

How The World Hides Liability For Climate Deaths



01-04-2025 ~ *Unfair family planning regimes have stalled progress in the climate fight and prevent children from having a fair start in life.*

Nearly [half the world's children](#) “live in countries where risks to their health and safety due to the effects of climate change are extremely high,” according to UNICEF. By 2050, almost all children globally will be “exposed to heat waves,” resulting in the rise of specific health issues, especially for smaller children, adds the agency.

[Rich](#) nations’ inability or [unwillingness](#) to curb their emissions has exacerbated the climate crisis, which, if left unchecked, may unfold [apocalyptic scenarios](#). Those most responsible for the climate crisis spent [decades funding denialism](#) while robbing children and animals of the future they deserve. They exploited the world’s people and resources while hoarding wealth for themselves.

The outcome of the [2024 United Nations Climate Change Conference, or COP29](#), held in Baku, Azerbaijan, is a shining example of how rich countries are reluctant to take remedial steps to secure the children’s and the planet’s future. The COP29 was widely criticized for the rich world’s failure to adequately address developing nations’ critical climate-related financing needs.

“The latest NCQG [[New Collective Quantified Goal on Climate Finance](#)] decision at COP29 starkly highlights the unwillingness of developed and oil-rich nations to take responsibility for their historical and substantial emissions,” [said](#) Pegah Moulana, the secretary general of [Youth and Environment Europe](#), the largest independent platform of environmental youth organizations in Europe. “By failing to provide concrete support to the most affected states and neglecting to establish a robust protocol to ensure these nations remain debt-free during implementation, the decision exacerbates climate injustice.”

According to a 2024 [analysis](#) by the International Institute for Environment and Development, the poorest countries and those most vulnerable to climate change spend “more than twice as much to service their debts as they receive to fight the climate crisis.”

Sri Lanka Struggling to Fight Climate Change

A 2020 World Bank [report](#) points out how climate change is a threat to poverty reduction and is expected to drive between 68 million and 135 million people into poverty by 2030. “Climate change is a particularly grave threat for countries of Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia—the regions where most of the global poor are concentrated,” the report states.

Island nations like Sri Lanka are especially more susceptible to the effects of climate change. In June 2024, Hafsa Jamel from the Lanka Environment Fund [told](#) Climate Champions, “With 33 percent of our population living along vulnerable coastlines and facing risks from rising sea levels, ocean acidification, and frequent natural disasters, the challenges are immense. ... and a distressing 81.2 of our population lacks the capacity to adapt to these changes.”

In 2023, the Global Climate Risk Index placed Sri Lanka [among the top ten countries](#) likely to experience extreme weather events. Climate change has already [severely affected](#) the country’s poorest and most vulnerable regions.

According to the [Emissions Database for Global Atmospheric Research](#)(EDGAR), an independent, global database of anthropogenic emissions, Sri Lanka’s 2023 greenhouse gas emissions represent a mere [0.07 percent of the global total](#).

Amita Arudpragasam, a policy analyst from Colombo, Sri Lanka, [wrote](#) for the Pulitzer Center in September 2024 that “[B]y some projections, by the end of the century, [Sri Lanka] will experience mean temperatures approaching 35 degrees Celsius (considered the upper limit of human survivability or the wet-bulb temperature).”

Reshaping Climate Policy: Birth Equity

We can reshape climate policy by shifting the focus to [children’s rights](#) and ensuring birth equity as a fundamental aspect of policy evaluation. These rights include a healthy environment and a fair start in life and should not just guarantee mere survival; they need to ensure circumstances where each child has the right to thrive. Each child should be entitled to the same social, cultural,

political, and economic conditions and be treated as an equal member of society with a voice and meaningful influence in shaping their future.

A child born in New York City has basic access to [welfare resources](#), health care, and a safe environment. But a child born in rural Uganda does not. In these circumstances, where survival is uncertain, thriving is a distant dream. No child can discover their innate talent or pursue their life goals if they are battling polio or malaria. The lives of these children are filled with struggles and suffering or are cut short tragically.

