

Overpopulation & Women's Rights

A Touchy Subject with Many People

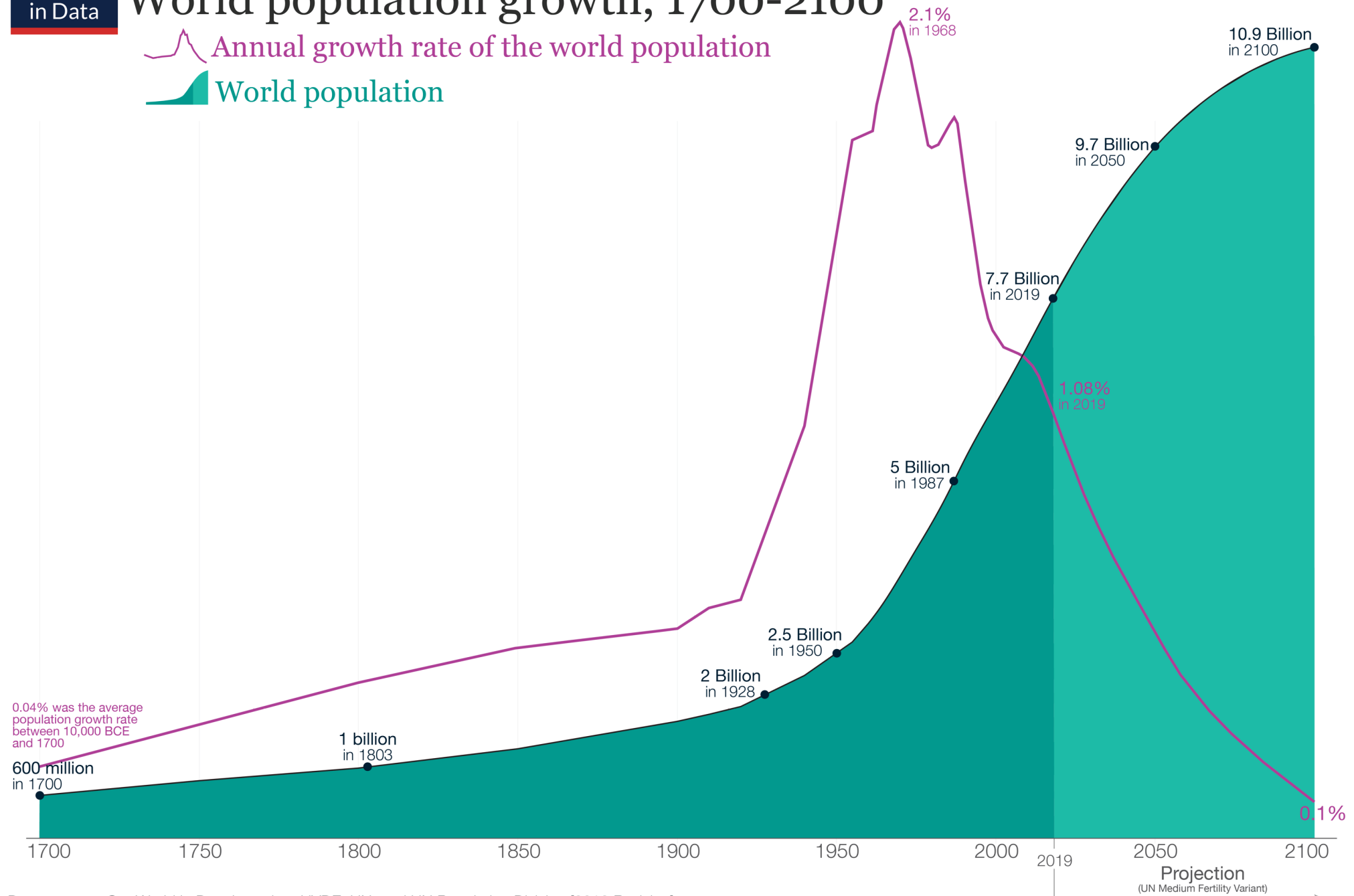
Overpopulation trends

- Current global population is over 8 Billion people (having reached that milestone on about November 15).
- Good news – current growth rate has declined to about 1%

