

The Concept of “Sustainable Population”

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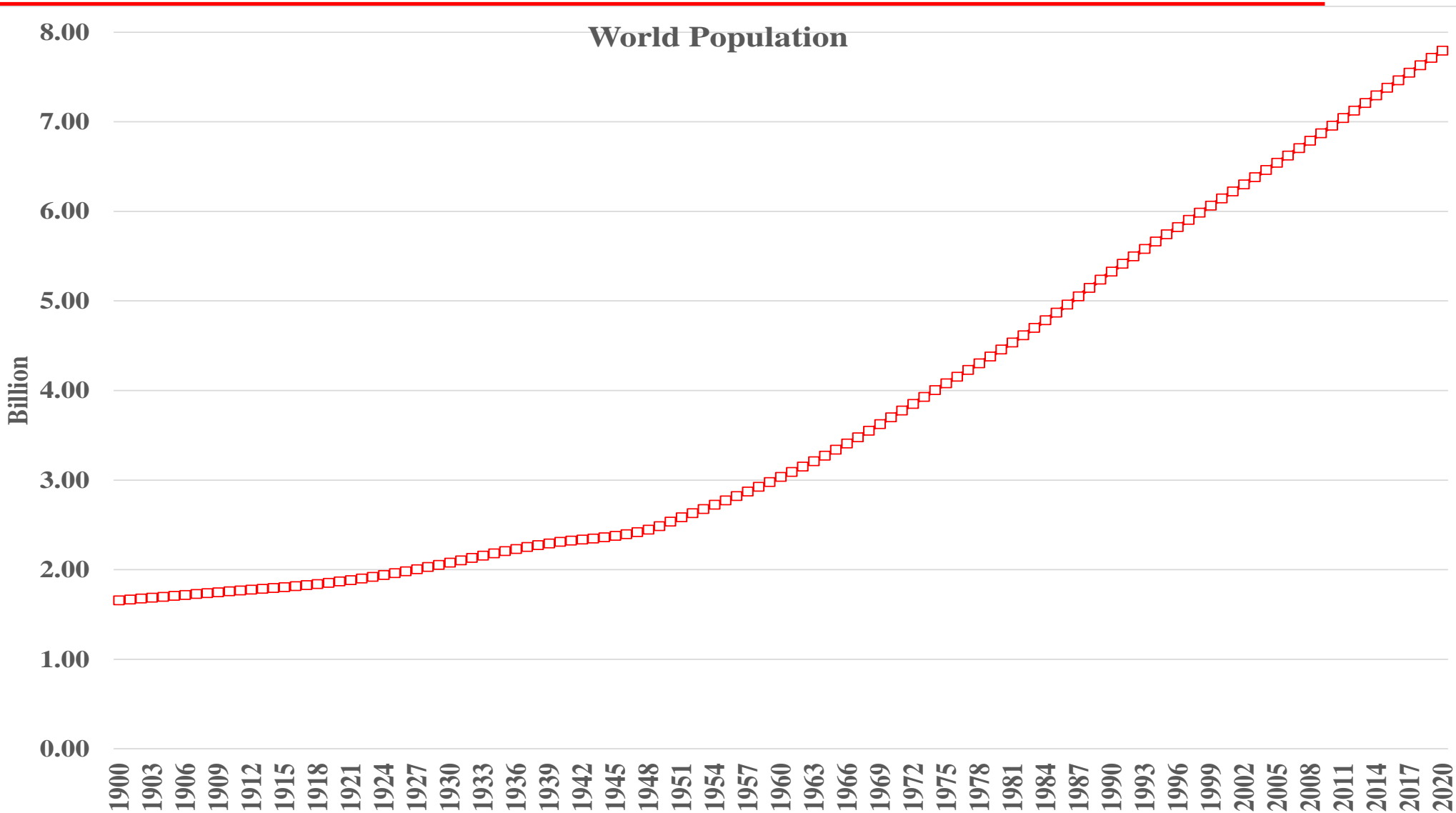
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Introduction

- ◆ I support ecological redline, social green belt and peaceful blue road. However, these arrangements are sustainable only if the population of the world is sustainable.
- ◆ World population has been growing at 1.6% per year since 1950. At this rate, it will double approximately every forty-four years so that the world population may reach 32 billion shortly past 2100.
- ◆ The world demand for consumption increases with population, putting pressure on the limited resources of the earth. Competition for resources makes peace and harmony so much more difficult to achieve and maintain.
- ◆ Moreover, carbon dioxide emission and global warming also increase with population, both directly and indirectly.

The World Population



The Concept of a “Sustainable Population”

- ◆ A “sustainable population” of a country is a level of population that can be maintained indefinitely in the future.
- ◆ It should have a net reproduction rate of unity, so that the total population of the country is approximately constant over time.
- ◆ It should have a stable and approximately stationary demographic structure that is sustainable, that is, the dependency ratio cannot be too high.
- ◆ The country’s given resources should be potentially sufficient to provide for the basic needs (including education and healthcare) of the entire population.
- ◆ Instruments for achieving a “sustainable population” include education, the timing of marriages and births, and the social provision of retirement benefits and elderly care.
- ◆ A “one-child” policy will not result in a “sustainable population”. If practiced continuously, it will eventually result in a continuously declining total population.

Voluntary Choice of a “Sustainable Population”

- ◆ Every country should be free to determine its own goal of a long-term steady-state “sustainable population”, taking into account its own conditions, medical advances, and subject to feasibility constraints.
- ◆ There are of course trade-offs. A higher level of population for a country means a lower standard of living, other things being equal.
- ◆ If every country has a goal of a steady-state “sustainable population”, together, the world will have a goal of a steady-state globally sustainable population.

Concluding Remarks

- ◆ All countries should work together to ensure that the level of global population can be sustainable.