

16th World Congress of Bioethics (WCB)

Basel, Switzerland
20 - 22 July, 2022

Congress of the Feminist
Approaches to Bioethics (FAB)
18 - 19 July, 2022



ONE-CHILD ETHICS AS THE ONLY SOLUTION TO OUR OVERPOPULATION CRISIS

JAN GREGUŠ

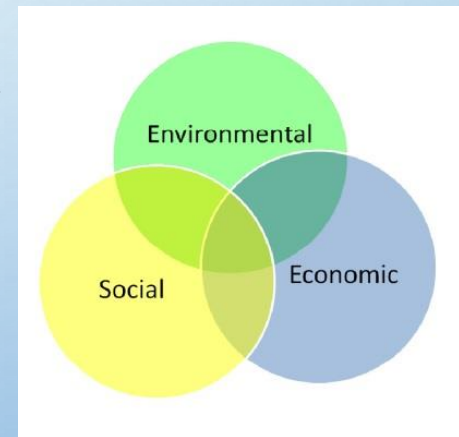
DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY, MASARYK UNIVERSITY, BRNO
CENTRE OF PRENATAL DIAGNOSTICS, BRNO
CENTRE OF OUTPATIENT GYNAECOLOGY AND PRIMARY CARE, BRNO

SUSTAINABILITY

SUSTAINABILITY AS AN IDEAL (CONCEPT):

- **THE GOAL OF SUSTAINABILITY** = TO “*CREATE AND MAINTAIN CONDITIONS, UNDER WHICH HUMANS AND NATURE CAN EXIST IN PRODUCTIVE HARMONY, THAT PERMIT FULFILLING THE SOCIAL, ECONOMIC, AND OTHER REQUIREMENTS OF PRESENT AND FUTURE GENERATIONS*” (NEPA 1969)

- A SUSTAINABLE APPROACH IS BASED ON **THREE PILLARS OF SUSTAINABILITY**



- **AS SUCH, IT PROTECTS THE ENVIRONMENT, STRENGTHENS COMMUNITIES, AND FOSTERS PROSPERITY**

SUSTAINABILITY

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS:

- A SET OF GOALS ACCEPTED IN 2015 AFTER *MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS* HAVE BEEN MISSED
- **THE GOAL = TO CREATE A WORLD IN WHICH WE CAN ALL THRIVE AND PROSPER**

“END POVERTY, PROTECT THE PLANET, AND ENSURE PROSPERITY FOR ALL” (UN 2015)



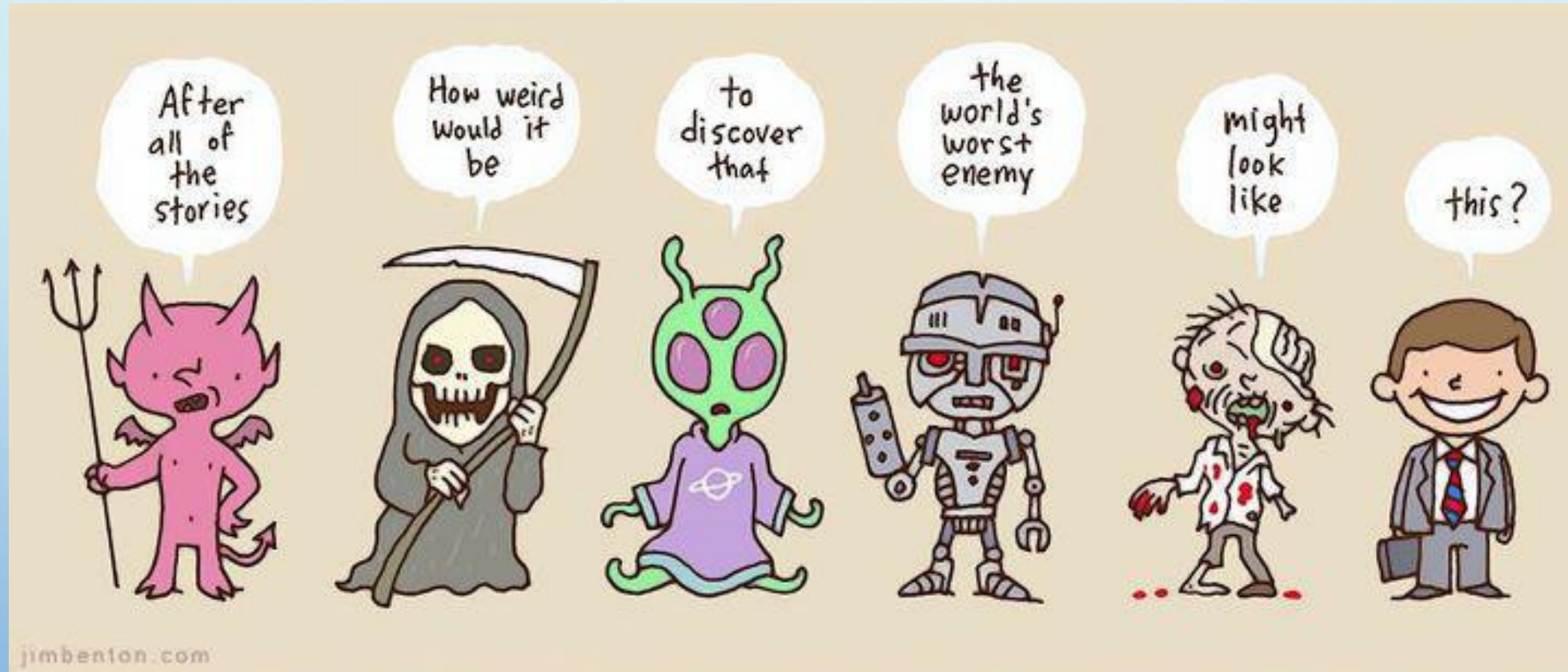
- **HEADS OF GOVERNMENTS HAVE UNDERTAKEN THE RESPONSIBILITY TO ACHIEVE SDG BY 2030**

UNSUSTAINABILITY

UNSUSTAINABILITY AS A FACT:

- THE GOAL OF SUSTAINABILITY IS TO **MAINTAIN EQUILIBRIUM BETWEEN HUMANITY AND NATURE**
- **HUMANITY IS NOT GETTING ANY NEARER TO THIS GOAL**
ON THE CONTRARY, IT IS GOING THE OPPOSITE WAY DESPITE MANY (SCIENTIFIC) WARNINGS:
- *THE POPULATION BOMB (1968)*
- *THE LIMITS TO GROWTH (1972)*
- *WORLD SCIENTISTS' WARNING TO HUMANITY (1992)*
- *WORLD SCIENTISTS' WARNING TO HUMANITY: A SECOND NOTICE (2017)*
- *SCIENTISTS' WARNING OF A CLIMATE EMERGENCY (2019), AND MANY MORE*
- **THE MAIN CAUSES OF UNSUSTAINABILITY = HUMAN NUMBERS, PRODUCTION AND CONSUMPTION**

THE WORLD'S WORST ENEMY



PROBLEMS MULTIPLIED BY MULTIPLICATION: TOO MANY OF US CONSUMER-POLLUTERS

UNSUSTAINABILITY

CONSEQUENCES OF OUR UNSUSTAINABLE NUMBERS:

