

# Asian MetaCentre Enters Second Year

The Asian MetaCentre for Population and Sustainable Development Analysis is moving into its second year of successful operation. Launched with the help of IIASA and funded by the Wellcome Trust's Population Studies Programme, the MetaCenter is not only a conceptual hub in cyberspace, but a welcoming and well-organized haven for scores of population experts across Asia and the world.

Why the focus on population studies in Asia? First, Asia's population has more than doubled over the past 50 years, growing from 1.5 billion in 1950 to 3.7 billion in 2000. This region is home to more than 60% of the world's total population, who live on only 24% of the world's land surface (excluding Siberia). Asia's population is expected to increase to around 5.2 billion over the next 50 years. Its sheer size alone will make it a key determinant of the future of humankind. Second, with its overly rapid economic growth, dramatic changes in population age structure and social structure in general, and "hot spots" of urban air pollution and ecosystem destruction, Asia is an ideal place to study some of the most serious problems confronting humanity today. Despite these facts, the scientific attention given to Asia's population thus far has been minimal in comparison to its global importance. It is time to devote major scientific attention to the analysis of PDE (population-development-environment) interactions in Asia. The Asian MetaCentre was established to help meet this need.

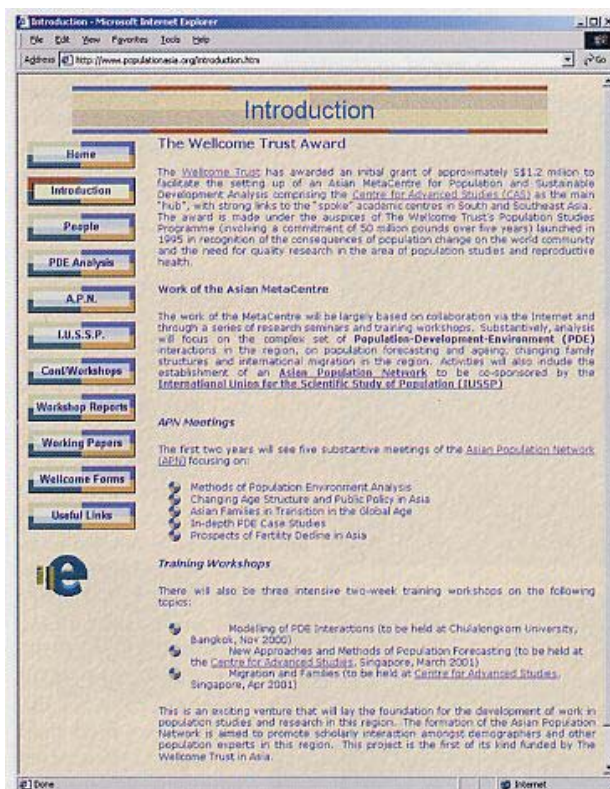
The MetaCentre has a 21st century mode of operation. It is not a new institution per se, but consists of several research centers united under an umbrella organization, with most of the collaboration occurring via the Internet. This innovative institution is lent strength by the high degree of collaboration the Internet-based structure affords. The intensive net-working established among existing centers is intended to both strengthen the individual centers and create a research environment that goes beyond their individual capabilities.

The partners in this MetaCentre are the Centre for Advanced Studies, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, National University of Singapore (location of the MetaCentre's headquarters); the College of Population Studies, Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok, Thailand; IIASA; and the National Centre for Epidemiology and Population Health, Australian National University. Additional collaborators include Tata Energy Research Institute (TERI), New Delhi, India; University of San Carlos, Cebu, Philippines; Philippine Center for Population and

Development, Inc.; Institute of Population Research, Peking University; Demographic Institute, University of Indonesia; Institute of Policy Studies, Singapore; and the Population Research Centre, Institute of Economic Growth, Delhi, India. Collaboration is open to further expansion throughout Asia.



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