

UN says global population to hit 8 billion, but growth slows

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Two women, one on a mobile phone, wait for a bus in New Delhi

United Nations, July 11 (RHC)-- The global population is expected to reach eight billion on November 15, the United Nations has forecast, with India set to overtake China as the world's most populous country next year.

The UN noted on Monday it had taken hundreds of thousands of years for the world population to reach one billion and only 200 years to grow sevenfold. In 2011, it stood at seven billion.

While the forecast by the UN's Department of Economic and Social Affairs said the world's population is growing at its slowest pace since 1950, it said the effect of the previous rapid growth would be felt for years to come.

"[The] dramatic growth has been driven largely by increasing numbers of people surviving to reproductive age, and has been accompanied by major changes in fertility rates, increasing urbanization and accelerating migration," the UN said. "These trends will have far-reaching implications for generations to come.

The report forecast the global population to reach 8.5 billion in 2030 and 9.7 billion in 2050, peaking at about 10.4 billion people in the 2080s before steadying at that level until 2100.

The UN said while the growth in population was indicative of advances in health and economic development, it also underlined the need for effective policies to tackle some of the world's most pressing issues.

"Progress is not universal, throwing inequality into razor-sharp relief," it said. "The same concerns and challenges raised 11 years ago remain or have worsened: Climate change, violence, discrimination."

More than half the rise forecast in the world's population in the coming decades will be concentrated in just eight countries, according to the report. It noted they are the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Egypt, Ethiopia, India, Nigeria, Pakistan, the Philippines and Tanzania.

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