

United Nations Population Fund  
(UNFPA)

Rafael M. Salas Memorial Lecture

**"Challenges for Sustainable Development in a New Era:  
Population, Climate Change and Global Security"**

Yasuo Fukuda

Member, House of Representatives  
Former Prime Minister of Japan  
Chairman, Asian Forum of Parliamentarians on Population and  
Development (AFPPD)  
Chairman, Japanese Parliamentarians Federation for Population  
(JPFP)  
Chairman, Asian Population and Development Association (APDA)

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## 1. Introduction: Word of Gratitude

I am delighted and grateful to have been invited to deliver a speech on this occasion of the prestigious Rafael M. Salas Memorial Lecture. I see Dr. Thoraya Ahmed Obaid, UNFPA Executive Director; Dr. Nafis Sadik, Former UNFPA Executive Director; and many familiar faces of old friends, and I thank you all for your untiring efforts.

Mr. Rafael M. Salas was the first Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and it was he who laid the foundation for its remarkable growth. Mr. Salas, with the late Nobusuke Kishi, Former Prime Minister of Japan; my father, the late Takeo Fukuda, Former Prime Minister of Japan; and others initiated parliamentary activities on population. Given this long family connection I feel very close to Rafael Salas and UNFPA.

In accepting this honour, I had the marvellous opportunity to go through the old photographs from the time of the establishment of both the Japan Parliamentarians Federation for Population (JPFP) and the Asian Population and Development Association (APDA). Each photograph reminded me of how passionately Rafael Salas was involved in our parliamentary activities, and brought back many fond memories.

## 2. Population Dynamics and Parliamentary Activities

### 1) Background of Parliamentary Activities on Population and Development

Firstly, I would like to tell you how and why we parliamentarians became involved in the resolution of population and sustainable development issues.

At the time of the establishment of UNFPA in 1969, the world's population was continuing to boom. Many developing countries, however, saw the increase in population in a positive light; despite the fact that every birth represented one more mouth to feed, it meant that there were two more

hands to do work. They saw the size of their population as a reflection of national strength and there was little understanding that the population increase would cause a problem.

When the World Population Conference met in Bucharest, Romania in 1974, many of you may recall that most developing countries that were present were reluctant to adopt any kind of population programme.

To tackle population issues, the UNFPA has certainly played an initiative role. One must not forget that in many countries it was the pioneers like Rafael Salas and other UNFPA staff who conveyed the importance of the population issue to governments, as well as religious and political leaders to enable implementation of population programmes. Without their untiring efforts and firm sense of mission, we would not have seen any hope in the world.

It was in that kind of social environment, with the helpful efforts of General Draper, Former US Assistant Secretary of Defence, and Rafael Salas that the world's first supra-partisan population group, the Japanese Parliamentarians Federation for Population (JFPF), was born that same year. This was indeed an epoch-making event considering that there was hardly any consensus on population dynamics at that time.

## 2) Experiences in Japan

This historic feat was achieved thanks to the steadfast conviction of the pioneers who believed there could not be sustainable development without stabilising population growth, and that Japan's experience of achieving a demographic transition must be shared with our friends in developing countries.

Interestingly, Japan was the first non-Western country to achieve this transition.

The demographic transition took place in Japan much faster than in the historical experiences of Western nations. Some Western demographers

noted that such a rapid achievement was a miracle, if not a statistical mistake.

This Japanese experience paved the way for a significant turning point that enabled population policies to be widely implemented around the world.

### 3) Realising the Earth as a Closed System

At about this time, the state of the environment was emerging among academics as a global issue. In 1963 Buckminster Fuller, an American architect, poet, and thinker coined the term “Spaceship Earth”. Economist Kenneth Boulding applied this concept to economics and asserted the need to build an economic system based on a new perspective of the earth as a closed eco-system, rather than the conventional economics built on the idea that the Earth’s environment was inexhaustible.

In 1968, Paul Earlick made a strong appeal through his concept of the “Population Bomb” – the decisive impact population would have on the global environment.

It was not long afterwards in 1972 that the Club of Rome published its report “Limits to Growth”, in which it issued a stern warning from a scientific perspective against the population increase and depletion of resources. The basic principles on which we base environment and population measures were created around this time.

### 4) The Population Bomb and the Nuclear Bomb

I recall how Takeo Fukuda fervently reminded us that we must, at all costs, prevent both nuclear and population bombs from exploding if humankind is to have a bright future.

I have high respect for US President Barack Obama for his dedication to pursuing nuclear disarmament, as the United States is currently the world’s largest nuclear power. It is indeed an extremely important first step towards building global security.

In our limited ecosystem, population dynamics is a fundamental factor in global issues such as environment and poverty, and has a profound impact on human security.

Based on the rate of the population increase at the time, the world's population was expected to reach 17.5 billion by 2050, and this increase in population would come to be a major cause of extreme poverty everywhere.

