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Series: Conferences, lectures and addresses

Sub-Fonds: Records of President Robert S. McNamara

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THE WORLD BANK
Washington, D.C.

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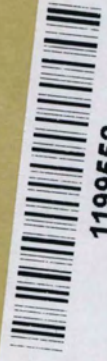
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McNamee Papers

Bellagio Conference on
Population, Apr. 1970 (Vol. 1)

Folder 7

 **Archives**
Bellagio Conference on Population - Correspondence 01

 **1199552**
A1995-255 Other #: 1 309656B

Bellagio
8/14/2/2

30 Rockefeller Plaza
New York, N.Y. 10020

Room 5600

Circle 7-3700

April 24, 1970



Dear Bob:

Since our recent Conference on Population at the Villa Serbelloni in Italy, our discussions have been much in my mind. I found the meetings stimulating and learned much myself.

As a follow up on the Conference I dictated some notes to clarify my own thinking. Some of the points made represent relatively new thinking and others more the strengthening of ideas already held. It occurred to me that these personal observations might be of interest and therefore I am taking the liberty of enclosing a copy.

It was a pleasure being with you at the Conference.

With warm best wishes, I am

Sincerely,

John D. Rockefeller 3rd

Mr. Robert S. McNamara
International Bank for Reconstruction
and Development
1818 H Street
Washington, D. C. 20433

President has seen

APR 28 1970 8:31

COMMUNICATIONS SECTION

Handwritten notes:
B...
RW/2/2

30 Rockefeller Plaza
New York, N.Y. 10020

Circle 7-2700

Room 5500

April 24, 1970



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With warm best wishes, I am

Sincerely,

John D. Rockefeller 3rd

RECEIVED
International Bank for Reconstruction and Development
1818 H Street
Washington, D. C. 20433

1970 APR 29 AM 8:31

COMMUNICATIONS SECTION

PERSONAL OBSERVATIONS REGARDING
POPULATION CONFERENCE, VILLA SERBELLONI

April 6 - 8, 1970



1. I was confirmed in my belief that the population problem is the number one problem facing mankind today; that none of the other basic problems confronting us can be resolved unless population stabilization is attained.

2. The material presented to the Conference indicated that there was mounting concern around the world as to the seriousness of the population problem, but that in fact there is very little action anywhere which is commensurate with its magnitude and urgency.

3. The paper by Drs. Harkavy and Maier made clear the need for greatly expanded research if better contraceptives are to be available for use on a world-wide basis. The best scientists must be attracted to the field, existing research centers must be strengthened and new ones created, and the funds available must be

very substantially increased -- from the present \$35 million to at least \$150 million a year.

4. The Conference was much impressed by Dr. Freedman's statement as to the very serious inadequacy of research in the social science field. He pointed out that national planners just do not have the needed facts and that national leaders so often do not realize that their people genuinely want family planning.

5. Particularly stressed at the Conference was the need for greater will at all levels if the job ahead is to be accomplished before the population of the world reaches overwhelming proportions, or, to express it differently, before disaster strikes. Especially important is, of course, will at the top which is lacking in so many countries today.

6. Dr. Berelson stressed in his paper that a significant job can be done today even with the existing facts and "tools" when the will to succeed is really there. While a number of countries have

family planning programs, only a handful are genuinely effective. And I believe I am correct in pointing out that no country as yet has a national policy in regard to population stabilization.

7. There was general accord with the proposal in Dr. Myers' paper that one or more institutes for research in population be established in developing areas. South or Southeast Asia was particularly mentioned for the first. Such institutes should include research in both the social and bio-medical sciences, as well as services to governments in the area. It was thought that the small steering committee established by the Conference could well pursue this proposal.

8. It was agreed that the demonstration post partum program mounted by the Population Council in over 125 hospitals around the world is a significant approach towards family planning. There was general support for increasing the program to include another 350 - 400 hospitals of some size which are potentially available should the necessary funds be attainable.

9. In his paper Dr. Berelson urged the extension of the post partum concept to the rural areas since a large proportion of the world's population is rural. He pointed out that a feasibility study is now in process in 8 or 10 countries to see what such an effort would require in personnel, training, physical facilities, transport, etc. The concept was appealing to the conferees, but it was recognized that the effort as well as the funds required to bring it about would be very substantial.

10. As I have thought about the Conference these past several days, I have increasingly come to feel that if significant results are to be obtained towards population stabilization soon enough, fresh and more effective approaches may be required. In this connection I was interested to learn recently of a discussion held in the U.S. under the auspices of the Committee for Economic Development between junior and senior generations of business executives. The purpose was to consider how problems faced by American society -- environment, city blight, poverty, race,

population, etc. -- could be met. One of the conclusions that came out of these discussions was that business and government would have to develop the same kind of effective partnership in social problem-solving as hitherto had been achieved only in wartime emergencies. Our Conference greatly reinforced my own belief that the situation facing the world in relation to population is of such overwhelming magnitude, urgency and importance as to justify a wartime type approach.

11. In this same vein I am deeply troubled in terms of the adequacy of funding. While it was not specifically discussed at the Conference, I came away with the conviction that some new approach, such as a consortium, is essential if major financial needs pertaining to population stabilization are to be met. Such a consortium should obviously include the major developed countries, particularly the U.S., the U.K., Sweden, Canada, West Germany, and Japan, as well as international agencies such as W.H.O., the United Nations Fund for Population Activities, and the World Bank. A consortium would provide an organized means

of moving more rapidly to meet particularly promising opportunities.

12. As the Conference came to a close all agreed that the end objective of family planning is the quality of life for the individual and his family and through them society at large. It was recognized that use of words such as birth control and population control has given an unfortunate negative ring to the subject. It was also agreed that if the will to effectively stabilize population is to be generated, it must be in terms of the quality of life for people generally.

13. I believe that all who attended the Conference felt it was useful in terms of contacts established, information gained, ideas generated, etc. There was some disappointment I sensed, however, that there was not more emphasis on action with recommendations as to specific programs and how they might be implemented. With this thought in the background, I am sure, the Conference approved the recommendation that a follow-

up steering committee be appointed under Mr. Rafael Salas' chairmanship. It was also agreed that the group as a whole should reconvene in a year.

Rockefeller, John D III

813/1/9

30 Rockefeller Plaza
New York, N. Y. 10020

Room 5600

Circle 7-3700

April 25, 1969



Dear Bob:

George Harrar reacted favorably to your suggestion as to a conference on population to which would be asked not the experts in the field, but leaders whose responsibilities are affected by the problem, such as national planners. He indicated he would be seeing you at the agricultural conference shortly and hoped to have a chance to pursue the idea further with you. He was, I felt, quite sympathetic to the Serbelloni locale for the meeting.

I cannot tell you what your interest, concern and leadership in the population field mean to those of us who have been working in relation to the problem for a number of years now. As you already know, it gives us real pleasure and satisfaction when we can be helpful to you and the Bank in your thinking and planning.

With warm best wishes, I am

Sincerely,

John D. Rockefeller 3rd

The Hon. Robert S. McNamara
President
International Bank for Reconstruction
and Development
Washington, D.C. 20433

President has seen

Handwritten notes:
1969/1/19
5/1/69

30 Rockefeller Plaza
New York, N.Y. 10020

Circle 7-3700

Room 5600

April 25, 1969



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With warm best wishes, I am

Sincerely,

John D. Rockefeller 3rd

The Hon. Robert S. McNamara
President
International Bank for Reconstruction
and Development

Washington 1969 APR 28 AM 8:50

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