World population growth, 1700-2100

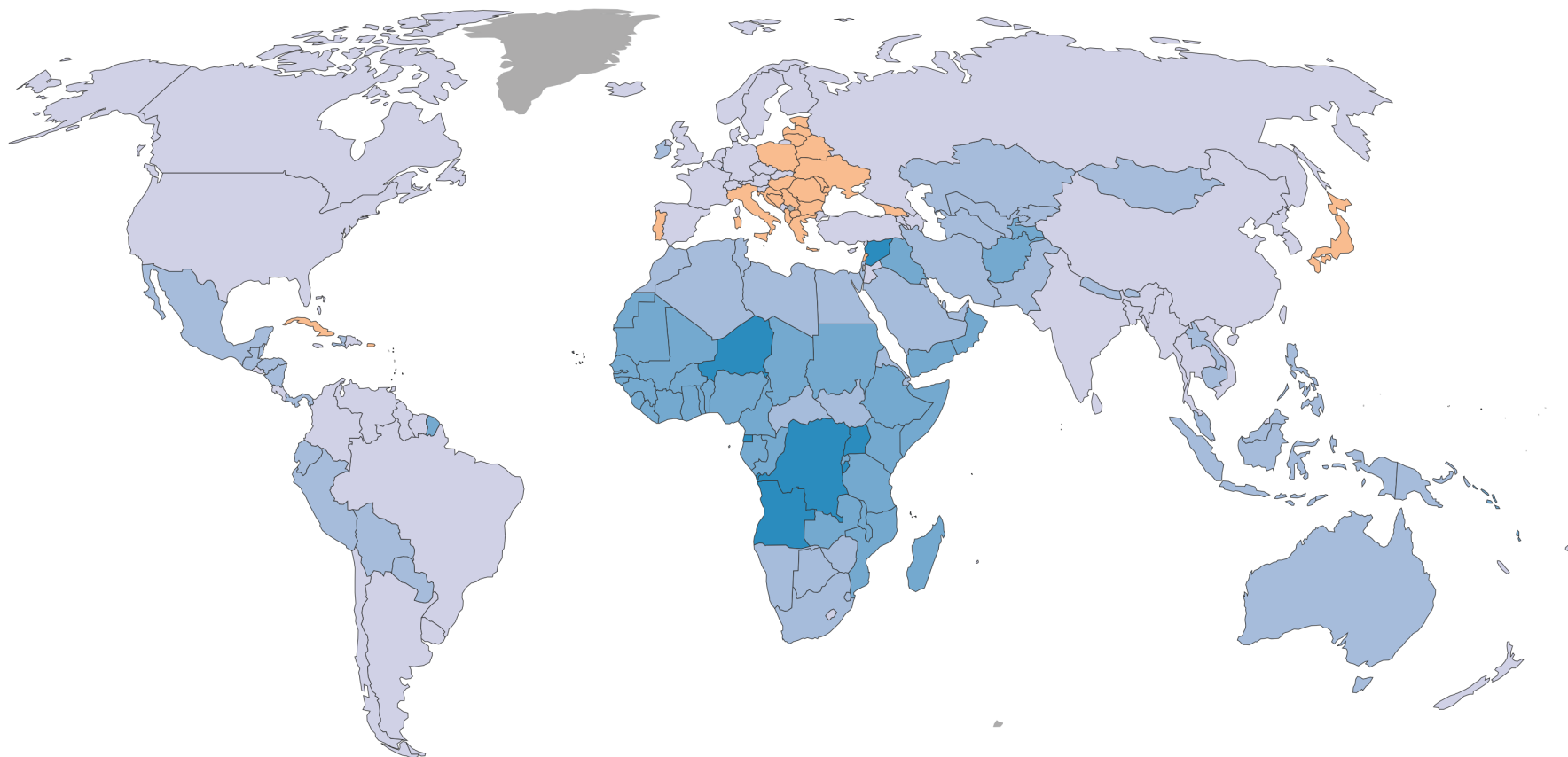
Annual growth rate of the world population

World population



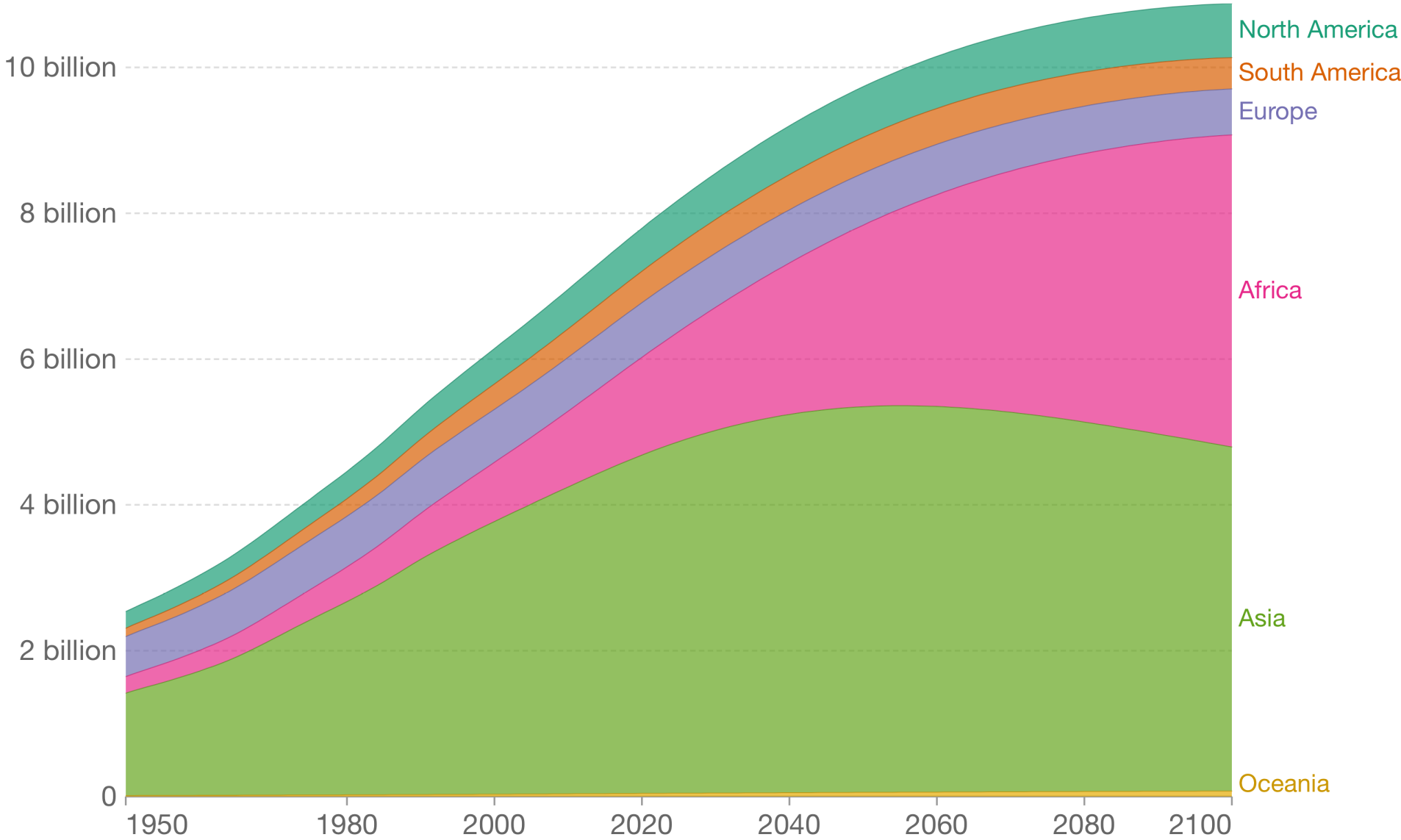
Population growth rate, 2020

Annual rate of population change from 1950, including UN projections to 2099 based on its median scenario. This takes births, deaths and migration into account.



World population by region

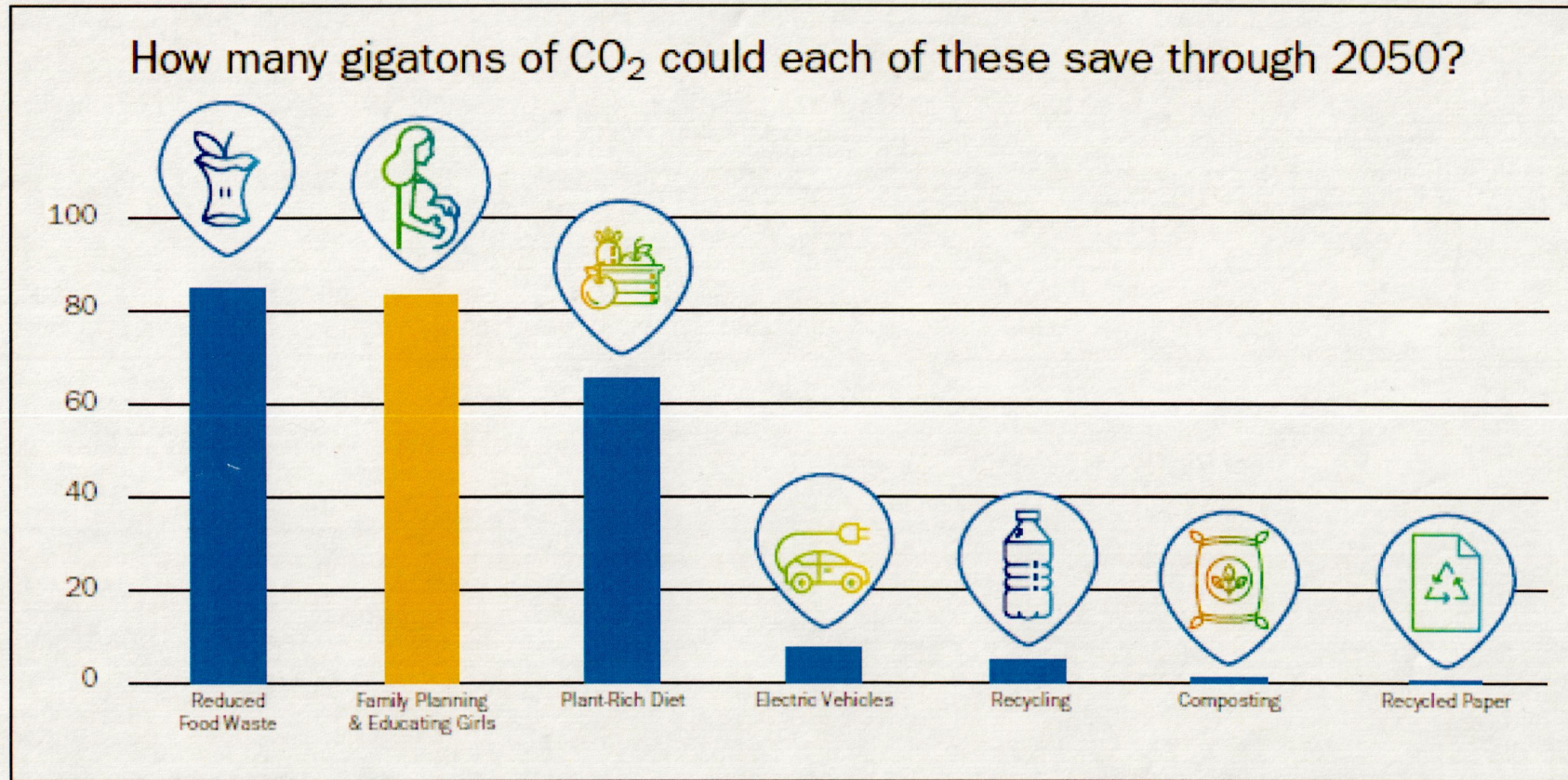
Projected population to 2100 is based on the UN's medium population scenario.



Why Does This Matter?

Especially if global population growth rate is declining, and global population is expected to possibly level out by the year 2100?

The Best Kept Climate Change Secret



Credit: Project Drawdown

ICONS MADE BY FREEMAN FROM FLATIRON.COM

If Africa's tropical regions were a country,
it would be the second largest emitter of
CO₂ in the world



