Beat: Lifestyle

Overpopulation threatens the future of our planet

UN warns against starvation

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USPA NEWS - The world population reached 7.888 million people at the beginning of this year. According to the United Nations, maintaining the current number of births, in 2050 we will be 10,000 million. Some experts maintain, however, that by the end of this century that figure will have almost tripled to 27 billion people on the planet. The UN warns that there will not be enough food for so many people and is studying how to increase food production, improve its distribution and reduce birth rates in developing countries. Overpopulation has been confirmed as a problem that is difficult to solve, and experts say that it is necessary to solve it to guarantee the future of Humanity.

Experts agree that existing resources are not enough to care for the current population, if all people on this planet aspire to improve their quality of life. If the population were maintained at current levels, most of the inhabitants of this planet could enjoy a prosperity similar to that of 1950 in developed countries. A poor goal, since in rich countries the quality of life has increased a lot in seventy years and its inhabitants would not be willing to go back in that regard. For the experts, "this would mean either a huge leap backwards for the rich countries or a considerable reduction in the number of their inhabitants."

The question that arises is whether development is incompatible with overpopulation. Rich societies have been aging for decades, due to the lower number of births and the increase in people's life expectancy. But in developing countries, the birth rate continues to rise. Especially in Africa, Asia and Latin America. Immigration solves the problems of generational change in rich countries, but also it exports the problems of overpopulation to the big cities. Currently, no country escapes overpopulation.

“Given the current situation of hyper-consumption in rich countries, with disastrous consequences for the environment, the number of people adopting this way of life must be significantly reduced through birth control and immigration curbs,” says Paul Gerbrands, President of The Ten Million Club Foundation, founded by a group of private individuals in the Netherlands who see overpopulation as the common denominator of most social problems. “The earth can only offer an acceptable quality of life to two billion people at the level of the European Union,” he adds. "With eight to ten billion people, welfare per person will be reduced on a global scale to the level of a poor peasant who can barely get his own food and does not know prosperity."

Experts agree that "the time will come when population growth and increased prosperity collide." The future is not rosy. Experience does not allow us to be optimistic: "The technicians emphasize that technology will provide, offering a solution to all our problems," they underline. Unfortunately, all the technology “has not been able to eradicate world hunger in a convincing way.” 10 percent of the world's population – almost 800 million people – continues to suffer from malnutrition.

The high demand for food is causing distribution problems in 80 countries that are home to 40 percent of the world's population. In addition, in recent decades the water available for human consumption has been reduced by 26 percent. And 11 percent of the soil dedicated to growing food is degraded. There is a lack of food and fresh water, the outlook is apocalyptic.

“The only solution is a demographic policy on a world scale,” explains Paul Gerbrands. “Industry, commerce and religions are only interested in population growth. Reducing well-being is almost as difficult for the rich as escaping poverty for the poor,” he adds. For his part, William Ripple, a professor in the College of Forestry at Oregon State University, denies that it is scaremongering. “Scientists are analyzing data and looking at the long-term consequences. They are recognizing the obvious signs that we are going down an unsustainable path,” he says.

Birth control is not the only solution. Partly due to overpopulation, but also due to the mismanagement of natural resources, the degradation of our environment also threatens our survival. Added to the 26 percent reduction in fresh water available for consumption is overfishing; the 75 percent increase in dead zones in the oceans; the disappearance of 120 million hectares of forests, converted into farmland; the growth of greenhouse gas emissions; the disappearance of 30 percent of the species of mammals, reptiles, amphibians, fish, and birds; pollution; the degradation of soils dedicated to cultivation; supply problems; and the 35 percent increase in the number of inhabitants of the planet, since 1992.

“There is not enough water, pasture or arable land for the excess population,” insists Paul Gerbrands. This expert recalls that in the poorest areas of Africa and the Middle East that are in conflict, the cause of the lack of food is persistent drought. “If there are others who have more than you and are not willing to share it, you will want to take it from them and war will break out. However, in all these cases, overpopulation is the underlying cause,” he explains: “There are too many people for the natural capacity of the area.”

In emerging countries, birth control "is the best remedy against the excessive exploitation of resources and pollution," adds the president of The Ten Million Club Foundation. Paul Gerbrands stresses that countries like China and India are copying the consumption pattern of rich countries, and warns that this exacerbates the problem. It is urgent to adopt policies focused on fighting overpopulation and the unlimited exploitation of natural resources, experts say.

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