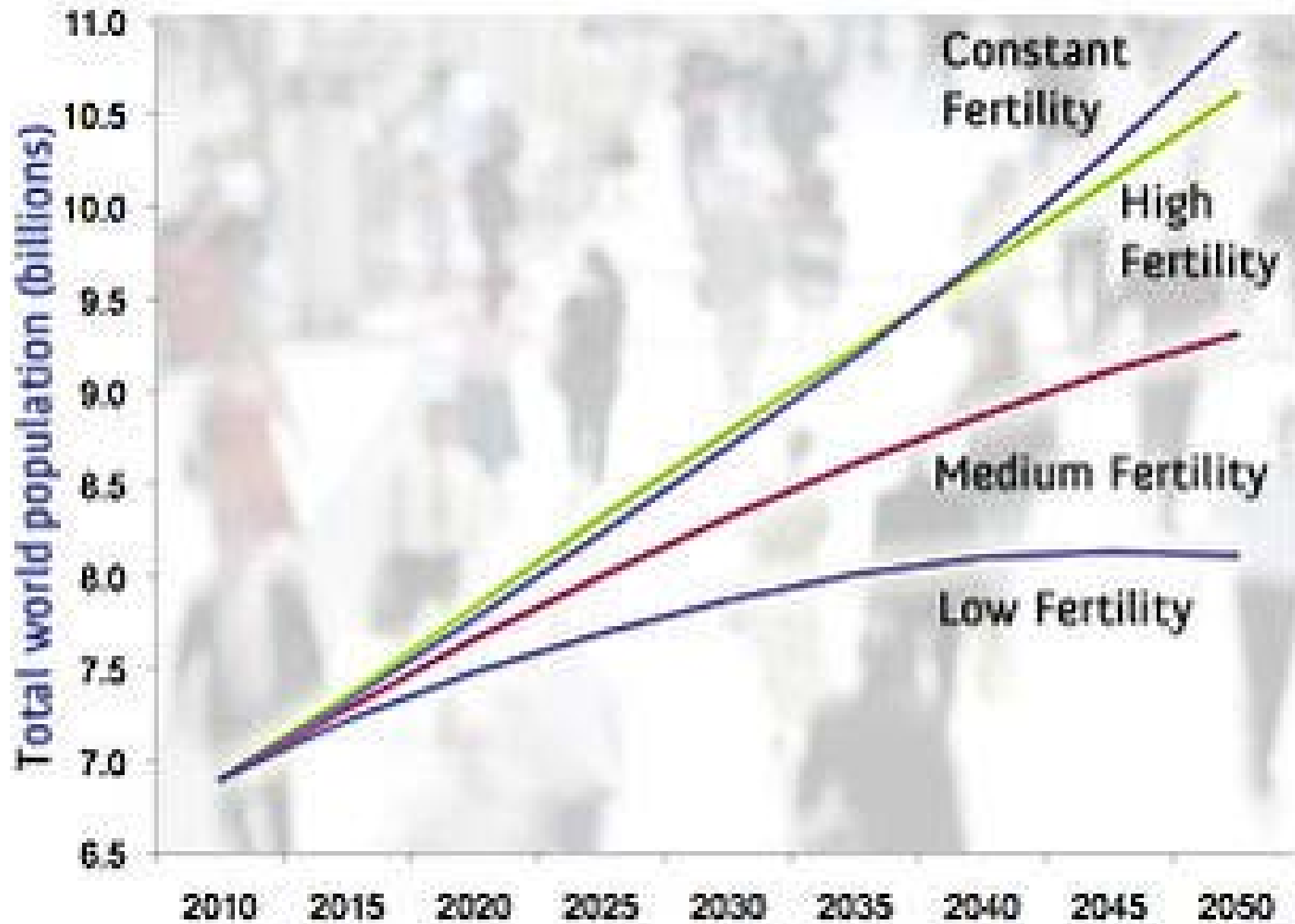
Explaining Population Growth and

Family Planning to Environmentalists





Possible paths of world population to 2050, per United Nations





