

TGCI GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

Global Development Update is a monthly bulletin that informs readers about the events, ideas, and people that are shaping an emerging world community. Click below to learn more about TGCI, and how to sign up for a free membership.

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FEATURED STORY

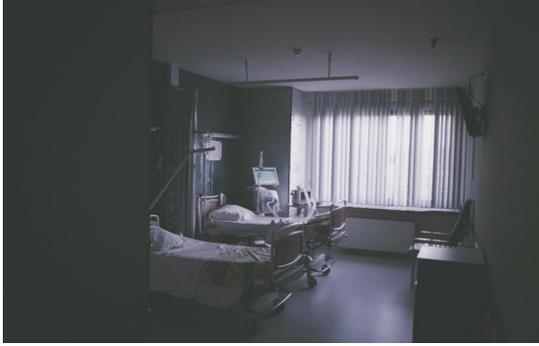
Global fertility on the decline

Two births per women is considered to be the “replacement rate” for a population. 50 years ago, only 6 countries reported fertility rates below this level. Today, that number is 83—making up half the world’s population. By 2050, 130 nations are projected to have fertility below the replacement rate. The international trend towards lower birthrates is due to several factors, and will place significant strain on government programs designed to support the elderly in the future. The global population, however, will continue to rise, as 25 high-fertility countries will see their populations more than double. [Read on.](#)

HUMAN RIGHTS

Physician-assisted suicide gains acceptance internationally

800,000 people commit suicide every year, and physician-assisted suicide is less than half a



percent of that figure. Yet easing the suffering of patients with a terminal illness incites strikingly polarized opinions, particularly amongst medical practitioners and the religious community. Presently, physician-assisted suicide is legal in only a handful of wealthy nations, but growing public support in countries around the world seems to indicate that this debate is far from settled. [Read on.](#)

UN update landmark Internet resolution

The UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC) recently passed an update to its resolution on “the promotion, protection and enjoyment of human rights on the internet.” In 2012, this resolution became the first in UN history to officially recognize that “the same rights people have offline must be protected online.” The resolution is nonbinding, but guides policy making at the national level. The updates passed by consensus, which was a success, but still leaves the text worryingly vague. [Read on.](#)

GENDER EQUITY

Women are finally getting the data points they deserve

The WomenStats Project, which emerged from Brigham Young University in 2001, offers one of the first expansive databases in the growing field of women, peace and security. The database examines the state of affairs for women in 176 countries, and offers insights into the security and behavior of countries as a result. The database draws from over 350 variables, and is available for use by anyone. It is a remarkable step forward for a field that is still in nascent stages. [Read on.](#)



ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION & SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Land degradation on an alarming trajectory

Human-caused land degradation is occurring at an alarming rate across the world. A study conducted by the United Nations found that 75% of land is already degraded—a figure that is projected to 90% by 2050. The Joint Research Centre at the European Commission, which recently created a “World Atlas of Desertification,” found that a region half the size of the European Union is degraded every year. Land degradation poses a significant threat to economies, food security, and political stability, and demands action. [Read on.](#)



Climate adaptation an urgent necessity

2018 has seen a plethora of extreme weather events. Wildfires burn across much of the Western United States, while Japan has declared a state of emergency due to record high temperatures. Europe was gripped by extreme cold in the winter, while the Arctic recorded temperatures 20 degrees Celsius higher than average. Climate scientists warn



that global warming is causing this extreme weather, and urge urgent adaptation, lest the trend continue. [Read on.](#)

“Hothouse Earth” a real possibility

Scientists from the University of Copenhagen, Australian National University, and the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research in Germany warn that if fossil fuel emissions continue at current rates, the earth is in danger of reaching a so-called “Hothouse State.” Such a threshold of warming would be impossible to reverse, and would wreak environmental havoc on coastal communities and coral reefs by 2300. Action is imperative. [Read on.](#)

POVERTY REDUCTION & INCOME INEQUALITY



50% of Central American youth view migration as their only option

According to a recent study conducted by the Institute of Social Research of the University of Costa Rica (UCR), almost half of the residents between 14 and 24 of poor neighborhoods in Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, and El Salvador view migration as their only hope for a better future. The group cited violence and a sense that “their fate does not depend on them” as particular reasons to migrate. The study highlights an overwhelming need to create opportunities for youth in the communities where they grow up, and to address urgent healthy and safety needs in areas where the government is largely absent. [Read on.](#)

A US-China trade war is bad for developing countries

President Donald Trump’s tariffs on China have been portrayed as posturing between two great powers. The grim reality, however, is that developing countries are more likely to be negatively affected by these provocations. Due to the globalized nature of the economy, downstream suppliers for Chinese manufacturers will be dramatically squeezed by any escalation in the trade war. Any further action could have unintended consequences far removed from simply the US and China. [Read on.](#)

GLOBAL GOVERNANCE & CONNECTIVITY

UN Adopts Global Compact on international migration

On July 13, the United Nations adopted, the Global Compact, a cooperative framework to address the challenges of international migration. The Compact is the product of a year of discussions between member states, local officials, civil society and migrants. While the Global Compact is not legally binding, it is being heralded as a major step forward on this breathtakingly complex issue, and will be formally adopted at a conference in Morocco in December 2018. [Read on.](#)



Palestine to lead the G77

The Group of 77 (G77) is the largest coalition of developing countries at the United Nations. In January, Palestine will be the group's newest chair. Nominating powers rotate on a geographic basis. This cycle was Asia's turn, and the group of nations unanimously nominated Palestine for 2019. This decision is historic, as it will empower Palestine to speak on behalf of a 54-year-old cohort that represents more than 80% of the world's population. [Read on.](#)

GLOBAL PEACE & JUSTICE

2018 midterm elections are the most important in decades

The election of Donald Trump shocked many in America and overseas. During his two years in office, he has demonstrated a blatant disregard for important allies, nuanced diplomacy, or judicial independence. Yet it remains to be seen whether the outrage and backlash that he has generated will translate to votes at the polls in the 2018 Midterm Elections. A resounding victory for Democrats would send a powerful message to President Trump. [Read on.](#)



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