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Dr. Malcolm Potts, who has been a leader in the field of contraception and family planning for many years, originally suggested that the logo of CONTRACEPTION be changed and originally developed the new logo which appears on the cover of this journal. In the following Editorial, Dr. Potts presents the rationale for use of the new logo for CONTRACEPTION.

#### GUEST EDITORIAL

Malcolm Potts, MB, BChir, PhD  
President, Family Health International  
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The new cover of CONTRACEPTION symbolizes both the challenge and the opportunities of the 1990s. Sometime in the next 10-20 years, an inflection in the growth of human global population will occur. The date of that change will largely determine the final, stable population of the planet. Will it be as soon as 1995, when world population could plateau at less than 10 billion, or as late as 2010, when population would rise to 14 billion? Which trajectory human population takes will, to a considerable extent, be determined by the strategies adopted by the developing nations, the resources made available by developed countries, and the ingenuity and commitment of those working in contraceptive development and distribution.

When CONTRACEPTION was founded in 1970, the population explosion was a phrase on the lips of many people. The United States was the intellectual leader, drawing attention to rapid population growth and urging action. The big unknown was what, if anything, could be done to bring birth rates down. Family planning in the Third World was an act of faith.

Mistakes were made; unachievable targets were set and too much emphasis was given to technology rather than understanding that family planning also requires "software". IUDs, for example, only work well if backed up by appropriately trained and supervised health professionals to insert the device and to deal with problems and complications. Too little attention was focused on breast-feeding as a major determinant of fertility in the Third World. Successes, however, have greatly outnumbered failures. However, because emphasis was placed on family planning services and commodity supply, the international effort to lower birth rates has had some dramatic successes. The World Fertility Survey of the 1970s demonstrated a vast need for family planning and began to document some surprisingly rapid fertility declines in certain countries. The Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS) of the 1980s demonstrate the same trends continue.

The experience gained over the current life of CONTRACEPTION demonstrates that family planning works, particularly when it makes a range of methods available including sterilization. In Colombia and Korea, the total fertility rate fell from 6.0 to 3.5 in 12 years -- it took the United States 0.58 years to achieve a similar decline. Fertility decline has taken place, for example, in Indonesia which has a strong family planning program in the absence of rapid social and economic change and without dramatic improvements in other aspects of health care or falls in infant mortality. It has not occurred in Jordan where infant mortality has fallen and per capita income risen, but family planning services are virtually non-existent.

Early in the history of family planning, vitriolic debates about the merits of so-called vertical and integrated family planning programs existed. Today, we know that family planning can sometimes be the first element of primary health care and, of itself, can do a great deal to improve maternal and infant health.

The paradox of the 1980s has been that although we know a great deal about how to provide family planning -- and have more convincingly documented successes than in almost any other aspect of international assistance -- the political leadership in family planning has crumbled in the United States, and the available resources have plateaued.

Although the rate of human population growth has slowed marginally in the last decade, the increase of human numbers continues to rise. By happenstance, it approximates to the calendar year - 89 million more births than deaths this year, 90 million more next year and so on until some date in the 1990s or early 21st century. The first year that we have less absolute growth in human numbers than in the previous 12 months will predict which of the three projections on the cover is likely to be correct. Our efforts in the 1990s will help determine whether the world our children inherit has twice as many or three times as many people as today.