World Population Prospects and Unmet Need for Family Planning

Scott Moreland

Ellen Smith

Suneeta Sharma

April 2010

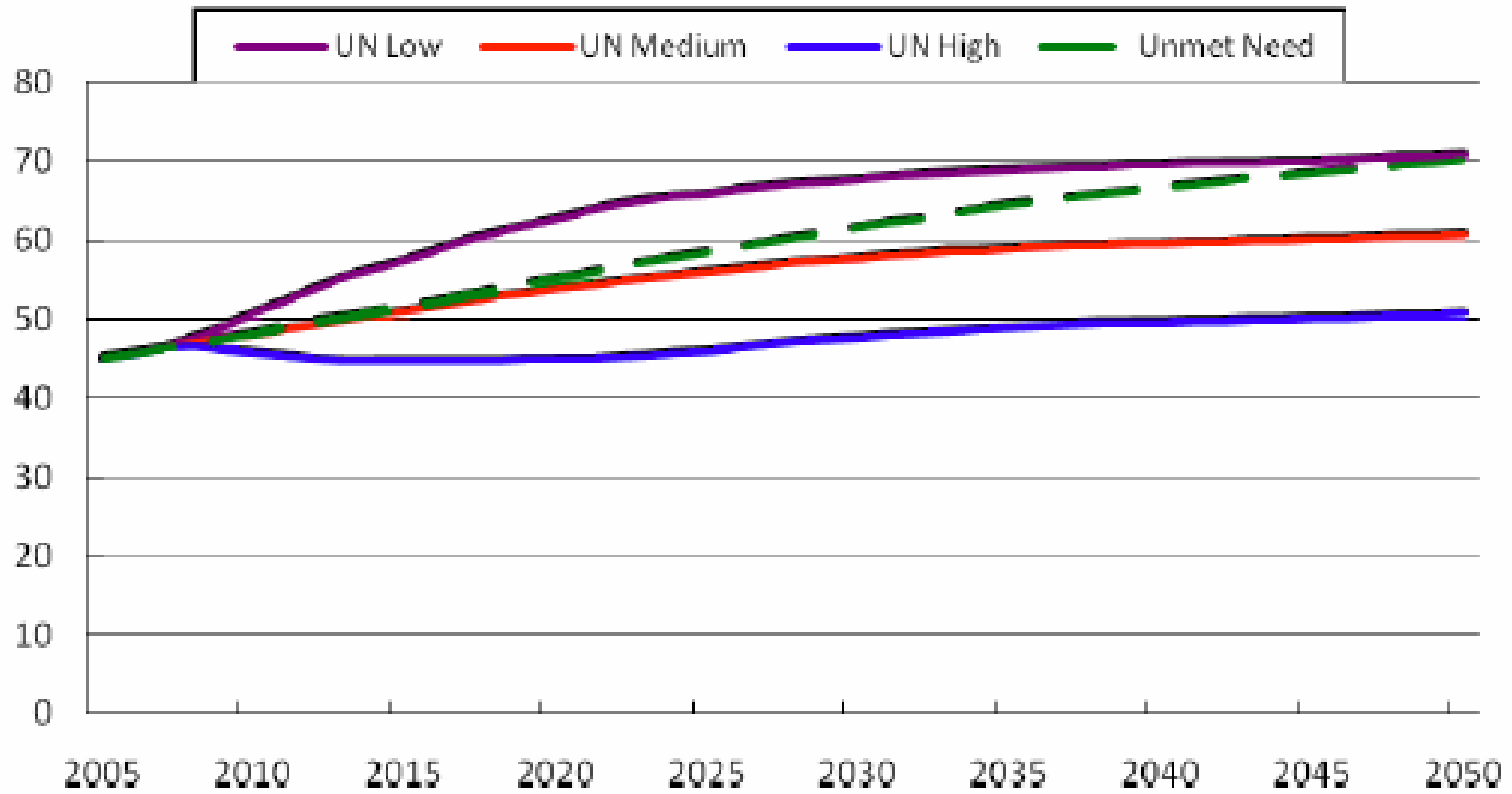