#### 5) Establishment of the JFPF and Transferring Japan's Experiences

In 1973, on the eve of the establishment of JFPF, members of the Japanese parliamentarians group went on an inspection tour of India, Thailand, Indonesia, and the Philippines. It came as a great shock when they saw that there were innocent children born, literally, on the street and dying there of hunger.

Japanese Members of Parliament knew that the population issue could not be imposed on anyone and there also needed to be an improvement in living standards that would enable each person to enjoy a happy and healthy life. This is an important point in understanding how the population issue evolved and was addressed.

The experience Japan gained from historical events has served as a basis for moving forward. After its crushing defeat in the Second World War, Japan rose from the ashes, achieving successful economic reconstruction. In the process, it was recognised that improving rural life was an urgent necessity, and the "New Life Movement" was introduced.

In 1955, the then Prime Minister Ichiro Hatoyama, grandfather of the current Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama, encouraged and endorsed the New Life Movement. This movement contributed dramatically to improving the status of women, which led to a rapid decline of the birth rate and addressed the situation as a Japanese proverb goes, "The rich get richer and the poor get – children".

Having seen for themselves the dire circumstances in other Asian countries, the Japanese Members of Parliament adopted a principle to guide their activities on population: “No child should be born only to die of hunger”. To actualise this mission, parliamentarians understood from the very beginning that the necessary condition lay in promoting health and better living conditions for each individual.

These are the very principles enshrined in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) Programme of Action (PoA), which call for the eradication of poverty. This is a tribute to the timeliness and astuteness of the principles Rafael Salas and the parliamentarians adopted in initiating the legislators’ activities regarding population and development.

Thirty-five years ago, in partnership with UNFPA’s Executive Director Salas, it was the Japanese parliamentarians who pioneered this initiative in the world.

### 3. Building Global Networks

Immediately after the establishment of the JFPF in 1974, it became abundantly clear that there was a need for establishing more parliamentary groups for population and development throughout the region so as to share Japan’s experience with the developing countries, and also to build a platform for parliamentary activities enabling constant consultation and communication among them.

It was in 1981 that the resolution was adopted to establish the Asian Forum of Parliamentarians on Population and Development (AFPPD), and in 1982, the Global Committee of Parliamentarians on Population and Development (GCPPD). Furthermore, the Inter–American Parliamentary Group on Population and Development (IAPG) was created.

As a follow-up to the 1994 International Conference on Population and

Development (ICPD), the Forum for African and Arab Parliamentarians on Population and Development (FAAPPD) was established in 1997, and in 2000, the European Parliamentary Forum on Population and Development (EPF). At present, there are parliamentarians' fora in every region of the world, which are playing vital roles as regional platforms for parliamentary activities concerning population and development.

#### 4. Ever-Complex Contemporary Population and Environmental Issues

##### 1) Population Issues in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

In the 21st Century, we have seen population issues evolve partly as a result of the success of the programmes implemented, as well as the shift from suppressing the population increase experienced in the sixties and seventies to meeting the ever divergent challenges in different countries of population and environment, urbanisation, aging, and currently in some countries, extremely low birth rates.

As population issues assume a greater complexity, population stabilisation measures, once uniformly implemented without respecting human rights, became unacceptable. At the same time, as globalisation continues to evolve, population issues have become global challenges that require all of us to be engaged since no one can escape their impact.

The Buddha left us the following parable. In brief, a person who was shot with a poisoned arrow asked questions endlessly as he was dying. The wounded man also refused treatment saying, "I will not let anyone pull out this arrow without knowing the shooter's caste, and the shooter's family name, and the arrow's material, and so on and so forth. Meanwhile, time was passing quickly and in the end, the wounded man passed away.

What needs to be done is to quickly pull out the poisoned arrow, wash out the poison and treat the wound.

##### 2) The Current Development Agenda: Climate Change and Population

During my tenure as Prime Minister in 2008 there were two major international conferences held in Japan. One was the Fourth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD IV) where I stressed that if Africa was to enjoy the fruits of development, the population issue must urgently be grappled with.

The other was the G8 Hokkaido Toyako Summit during which a common understanding was formed at an international level on the importance of Millennium Development Goals 4 and 5, namely the reduction of child mortality and the improvement of maternal health, and the need for strengthening health systems.

At the G8 Summit the interrelationship between population issues and climate change was also discussed. As we consider the future of humankind as the population continues to grow there are other pressing issues such as shortage of fresh water resources, food security, and the environment that must be addressed.

### 3) Population as the Basis of the Environmental Issue

There are earnest discussions in progress around the world in preparation for COP15 that will take place in Copenhagen in December this year and most have to do with the mitigation of the environmental load through technological innovation and optimisation by way of the carbon market such as emissions trading.

