



Why climate hawks should care about birth-control access

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Any morally acceptable pathway to prevent catastrophic global warming includes broad access to affordable birth control for the world's women. The conservative war on birth control is a war on [women's rights](#), and thus on the rights of us all. Human-made global warming is one of the most troubling symptoms of economic and social injustice around the planet, and the "countries in the developing world least responsible for the growing emissions are likely to experience the heaviest impact of climate change, with [women bearing the greatest toll](#)." Researchers have found that [empowering women to reduce unplanned pregnancies](#) is one of the most cost-effective ways to combat greenhouse pollution, as U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights [Mary Robinson](#) discussed at the Durban climate conference last December:

In addressing climate resilience, Robinson stressed the importance of focusing on health and burden impacts of climate change. One of the keys is access to reproductive health for women.

"The sexual and reproductive health and rights community should challenge the global architecture of climate change, and its technology focus, and shift the discussion to a more human-based, rights-based adaptation approach," said a [Lancet editorial](#) in 2009. "Such a strategy would better serve the range of issues pivotal to improving the health of women worldwide."

“Increasing women’s reproductive rights should be at the heart of the climate discussion, in the same basket as strategies like increasing energy efficiency and researching new technologies,” [Robert Engelman of Worldwatch](#) said in 2010.

As [Nick Kristoff](#) said in 2011, family planning is a solution to “climate change to poverty to civil wars,” but it has become a “victim of America’s religious wars.”

The more world leaders focus on giving women and [girls the tools of empowerment](#) — access to family planning, education, and the political and economic system — the better future all of us will have.

A world where women and girls have more power is a healthier world.