Futures Group

One Thomas Circle, NW

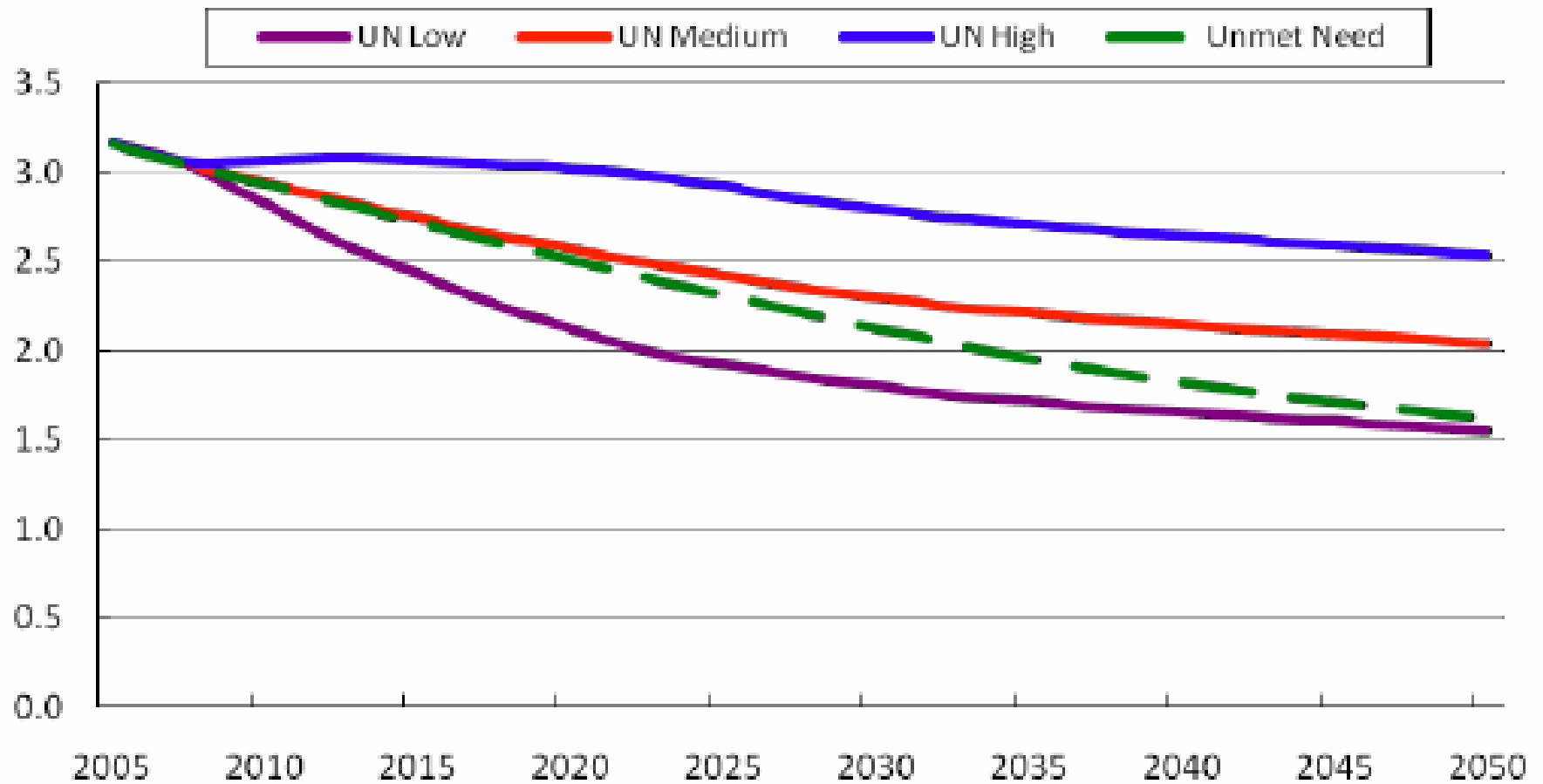
Washington, DC 20005

United States of America

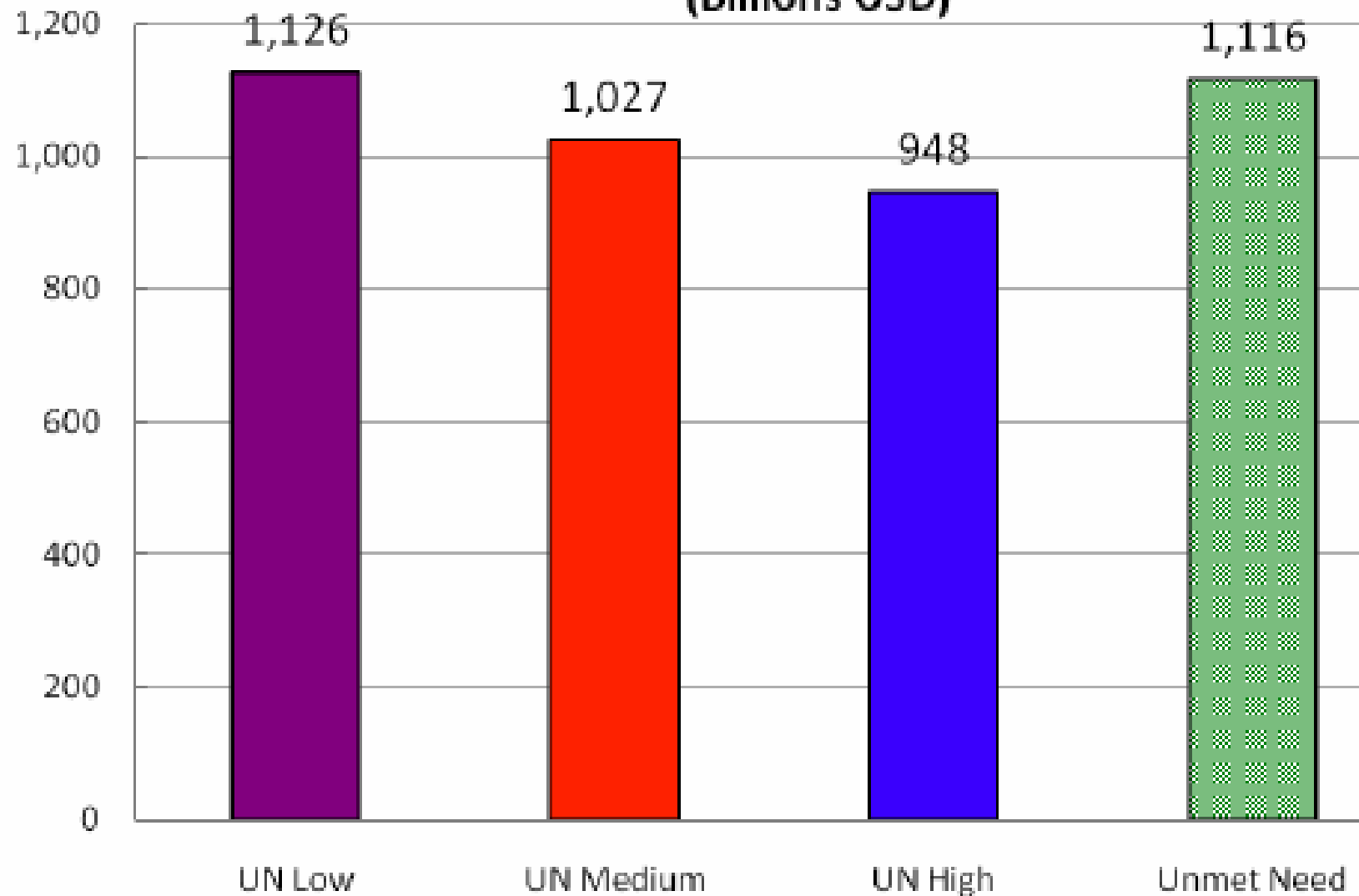
2a: Global: Contraceptive Prevalence Rate



2b: Global: Total Fertility Rate



2d: Global Cumulative Family Planning Costs 2005-2050 (Billions USD)