Source: Nature Communications

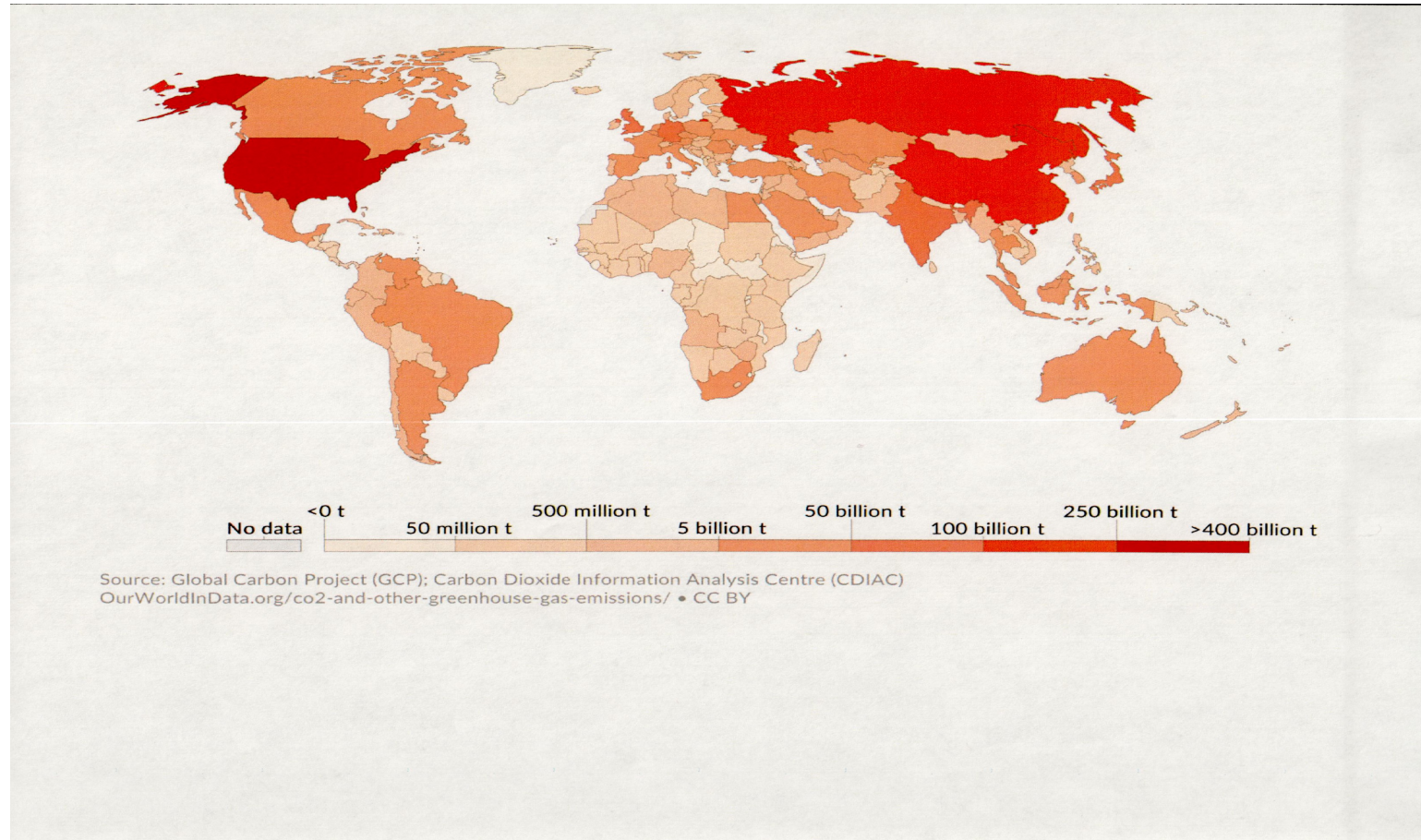
Environmental Effects of Overpopulation

- Deforestation (which greatly contributes to global warming)
- Desertification
- Species extinction (both plant and animal)
- Air and water pollution
- Resource Depletion
- Etc., etc.

Should Environmentalists in the U.S. Adopt This Issue?

- After all, the U.S. is number 2 in green house emissions, and number one per capita.

Per Capita Greenhouse Emissions



Shouldn't We Get Our Own House in Order?

Rather than pointing fingers at other countries, many of whom suffer very high poverty rates and have much lower per capita emissions rates

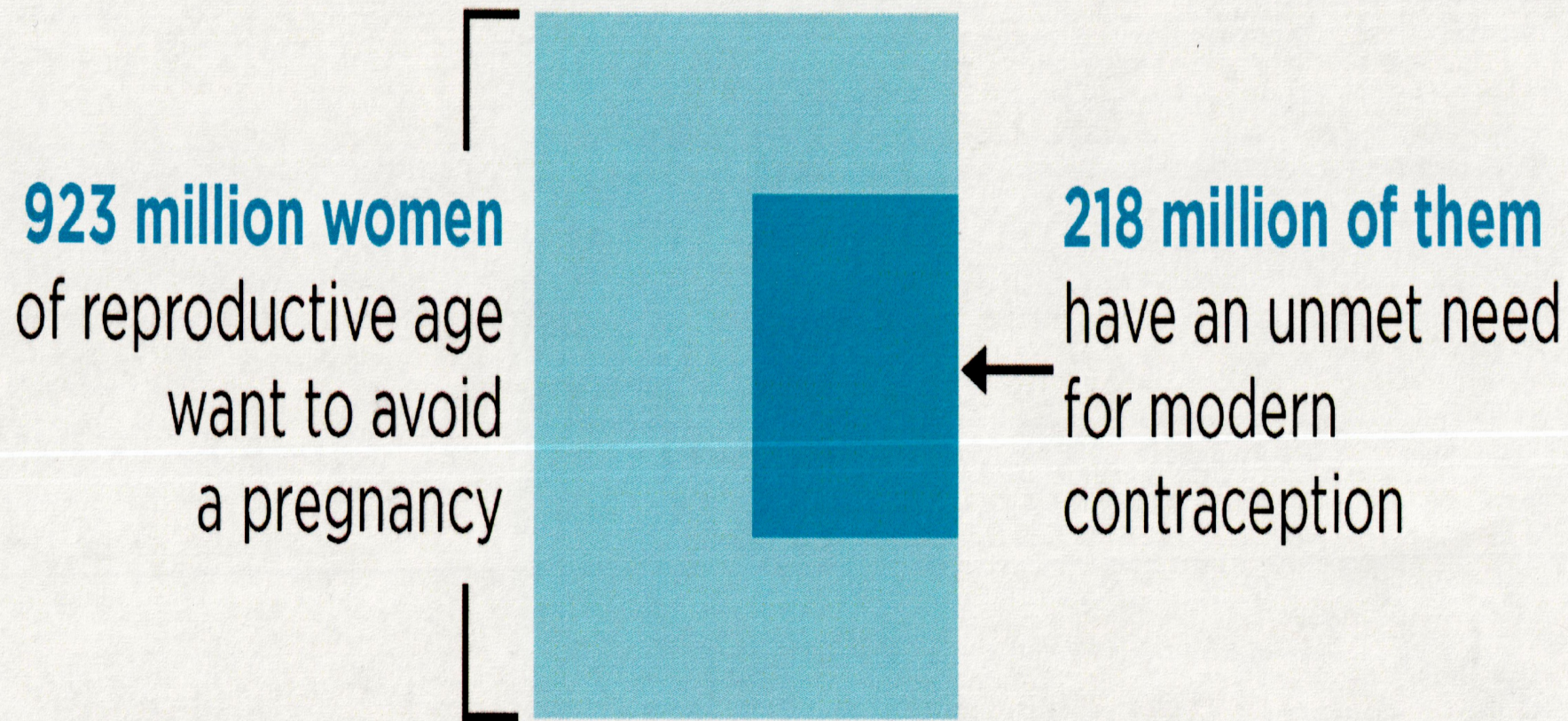
ABSOLUTELY!

- We need to get our own house in order.
- However, it is not an either/or proposition.
- Working to decrease our own emissions does not preclude working to decrease population growth.

Nor is it a question of pointing fingers
or coercion

Millions of women (and men) in Lower and Middle Income countries currently want access to modern contraception, and do not have it.

Expanded services are needed to fulfill unmet needs in LMICs



Many data also show that providing education to girls results in lower fertility rates.