Every person needs to ask: Why do we tolerate this initial inequity?

“Above all, we’re talking about how all these—and many other events and policies and cultural practices—have worked together to keep wealth and well-being disproportionately concentrated in white communities,” writes Edgar Villanueva in [Decolonizing Wealth](#) (2021), which focuses on how philanthropy nonprofits need to engage in reparative justice.

“The fact that... communities of color and low-income communities face more pollution is not a coincidence or an accident. It is the direct, if at times unintended, consequence of white supremacy and racist public policies,” [states](#) Climate Nexus.

The power relations that develop when we are created, between each other and with the nonhuman environment, are the basis of our positionality (i.e., our socioeconomic position relative to others) and impact all we do.

White supremacy might seem like an anomaly to many whites until they [consider the massive financial and political inequity](#) that continues to define the future of children at birth.

The climate crisis is embedded in the exploitation of natural resources by a few, leading to the exploitation of the majority population already facing inequity. To take remedial action, we need to address [intergenerational justice](#).

An essential step in this direction would be to update the [Convention on the Rights of the Child](#)—necessitated by the climate crisis—which modifies existing reproductive rights regimes to focus on child share equity over reproductive autonomy or the inclusive and [measurable empowerment of each child as they](#)

[enter the world](#).

A Deadly Idea: Endless Growth

So, what does the right to a healthy environment mean? [Access](#) to unpolluted air and clean water is now a universal human right. To uphold this right, recommendations [include](#) holding companies accountable, urging governments to implement climate-protecting laws, promoting recycling, and more. Every small step, every action we take, matters.

However, the UN Human Rights Council's resolution 48/13 overlooks one crucial aspect: the right to a fair start in life. This right should be considered the most fundamental human right. It should not be predetermined at birth based on circumstances a child is born into, such as being born in a small village in Kenya to a mother forced into a marriage merely for survival or to a wealthy New York family.

The threat to securing this right is more than political. Nonprofits and advocacy groups also play a role when they fail to include birth equity in their values and mission.

We urgently need to align with this principle of ensuring birth equity before we exhaust the finite resources on earth. [Infinite growth is a fallacy](#) and a dangerous belief that drives all economies. It cannot be remedied by continuing with neoliberal and technocratic solutions spearheaded by primarily white men invested in maintaining their wealth and power.

It is often touted that [energy efficiency](#) has increased since 1990, and carbon dioxide emissions have reduced. However, the facts ignore that the [effects of population growth](#) have reversed much of the progress made on the climate front.

The United States government, as well as governments around the world, are [urging women to have more children](#) with little or no safeguards and resources in response to [falling fertility rates](#), especially in rich countries. Reduced fertility rates [threaten the economic growth](#) that created the climate crisis in the first place.

Hungary is another example of encouraging population growth without ensuring a fair start in life. It [offers](#) tax incentives to mothers of four or more children. The question remains: Who benefits from this growth? Not the children.

Bad Family Policies Cancel Out Progress

Animal rights and welfare involve protecting species and biodiversity and protecting and accounting for each nonhuman life. Humans need to play a more effective role in ensuring the [liberation of animals](#) and restoring balance in nature.

In the book, [Winners Take All: The Elite Charade of Changing the World](#), Anand Giridharadas presents a groundbreaking investigation of how the global elite's efforts to "change the world," preserve the status quo, and obscure their role in creating the problems in the first place.

Many animal and environmental nonprofit organizations contribute to this issue and perpetuate the problems they claim to resolve. Instead of preserving the creation of relations between humans and nonhumans as an integral part of animal law and animal rights, they are causing damage by not [emphasizing](#) sustainable family planning and birth equity in their policies. This is pushing more animals into factory farming and worsening the climate crisis.

The demand for factory farming grows with the birth of every child, and industrial agriculture is responsible for 11 percent of global emissions, not to mention the unimaginable suffering of innocent animals.