Feature

An End to Population Growth: Why Family Planning Is Key to a Sustainable Future

by **Robert Engelman**

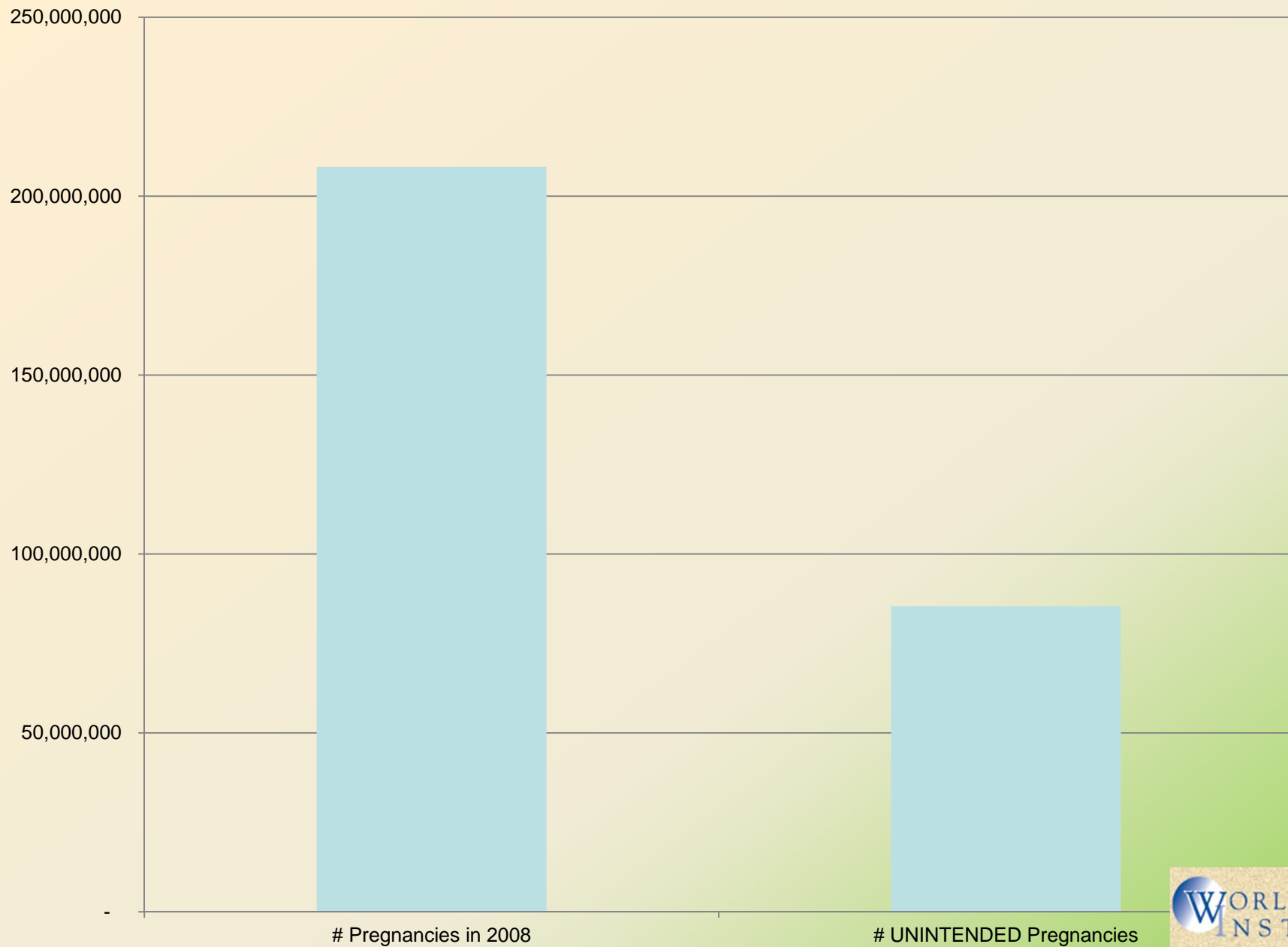
In Brief

The widespread assumption that world population, now at 6.9 billion, will inevitably grow to 9 billion by midcentury is wrong. Population could peak before then and at a lower level, ameliorating environmental risks associated with climate change, water scarcity, biodiversity loss, and food and energy insecurity.