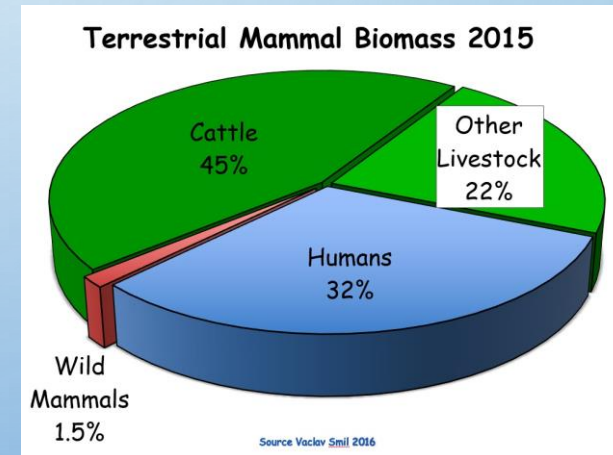
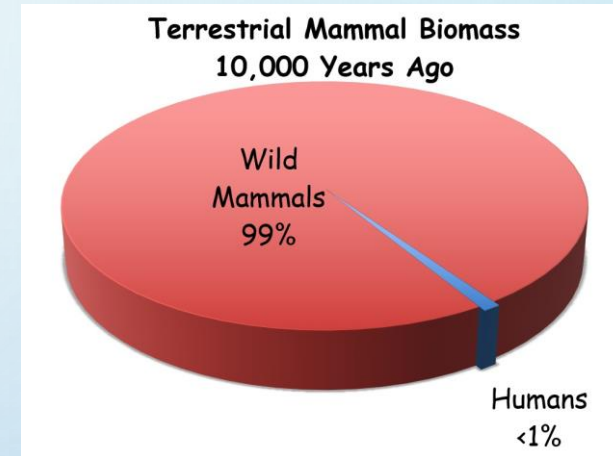
- **WATER SCARCITY**, FOOD INSECURITY, MASS STARVATION, MALNUTRITION
- **PANDEMIC EMERGENCE**, INADEQUATE HEALTHCARE SERVICES
- INCREASED POVERTY, SLOWING ECONOMIC GROWTH, INADEQUATE HOUSING
- **FORCED MIGRATION**, CLIMATE REFUGEES
- RADICALIZATION, EXTREMISM, WIDESPREAD CONFLICT, **RESOURCE-DRIVEN WARS**

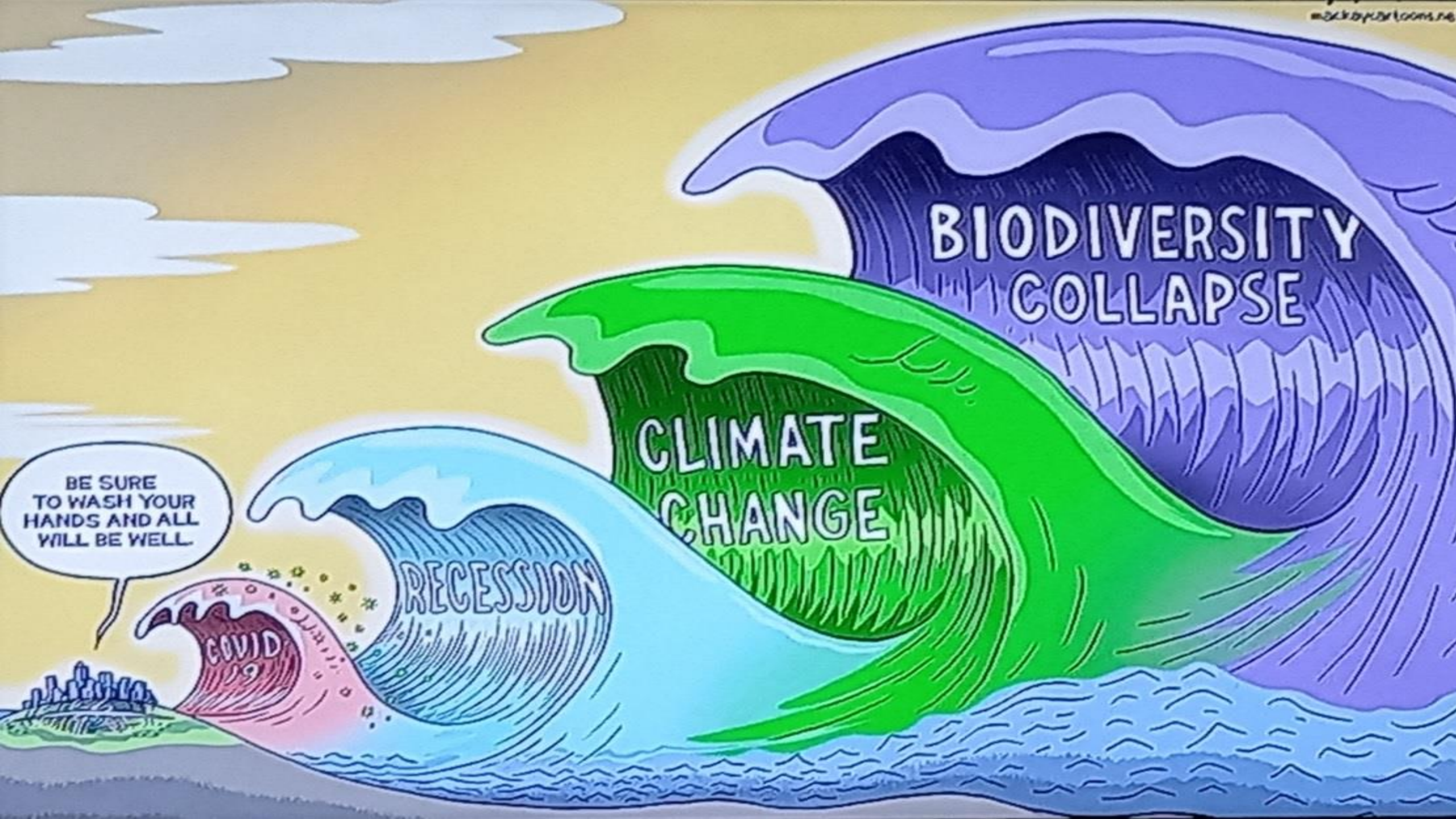
- **MAJOR OBSTACLE TO ACHIEVING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS**
(1) NO POVERTY, (2) ZERO HUNGER, (3) GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

UNSUSTAINABILITY

CONSEQUENCES OF OUR UNSUSTAINABLE NUMBERS:

- **CLIMATE CHANGE**
- ENVIRONMENTAL **DEGRADATION AND POLLUTION**
- RESOURCE DEPLETION
- INCREASE IN MUNICIPAL WASTE
- **BIODIVERSITY LOSS**
- DEFORESTATION, DESERTIFICATION
- MASS SPECIES EXTINCTION (**SPECIES GENOCIDE**)





BE SURE
TO WASH YOUR
HANDS AND ALL
WILL BE WELL

COVID

RECESSION

CLIMATE
CHANGE

BIODIVERSITY
COLLAPSE



**IF HUMANITY WANTS TO AVOID ALL THESE NEGATIVE PHENOMENA,
POPULATION GROWTH MUST BE STOPPED AND REVERSED.**

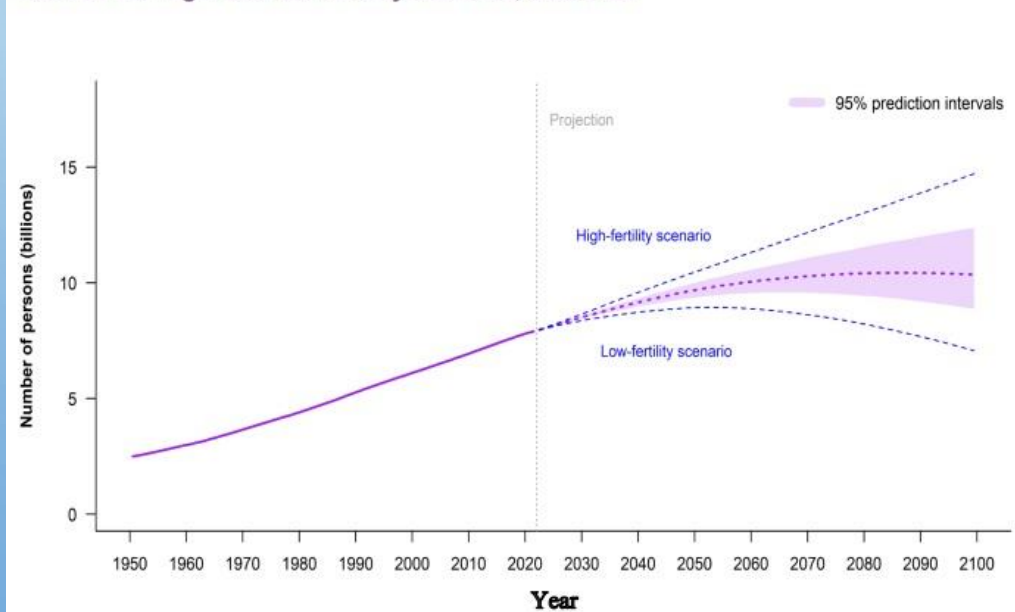
BUT TO WHICH SIZE? AND HOW TO DO IT ETHICALLY AND HUMANELY?



