

## Briefing: A Guided Tour of World Population Issues

*September 12, 2001, Allentown, PA* - World population is facing a wave of unprecedented dynamics involving population growth and age-structure. While recent population projections anticipate fertility to slow, the "demographic momentum" assumes population growth regardless of fertility rates. As less-developed regions continue to grapple with extremely high fertility rates, European nations and Japan face fertility rates well below replacement level. North America continues to report the highest growth rates in the industrialized world, much of which can be attributed to immigration. Developing countries in Africa and potentially Southeast Asia face devastating affects due to HIV and AIDS; nations such as China and India are beginning to see large disparities in male-to-female ratios. Policymakers will need to consider the implications of these population dynamics around the world and their impact on political, social and economic systems.

### Introduction:

**Marjorie Hass**, Associate Professor and Director for the Center of Ethics and Leadership, Department of Philosophy, Muhlenberg College

### Speaker:

**Charles Westoff, Ph.D.**, Senior Research Demographer, Office of Population Research, Princeton University

### Co-Sponsor:

Muhlenberg College

Dr. Westoff's Executive Summary "The Substitution of Contraception for Abortion in Kazakhstan" (see Executive Summaries page)

### Factoids:

"This century we have seen the highest population growth rates ever... If the current population growth rates were to continue, World population would increase to 13 billion by 2050."

"If fertility were [suddenly] at replacement level... we would still have a 50 percent increase in population. Stopping population growth would be like stopping an oil tanker on a dime."

"Nations as Italy are experiencing population decline; in the next 50 years, Italy's population will decline about 28 percent, from 58 million people to 42 million."

"Population projections for the United States over the next 50 years vary by about 200 million people, based on anticipated immigration numbers... The economic , social and political implications [of immigration] cannot be underestimated."

"Although the population of Sub-Saharan Africa's will decline over the next fifty years due to AIDS, it is still expected to be growing 1.6 percent annually in 2050."

All quotes from Charles F. Westoff, Senior Research Demographer, Princeton University