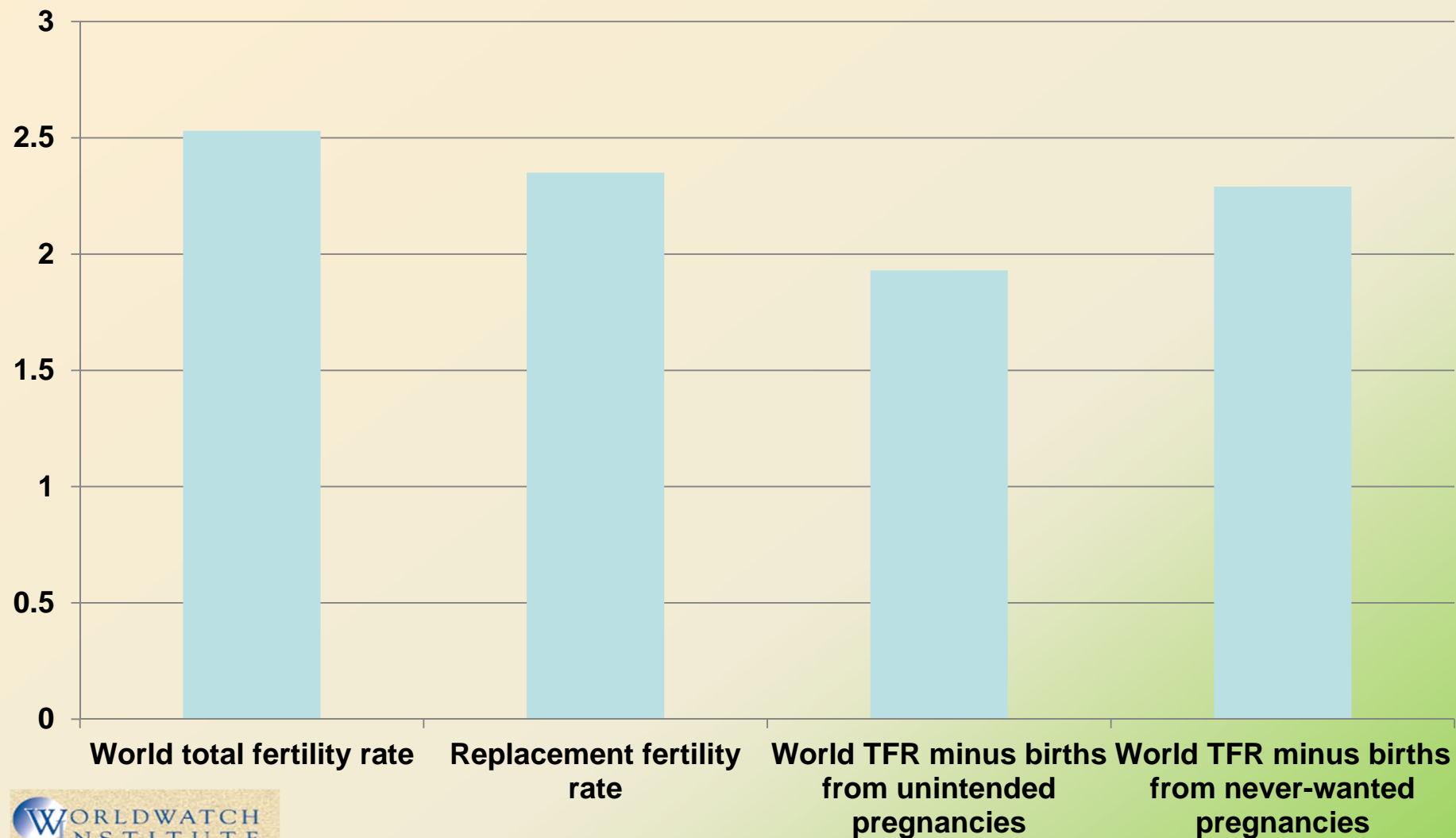
The equally widespread belief that an earlier, lower population peak would require coercive “population control” is also incorrect. Population growth rates and average family size worldwide have fallen by roughly half over the past four decades, as modern contraception has become more accessible and popular. The average number of children born to each woman worldwide is not much higher than replacement fertility, an average that would eventually end population growth. Yet more than 40 percent of all pregnancies are unin-

Those who ponder humanity’s future in the twenty-first century generally take at face value demographic projections suggesting that the world population will reach something like 9 billion around 2050 and will then stabilize at about that level.¹ The widespread belief that this 30 percent increase from today’s 6.9 billion people is inevitable undermines consideration of the role of population size in climate change, water scarcity, biodiversity loss, rising energy prices, and food security. Contributing to this is the related view that efforts to prevent population growth would require coercive government policies that constrain couples from having the children and the family sizes they want. While some analysts are confident that the world can feed, house, and otherwise support 9 billion or more people, others are less certain, and voices of caution about population growth are heard more often than in the past.² A logical application of the precautionary principle in the face of current environmental problems would suggest that humanity could more easily accomplish these feats in an environmentally sustainable manner with a smaller population.