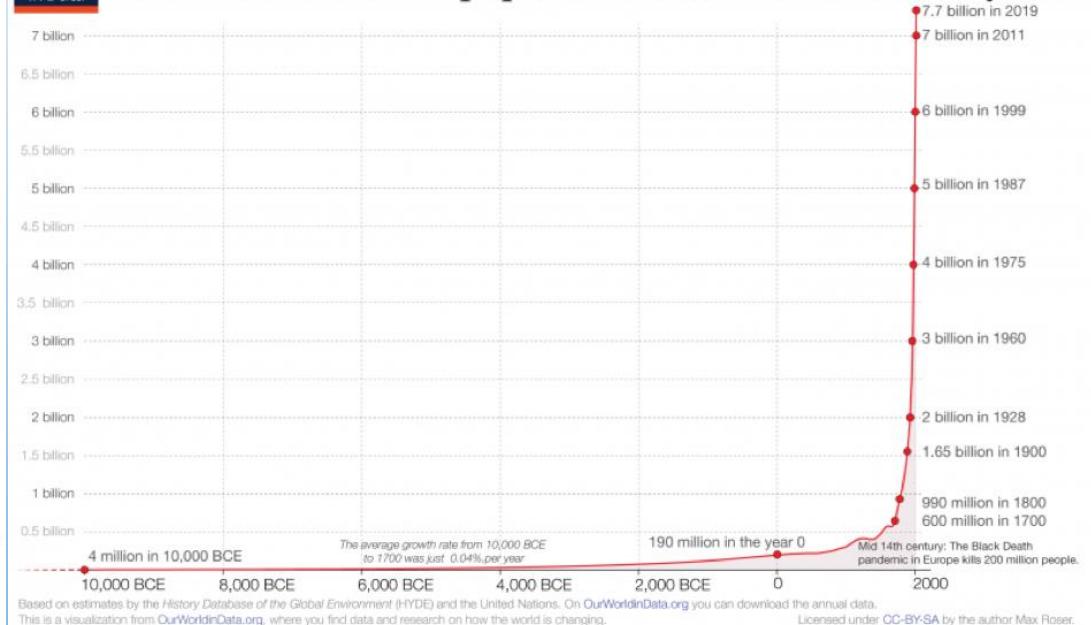
UNSUSTAINABLE HUMANITY

- SO FAR, HUMANITY OF **7.9 BILLION**, **RISING** WITH GROWTH OF **OVER 80 MILLION A YEAR**
- NO SIGN OF SLOWING DOWN IN THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE (DESPITE SLOWING POPULATION GROWTH & FERTILITY DECREASE) – FRESH MEDIUM-VARIANT PROJECTIONS (UN 2022) ARE:
- **8 BILLION (11/2022) ... 8.5 BILLION (2030) ... 9.7 BILLION (2050) ... 10.4 BILLION (2100)**

Global population size: estimates, 1950-2022, and medium scenario with 95 per cent prediction intervals and high- and low-fertility scenarios, 2022-2100



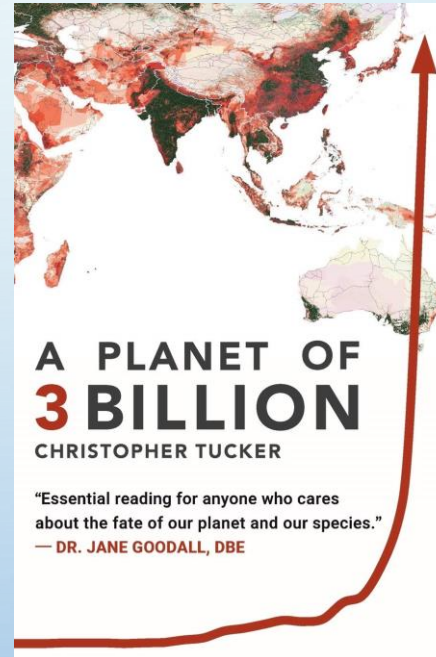
Our World in Data The size of the world population over the last 12,000 years