The family policies many organizations support are harmful—[undoing climate mitigation efforts](#) that have led to the [deaths](#) of 4 million people between 2000 and 2024—and counter any good other policies might do. This dynamic can be labeled "impact fraud."

[Abstract academic debates about population ethics](#), often funded by concentrations of wealth and power reliant on inequity and growth, threaten to worsen the results of the climate crisis by forestalling the necessary law and policy reforms from being implemented. Many of the debates against these reforms emerge from the same Eurocentric vestige of colonialism—[the historic entitlement of wealthy families exploiting birth positionality](#)—nesting in the current human rights regime.

This threatens minimum thresholds of personal welfare, equal access to opportunities, participation in and adhering to political/legal systems purported to represent the governed, and the enjoyment of an environment relatively conducive to human and nonhuman health.

Academicians, foundations, and nonprofit organizations need to address these issues by advocating for human rights systems that include child welfare and birth equity in instruments like the Convention on the Rights of the Child and in ethics, law, and family planning policies.

Understanding misleading terms and supporting family policies that ensure minimum levels of well-being, equity, democracy, nature, and a sustainable right to have children for all through [birth equity entitlements](#) are important steps in that direction. These will ensure parental delay and readiness, equal opportunities for all children, and smaller or more sustainable families.

The False Promise of Growth

Emphasizing sustainable practices, such as switching to vegan brands and eating a plant-based diet, is essential for protecting the environment and ensuring animal welfare. Still, these practices cannot alone resolve the climate crisis.

In many cases, food tech startups that support the move to plant-based meat are often fueled, in part, by greenwashing.

The climate crisis is not just an imbalance of emissions and responsibility among nations. Some of the blame for climate inequity also falls on deceptive tactics like [greenwashing](#), [growthwashing](#), and [humanewashing](#).

A more holistic approach is needed to prevent global warming and create a more just and equitable world for children and nonhuman animals. It is important to look beyond the fantasy world of value and progress built by nonprofits, media, foundations, companies, etc., all driven by [growth-based funding](#). This funding hides the need for true reform, forestalls effective family law changes, and has led to the deadly climate crisis. The push for growth is setting us all toward a future of [ecocide](#) and extinction.

“You cannot have it both ways and complain that [global warming will harm GDP](#),” [writes](#) Terry Cannon, emeritus senior research fellow of the Institute of Development Studies at the University of Sussex, in a May 2024 letter to the Guardian. “A drop in global GDP is one of the best things that can happen to reduce global warming if it reduces consumption of carbon-intensive products and services. GDP is a very poor way to measure the negative impacts of global warming.”

The Inequity of Opportunity Begins at Birth

The [wealth gap](#) between Black and white families has only worsened over time. “The growing disparity means that in 2022, for every \$100 in wealth held by white households, Black households held only \$15,” states a 2024 Brookings Institution article.

This gap is a result of colonization, slavery, and other structural forms of racism. This is the genesis of inequity of opportunity and should be the basis for treating the legal system that allows it [as illegitimate](#).

“Policies that privilege whiteness are reflected in higher levels of wealth for the average white family, which can be leveraged across generations to generate greater wealth and advantages,” [adds](#) the Brookings article.

This disparity means that Black, Indigenous, and Latino communities absorb the most significant [risks and harms in the climate crisis](#)—both socially and ecologically. Black children were [more than twice](#) as likely to face hunger compared to white children in 2023.

These disparities can be resolved with universal birth equity-based planning—and significant [baby bond distributions](#)—but policymakers and wealthy white families that benefit from policies supporting this racial wealth gap prefer to exploit the difference.

Similarly, most rich countries have made their wealth by exploiting poorer nations and continue to profit by maintaining this inequality. This is true even though many developing countries have the answers to some of today’s global problems.

For instance, Sudan has the potential to “address the global food crisis” but can only achieve this with “the cooperation of its African and Middle Eastern neighbors, along with the international community, to move on from its war-torn history and play a vital part in global trade,” [points out](#) a 2024 World Economic Forum report.