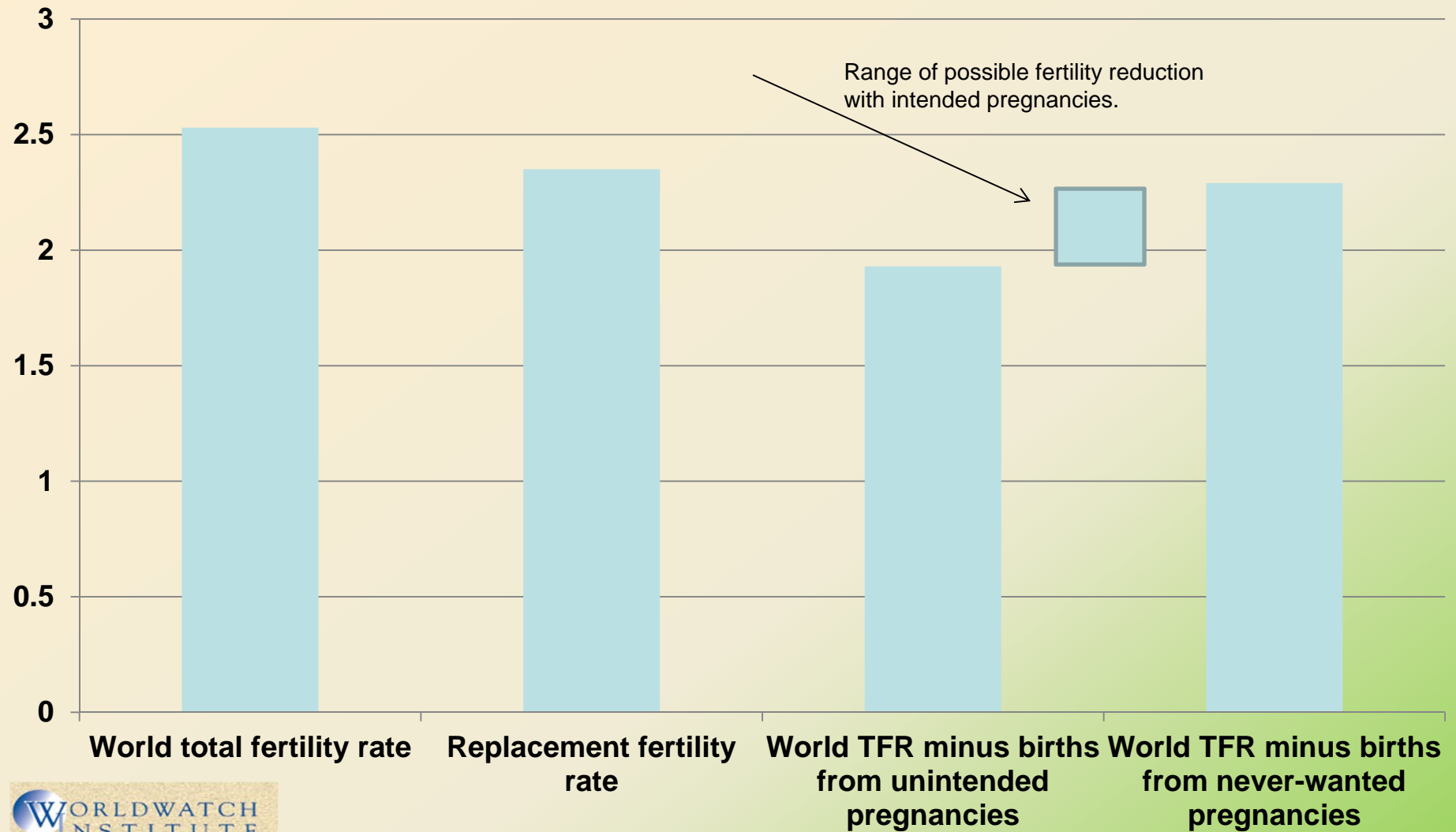
All Pregnancies vs. Unintended Pregnancies, 2008



World Total and Replacement Fertility Rates, 2010, with Calculated TFRs Minus Births from Unintended and Never-Wanted Pregnancies



World Total and Replacement Fertility Rates, 2010, with Calculated TFRs Minus Births from Unintended and Never-Wanted Pregnancies



For further research

- More, better data (e.g. more countries) on unintended pregnancy and its outcomes
- Standard definitions of terms (e.g. unintended, unplanned, unwanted)
- Rigorous separation of never-wanted from mistimed pregnancies, based on uniform criteria
- More exploration of implications of mistimed pregnancies (e.g. proportions followed with intended pregnancies and when)
- Robust integration into population projections