It is a shame that the population issue, the main factor in the discussion of climate change, is left out. As is clear from the well known formula  $I=PAT$  expressing the environmental Impact=Population x Affluence x Technology, sustainable development cannot be achieved without stabilising population growth.

Although this is an established fact, one can hardly say that the population dynamism is fully taken into consideration in dealing with the problem of climate change.

Before all else, we must protect human lives. Only by adopting appropriate measures on population issues can we realise a decent life with dignity for every person, and ensure the survival of humankind in this finite environment.

In order for that to happen, in addition to the important microscopic perspective promoted by UNFPA – “Universal Access to Reproductive Health” – it is essential to have a macroscopic perspective that enables us to find ways to promote sustainable development in a finite planetary ecosystem. Micro-level activities must be aligned with the macroscopic perspective. This is clearly stated in the preamble and principles of ICPD, as well as in the foreword by Dr. Obaid in the “State of World Population 2009”.

Environmental problems do not know any national boundaries. It is imperative that we deal with population and climate change simultaneously as we think about our future and the impact climate change could have on the poor and vulnerable people around the world. It is particularly vital that they be given improved knowledge and technology so that they develop adaptive competencies to deal with climate change by utilising local wisdom and resources.

To realise these initiatives, we must encourage partnerships among governments as well as among specialised agencies of the United Nations in order to be able to carry out the much-needed comprehensive and integrated approach across agency walls and national borders.

#### 4) Expectations from UNFPA

In this sense, the reform undertaken by the United Nations under the slogan “One UN” is an important initiative in looking towards a hopeful future.

By strengthening measures in the areas of population and sustainable development, UNFPA will play a central role in promoting the much-

desired comprehensive and integrated approach.

Japan's ODA policy is based on our commitment to human security – of ensuring dignity and a decent life for every person.

The foundation of true global security is anchored in guaranteeing human security and by building a society in which the rights to a better life for all are protected.

There is no better time than the present for us to incorporate population issues within the context of sustainable development and to mobilise all wisdom, technologies and resources for building a society in which the dignity of every person is protected.

## 5. In Conclusion: Building a Hopeful Future

### 1) The Future for Parliamentary Activities to Address the Issue

Today, we have parliamentarians' fora in each region of the world that are vigorously devoted to supporting population agendas. Committed Members of Parliament have represented grassroots' voices directly on the international stage and reflected the voices of the poor in their policies.

I am convinced that parliamentary activities in the field of population and development will become ever more important as we strive for the welfare of all people, and for democratisation and good governance to ensure individual dignity as the foundation and benchmark of global security.

As a concrete step, APDA, for which I serve as the Chair, and which in turn serves as the secretariat of the JPFP, has begun an ambitious initiative to realise good governance through greater transparency and accountability in the management of Official Development Assistance (ODA), by strengthening parliamentary networks and raising the capacity of national committees.

## 2) The Dreams of Rafael Salas

UNFPA initiated the partnerships between UN agencies and legislators. Most UN specialised agencies have partnerships today with members of legislatures. There is, however, no matter of greater importance than the partnerships in the population arena.

Rafael Salas and his colleagues had the vision and foresight to establish UNFPA and give support to parliamentary activities.

Rafael Salas was a true friend of Japan and had a profound understanding of its culture. For example, he understood the seemingly insignificant gestures of a Noh actor; their handling of a fan, or that a small step taken by their white tabi-clad foot signified a distance of hundreds of miles. He appreciated the abstract meaning of movement embodying the beauty of form raised to the level of art.

His artistic talent came alive in the world of haiku. As a student of Master Kazuo Satoh of Waseda University, Salas published two books of haiku in English: *Fifty-Six Stones*, and *Footprints*.

In his foreword on Salas' *Footprints*, Satoh wrote how my father rejoiced in the publication of Salas' haiku book and joked how he wished he could be the haiku master Salas' pupil. Satoh also quoted the late Shidzue Katoh, who was known as Japan's Margaret Sanger: "It has been 300 years since the demise of the haiku master Basho. He must be thrilled he has a disciple among the high officials of the United Nations.

Shakespeare's world was the theatre; Basho's world was his travels and haiku poems. Rafael Salas was also a great traveller. He travelled 2.5 million miles by jet – the equivalent of travelling 100 times around the world.

Afghanistan to Zimbabwe  
Each mission thins soles  
Of the soft shoes

Thinking of this haiku, I am mindful of the enormous contribution made by Rafael Salas by wearing out the soles of his shoes as he covered the world from A to Z while helping to solve the population challenge.

### 3) In Sum

I too will continue to pour my energy into this great challenge on which a hopeful future for all humanity depends.

I am convinced that for true global security in the new century, UNFPA – a leader in world population issues – and parliamentarians dedicated to population and sustainable development, must work hand in hand for these inseparable objectives. With Rafael Salas and his belief in our heart, we value our long-standing partnership for addressing population issues to ensure a sustainable future.

Thank you.