SUSTAINABLE HUMANITY

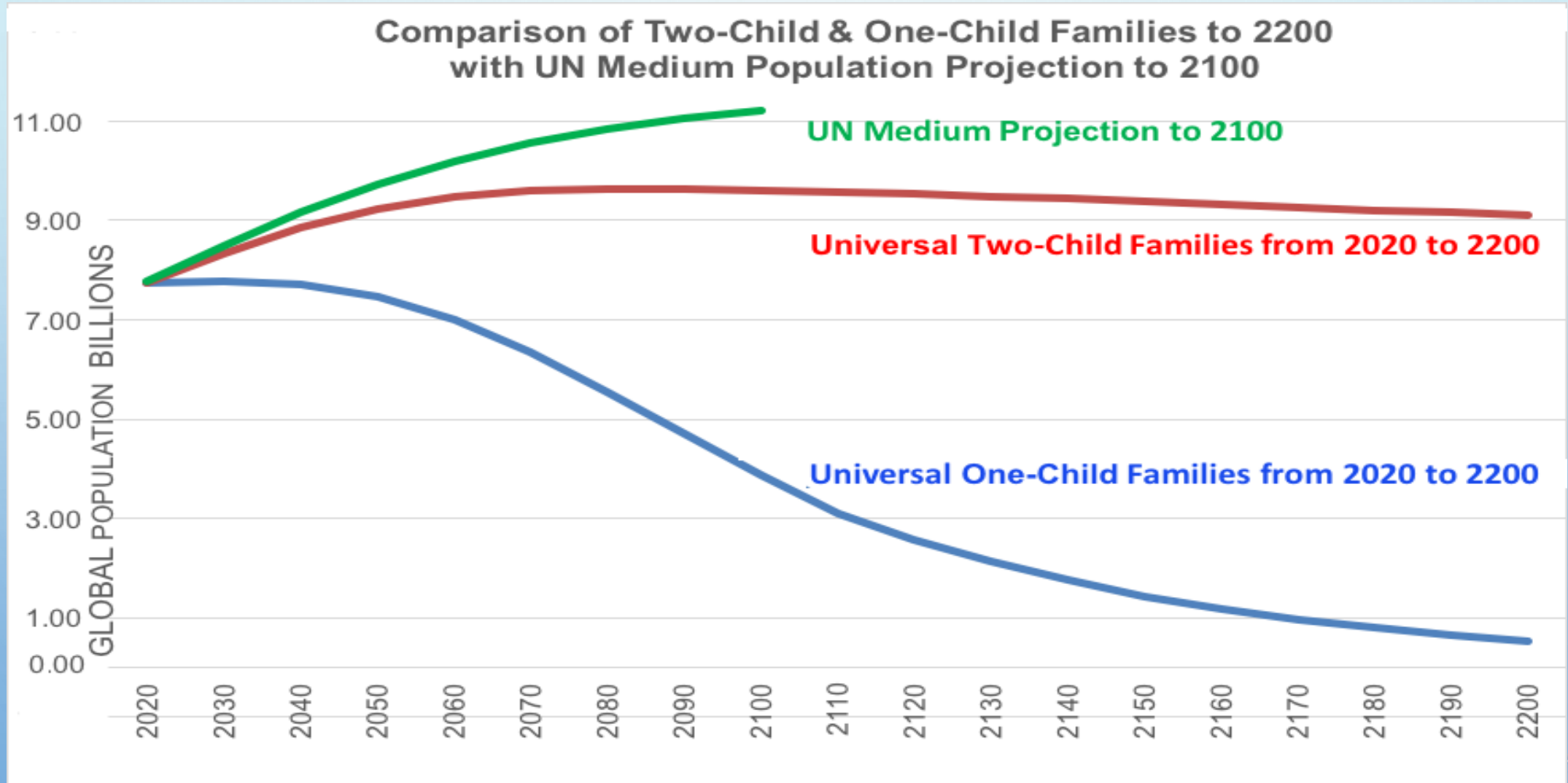
- STUDIES FOR A LONG-TERM SUSTAINABLE HUMANITY ARE BASED ON VARIOUS CRITERIA AND ASSUMPTIONS:

- **1.5 – 2 BILLION** (DAILY ET AL. 1994)
- **3 BILLION** (PIMENTAL ET AL. 1994)
- **2 BILLION** (DAILY ET AL. 2010)
- **3.1 BILLION** (LIANOS AND PSEIRIDIS 2016)
- **3 BILLION** (TUCKER 2019)
- **0.5 – 5 BILLION** (DASGUPTA 2019)



- OBVIOUSLY, MORE STUDIES, DISCUSSION, AND GENERAL CONSENSUS ON THE IDEAL NUMBER ARE NEEDED
- NEVERTHELESS, ONE THING IS CRYSTAL CLEAR – **HUMANITY IS FAR BEYOND BEING SUSTAINABLE**

ONE-CHILD REALITY



(FERGUSON AND RIMMER 2017)

ONE-CHILD REALITY

- **ONE-CHILD REALITY (ETHICS OR POLITICS) IS THE ONLY SOLUTION TO OUR OVERPOPULATION CRISIS:**
- THE 2017 STUDY EXPLORES THE HYPOTHETICAL RESULTS OF A VOLUNTARY, GLOBAL AGREEMENT FROM 2020 THAT ALL FAMILIES SHOULD HAVE EITHER TWO CHILDREN OR ONLY ONE CHILD, AND COMPARES THEM WITH CURRENT UN-PROJECTIONS, CONCLUDING THAT **ONLY UNIVERSAL ONE-CHILD FAMILIES COULD SOLVE THE PROBLEM**
- IT FURTHER DISCUSSES THE REMARKABLE FACT THAT A UN-PROJECTED FERTILITY DECREASE, DOWN FROM 2.4 IN 2020 TO BELOW 2.0 BY 2100, RESULTS IN A **STEADILY INCREASING POPULATION: 11.2 BILLION BY 2100**
- **THIS IS BECAUSE DECREASING FERTILITY IS COUNTERBALANCED BY A HIGHER POPULATION BASE OVER TIME.** THOUGH A HYPOTHETICAL DECREASE TO **TWO-CHILD FAMILIES** WOULD STOP THE GLOBAL POPULATION FROM RISING ABOVE 10 BILLION, IT WOULD **TAKE UNTIL 2480 TO RETURN TO 2020-LEVEL POPULATION**

FIRST CONCLUSION

- **SUSTAINABILITY IS POSSIBLE AND ACHIEVABLE, BUT REQUIRES SUSTAINABLE HUMANITY**
- TO ACHIEVE THAT, WE MUST: (1) STOP POPULATION GROWTH, (2) STABILIZE POPULATION, AND THEN (3) LOWER IT TO LONG-TERM SUSTAINABLE NUMBERS
- **THIS CAN BE DONE THROUGH PROMOTION OF SMALL FAMILIES, IDEALLY ONE-CHILD ETHICS**
- WHILE IT IS NOT LIKELY FOR VOLUNTARY ONE-CHILD ETHICS TO BE GLOBALLY ACCEPTED AND EMBRACED IN THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE, IT SHOULD BE WIDELY CIRCULATED AMONG BIOETHICISTS AS WELL AS ALL HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS TO EMPHASIZE THAT THIS IS **ULTIMATELY THE ONLY ETHICAL SOLUTION TO OUR OVERPOPULATION PREDICAMENT**

TO BE CONTINUED...

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REPRODUCTIVE ETHICS: BIOETHICISTS NEED TO PROMOTE SMALL FAMILIES WORLDWIDE

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SESSION P3.5, 20TH JULY 2022, 17:00