

## 1 **Too many people?**

2 *(full version at <http://www.economist.com/debate/overview/151>)*

3 Rapid human population growth is as much a defining characteristic of our modern age  
4 as fossil fuels. Coinciding—not coincidentally—with the onset of the Industrial Revolution,  
5 we've grown from one billion people in 1800 to 6.8 billion today. We add another billion  
6 people to the planet every dozen years. Virtually all of that growth now takes place in the  
7 poorer places on earth.

8 There is no question that this growth has a real and negative impact on the environment,  
9 on political and civil security, and on the lives and health of people across the planet.

10 Continuing rapid population growth is leading to the destruction of forests, the spread of  
11 deserts, and the pollution and overfishing of waterways and oceans. In addition, it is one  
12 of the leading drivers of climate change. These aren't esoteric issues; all of them cause  
13 significant problems for people.

14 Population growth also places huge stress on the ability of fragile governments to keep  
15 order and security. These governments of the poor countries are already struggling to  
16 maintain minimal health care systems, schools and infrastructure. They're already unable  
17 to ensure a reasonable quality of life. And they're likely to face an even larger cohort of  
18 impoverished and angry young people in the future.

19 It's a matter of values. How do we want to live, and how do we wish others to live?

20 What set of values would countenance the fact that one billion people in the most  
21 crowded places on earth now struggle to survive on less than one dollar a day?.

22 Some claim that all of this is merely a distribution issue. That's cold comfort to the  
23 billion or so people who lack adequate daily nutrition. And I suspect that any proposal to  
24 distribute global income equally would meet with some resistance here and there.

25 It is good news indeed that people in most highly developed countries have "stopped at  
26 two" children or, in some places, chosen to have even smaller families.

27 In the grand scheme of things, family planning represents a relatively small and very wise  
28 investment. It can and will lead to a world with fewer people than would otherwise be the  
29 case. And it can help us all achieve a world with better choices and better outcomes.

## Questions:

- 1) The proposition of the debate from which this text has been taken was 'The World would be better off with fewer people'. Do you think this text argues for or against it?
- 2) 'Coinciding—not coincidentally—' (line 4) what does the author want to say by using these two words next to each other?
- 3) What are the consequences of population growth mentioned in the article?
- 4) What is 'nutriton'?(line 23)
- 4) 'And they're likely to face an even larger cohort of impoverished and angry young people in the future' (lines 17-18) – why is it likely for governments to see even more angry young people?
- 5) You are probably not familiar with the verb 'to countenance' (line 20). Could you perhaps guess its meaning from the context?
- 6) What is 'family planning' (line 27)
- 7) Why do you think the population boom is linked to the Industrial Revolution?
- 8) Do you agree with the proposition of the debate?

## Vocabulary:

to add to (line 5)

dozen years (line 6)

to face st. (line 17)

otherwise (line 28)

Přejeme Vám mnoho studijních úspěchů.

Tým jazykové skupiny Spěváček: