

**“FACTS AND FIGURES: THE WORLD, ASIA
AND THE PHILIPPINES ***

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It took the whole of recorded history until 1830 for the world to acquire its first billion human beings. It took only one hundreds years from 1830 to 1930 for the second billion to be added. The third billion took thirty years (1930-1960).

The fourth billion, taking only 15 years to produce, is about due next year.

Average growth of world population proceeds at two per cent per annum, implying a doubling every 35 years.

The twentieth century began with 1½ billions; it will end in 26 years time with around six to seven billions. Much larger figures may be expected in the next century.

The global average masks two worlds: the richer nations, growing slowly at an average of one per cent, and the poorer countries whose population growth is more than twice this rate (about 2.4% on average).

More than half the world's population lives in Asia. This means more than 2 billions living on only 17% of the world's land area.

Most Asian countries have a continuing high fertility. One group of countries has a high but declining fertility: Hongkong, Republic of Korea, Taiwan, Singapore and Sri Lanka.

It may be possible soon to add the Philippines to this group. The 1960-1970 intercensal growth rate was 3.01% per annum. Since then, a determined population policy and programme have

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been implemented. Present indications are that the current population of about 40 millions will double to 80 millions by the end of the century.

The "Time Bomb"

There are two related factors which make rapid population growth a most difficult problem: the "youthening" of the population, and the time-lag between fertility behaviour and its results, which means that the effects of today's fertility behaviour are not felt by the existing generation, but by the next. Approximately every second Filipino is a future parent, for example. So, if each of these future ten million couples has a "normal" family of 5 or 6, tomorrow's parents will add 50 or 60 millions to the population.

It is estimated that, if it were possible to achieve a net reproduction rate of 1 immediately for the whole world (which is impossible), there would still be an increase in global population of 30% in the next 30 years, and 50% in eighty years.

Population and Socio-economic Development

The reason for this population explosion is the success of death control because of the spread of modern civilization and technology. In most countries, mortality rates have fallen dramatically as a result of measures in the fields of public health and sanitation, food production and peace and order.

In the richer countries, mortality decline has been followed by voluntary fertility decline. The reasons why this happened are not fully understood. It is hoped that history will repeat itself in the countries of high population growth rates which are overcrowded, or threatened with overcrowding.

To help this process, there is a new factor: the availability of modern family planning methods, and the rapid development of population policies.

On the negative side, an obstacle to voluntary fertility decline may be the phenomenon of "reversed history". Instead of public health and other mortality — reducing measures following in the train of general economic development, as happened in the past, they are nowadays available more or less

independently of a thorough-going economic development in which the mass of the people participate. The result can be the sort of overcrowded poverty seen in Bangladesh, for example.

One thing seems to be clear: a high degree of participation by the people in the economy and a good distribution of national income seem to be related to the achievement of moderate and low rates of fertility. Also, as Gunnar Myrdal points out, a reduction in the rate of population growth has an immediate and beneficial effect on the dependency ratio.

Need for a World Strategy

This is the background to the designation of 1974 as World Population Year.

Perhaps more than any other phenomenon, current population growth rates, projected only a little way into the future—twenty-six years to AD 2000—make it abundantly clear that we need a global strategy; even a World Government.

Technologically, economically and politically our world order belongs to the past. It is appropriate only for an uncrowded world. The following considerations illustrate this:

1. Although nuclear, solar, hydroelectric and geothermal sources of energy point the way to the future, our technology is still based on non-renewable resources. We cannot continue much longer in this direction. If everyone consumed the energy used by an average American, for example our non-renewable resources would be immediately insufficient, and pollution would choke the planet.
3. Capital is concentrated to an extraordinary degree within national boundaries. It does not flow to where it is needed, largely because of political divisions.
3. Similarly, labour is restricted, and cannot move across frontiers. Thus we see millions of unemployed and under-employed in less developed countries, and acute labour shortages in richer countries, leading to the increasing automation of production.
4. In our economic order, production of commodities is only engaged in to supply a "market". Generally speaking, we are

not geared up to produce and supply commodities because people need them for survival, but only when they can be paid for.

5. Ideological blocks divide the world. In spite of these rather paralysing and anachronistic features of our world order, the United Nations is striving to achieve a measure of global resolution to determine a World Population Plan of Action.

UNFPA and WPY

UNFPA was established as a Secretary General's Fund in 1967 and passed to the administration of UNDP in 1969. Under the leadership of Mr. Rafael Salas, UNFPA has expanded to become one of the most important parts of the UN system. It provides financial assistance to help countries improve their capacity to develop and implement population programmes. UNFPA has financed about 1,000 projects and assisted 92 countries since 1967. Its volume of assistance for 1973 was about \$50 million.

UNFPA has been charged with the organization of WPY.

So far, the year has been devoted to activities designed to create a maximum awareness of the population question throughout the world. World Population Year is one of the largest and most comprehensive publicity operations ever launched by UN. It is also being actively publicized by national institutions all over the world. The Philippines Population Commission and the World Population Year Secretariat have been particularly active and successful.

The culminating event will be the World Population Conference, to be held in Bucharest, Romania, next month. The draft World Population Plan of Action, prepared and discussed already in preliminary conference held in different parts of the world, will be debated and adopted.

The primary aim of the Plan of Action "is to expand and deepen the capacities of countries to deal effectively with their national and subnational population problems and to promote an appropriate international response to their needs by increasing international activity in research, the exchange of information and the provisions of assistance on request".

The Plan goes on to make recommendations on population growth, morbidity and mortality, reproduction and family for-

mation, population distribution and internal migration, international migration, demographic structure, data collection and analysis, research, training, education and information, development and evaluation of population policies, the role of national governments and the role of international cooperation.

The Plan is not a radical document. It suffers from the dilemma of having to encompass all possible national policies, including those designed to increase population growth as well as those intended to reduce it.

However, this very dilemma serves as an indication of the amount of work which remains to be done to achieve a clear and unified global strategy. WPY is only a beginning.