In this chapter, you read about the most populous country on Earth. You learned about the role of population growth and famine in China’s history. You saw how a population’s rate of natural increase and doubling time are related. You also looked at how China is working to achieve three goals: zero population growth, clean energy, and economic growth.

China is not the only country trying to deal with population growth. By 2050, the number of people in the world is expected to increase by over 2.5 billion. Most of that growth will happen in developing countries. Think about the problems these countries will face as you look at rates of natural increase in the next section.

Global Connections

The map shows rates of natural increase in countries around the world. At these rates, the populations of the 50 poorest countries will more than double by 2050. The tables look at education for women and spending on health care in countries with various rates of growth.

How might money spent on health care affect a country’s rate of natural increase? With better health care, a country’s infant mortality rate drops. Life expectancy rises as well. Parents worry
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less that their children won’t survive childhood. Because of this, they may have fewer children. Better health care also means better access to modern family-planning methods. This helps couples plan how many children they will have.

How might money spent on educating women affect a country’s rate of natural increase?

Women who are educated usually have more control over the number of children they have. Educated women often marry later. They may put off having children to focus on a career. When they do have children, they usually have fewer than women who lack an education.

How might a country with rapid population growth benefit by slowing its rate of natural increase? Countries that slow their rates of natural increase generally grow wealthier. With fewer children, they are better able to educate each child. They also have
more money for health care. A healthy, educated population attracts trade and business. This often leads to economic growth and a rise in living standards.