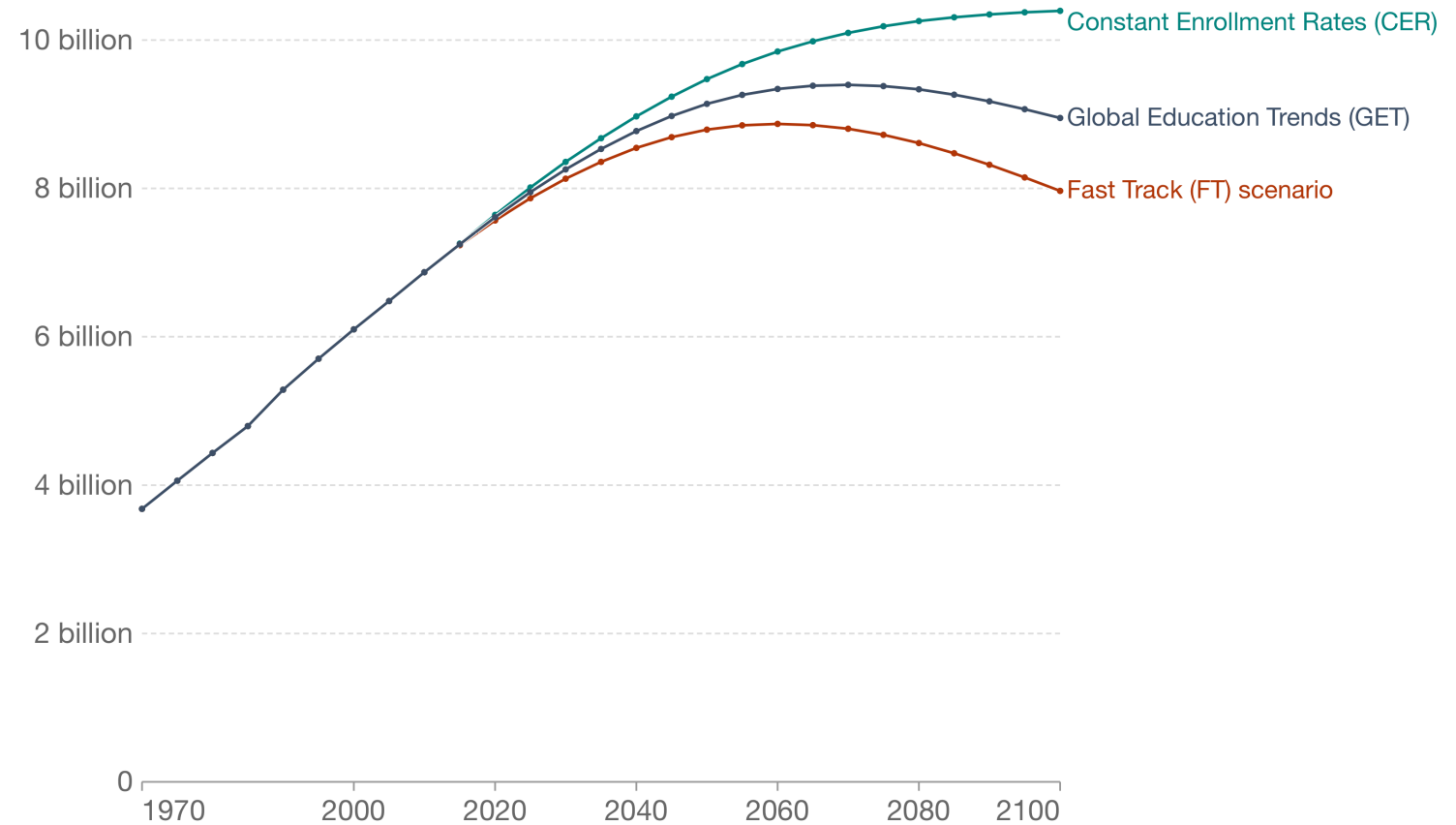
Constant Enrollment Rates – status quo

Global Education Trends – somewhat optimistic

Fast Track Scenario - most optimistic

Projections of the total population by education scenario, World, 1970 to 2100

Our World
in Data



Source: Medium SSP2 - Wittgenstein Centre for Demography and Global Human Capital
OurWorldInData.org/world-population-future-education-now/ • CC BY

Providing access to reproductive health care, including access to contraception and providing access to education, are important environmental issues.

And they are also women's rights (affecting primarily women of color), and therefore human rights issues.

Is Fighting Overpopulation Racist?

When discussing overpopulation, I am often told that trying to do something about it is racist, because it is primarily Asia, Africa and South America that are suffering from overpopulation. I am also told that it is racist to try to restrict immigration into the United States.

ABSOLUTELY NOT!

- What I want to see the West do is help people have a better life, by helping them get access to both modern birth control, and education
- I also think that it is misguided to conflate immigration and overpopulation.

What Can a Middle Class American Do?

- Support efforts by organizations like Population Connection and Planned Parenthood to provide reproductive health services, including modern contraception, to all women who want them. This includes lobbying to increase Federal funding for women's health globally.
- These and other organizations are also working to permanently end the "Global Gag Rule". This has been implemented by every Republican president since Ronald Reagan. It prevents foreign organizations receiving U.S. funding from providing information, referrals, or services for legal abortion, even with their own money.
- The Gag Rule not only hinders efforts to provide women with health care and reproductive services, it also, ironically, results in an increased number of abortions worldwide.
- Support efforts by organizations like The Malala Fund to increase funding for female education worldwide.