In a territory like Palestine that has traditionally grown olive trees, continuing to export olive oil from its olive trees can help maintain climate health and create sustainable economic products, such as soap. These products can also support organic alternative hair and skin care products like those from Palestinian-based brands like [CHI Haircare](#).

With Occupation contributing significantly to the devastation of the land in Palestine, creating ecocide, domicide, and urbicide, emissions have increased and created devastation to the natural environment, much like deforestation.

While globally sustainable areas like the Congo Basin rainforest sustain a portion of the world's oxygen supply, businesses, and corporations use deceptive practices to hide the deforestation of these forests. This further contributes to more significant gaps in wealth for non-white communities.

Explosive Growth Has Destroyed Functional Democracy

The current situation is not ecologically sustainable, does not ensure the safety of unborn children, and has [destroyed functional democracy](#). Democracy starts with "one person, one vote," which implies that each vote is influential. [Today, this is not](#) the case.

We need to redistribute resources to ensure birth equity and a fair start in life instead of letting governments decide on these matters if we have to secure the future of our children.

This poverty and inequity cannot be challenged through democracy because family planning policies have ensured that the average citizen is disenfranchised, with little or no influence over the laws they are forced to live under.

Because growth is enabled by removing even minimum levels of welfare or equity, [our elected officials simply do not represent their constituents](#). Growth has diluted votes.

The idea of representation is an illusion when, in reality, one should have access to [significant wealth or other forms of](#) influence to impact political outcomes. Also, the fact that the federal minimum wage is "poverty-level wages" is sufficient evidence that the [law hardly reflects the people's will](#).

Why Reparations to Young Disenfranchised Women Are Important

We can reverse the abovementioned injustices by backing young women's right to self-determination and reparation.

"Society, as reflected in our government and the policy implemented by our democratically elected representatives, must do what's best for children, regardless of economic impact, which must include social safety programs

designed to give each child a fair start in life and climate reparations for the crisis we have caused and are leaving to them as our legacy,” argues Jessica Blome, a public interest attorney who frequently represents the [Fair Start Movement](#), a nonprofit that promotes the convergence of social, eco, and reproductive justice (affiliated with two of this article’s authors, Carter Dillard and Beatrix Homler).

“That we are even debating the value of women’s autonomy as an economic driver—as opposed to an inalienable human right—is exactly why our culture needs to think differently about women and children,” Blome says.

[Mwesigye Robert](#), a co-founder of [Rejoice Africa Foundation](#), a nonprofit group that promotes climate restoration and family policy, argues that political leaders often promote climate responses that are ultimately unrealistic because they are top-down solutions. “They have come up with well-meaning centralized climate responses in their speeches and proposals, but none of these are implemented effectively,” he says.

His organization advocates the [care group model](#), which promotes social and behavioral changes through peer-to-peer knowledge sharing. Primarily deployed in international development contexts, care groups are often led by mothers sharing insights. “Effective climate restoration must be decentralized to the affected communities at the grassroots level,” says Robert.

All Children Deserve a Fair Start in Life

The climate and the related crises we face today were driven mainly, and certainly exacerbated, by the [absence of child equity standards being included in reproductive rights dating back to 1948](#). This seeded racist inequity and unsustainable growth and created a fake version of social justice, one hiding the actual creation of power relations in birth, development, and inequity. It allowed wealthy white families to amass wealth—at a deadly cost to generations of BIPOC communities.

This is a fundamental entitlement or constitutive fraud: Obligating others to follow laws while not measurably empowering them to be in a position to influence those laws.

Wealthy families in nations most responsible for the climate crisis are now funding a fantasy world to continue this farce and evade climate reparations they owe for the harm they have caused. Environmental sustainability and social

justice are vastly undone as [children enter the world without the necessary resources](#).

If the world's children are not given a fair start in life, it won't be possible to form organizations capable of representative governance through the measurable self-determination of their constituents.

We need to give each family equal opportunities and future generations the resources they need to fight climate change. This means giving each child the same rights and opportunities to shape the future.

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