

Foreword

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Population and fresh water are widely recognized as two of the most important issues facing humanity. Yet too few policymakers are aware of the close links between these two phenomena as well as their ramifications for livelihoods, economic productivity, and political and regional stability.

Rapidly growing populations are placing an ever-increasing demand on finite water resources—a demand that contributes to widespread scarcity, massive pollution, and endemic health problems. Urbanization trends of the last half of the 20th century have also exacerbated tensions over allocating water among agricultural, industrial, and domestic sectors. And water quality and quantity challenges, made more severe by population growth, place tremendous stress on local, national, and regional institutions in developed and developing countries. The strain on these capacities to provide clean and safe water to multiple and competing users promises to increase dramatically as 54 countries are expected to reach levels of water stress or scarcity by 2050.

Finding the Source: The Linkages Between Population and Water takes an important step towards increasing knowledge about these interconnections. These three articles highlight some of the most critical issues facing environment and development policy today. In “The Coming Freshwater Crisis is Already Here,” Don Hinrichsen and Henrylito Tacio outline how population growth has accelerated the threats to global freshwater resources. Next, Ruth Meinzen-Dick and Paul Appasamy detail how, in the absence of sustainable water policies, urbanization has led to intersectoral competition for both water quantity and quality. Finally, Anthony Turton and Jeroen Warner analyze the role of state and societal adaptability in meeting the challenges of population growth and water scarcity. The common message is unmistakable: global water problems are still soluble—but only with concerted international action that includes efforts to address population growth.

Finding the Source is also a step towards amplifying Southern voices in these policy discussions. Northern perspectives have long dominated debates over not only traditional foreign policy but also the place of environment, population, and health dynamics in national security formulation. By design, the author-team for each of these papers includes one Southern and one Northern writer. Each paper also features substantial treatment of developing-country cases: the Philippines, India, and sub-Saharan Africa, respectively. We hope that this collaboration can serve as a model for future research into these crucial questions. All of us at ECSP are very thankful to the six authors who committed tremendous time and attention to these joint efforts.

This publication is the most recent product of the fruitful, ongoing collaboration between ECSP and the University of Michigan Population Fellows Programs, directed by Frank Zinn. Frank and his colleagues Jane MacKie, Mita Sengupta Gibson, F.J. Cava, and Aimee Balfe have been invaluable partners exploring population and water linkages. Previous efforts include “The Future of the U.S.-Mexico Border: Population, Water, and Development,” a policy report from a May 2001 conference in Tijuana, Mexico (available

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at <http://ecsp.si.edu/tijuana.htm>). These publications and the meetings associated with them have been made possible through the generous support of the U.S. Agency for International Development's Office of Population.


Within ECSP, I want to recognize the hard work of a number of colleagues who made this publication possible. Shanda Leather shaped the topics and worked closely with the authors to foster the North-South dialogue that is at the heart of the project. With her departure from ECSP last year, Robert Lalasz, Jennifer Kaczor, Richard Thomas, Ariel Mendez, and Naomi Greengrass stepped in seamlessly to complete the effort and produce this publication. We hope you find *Finding the Source* a valuable contribution to your thinking on both population and water, and we welcome your comments. 

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