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Notes On Malnutrition

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The proportion of under-weight children in Mexico is higher than that of the majority of Latin American nations at similar per capita income levels. Almost 14% of Mexican children are under-weight, and 15% are born under-weight. In Chile and Venezuela, for instance, under-weight birth rates are 2.3% and 5.9%, respectively. Almost a third of all Mexican women of childbearing age are under-weight, and between 5% and 10% are anemic. According to Pedro Ojeda Paullada, general coordinator of the National Commission on Nutrition (CONAL), 66% of all Mexicans suffer from inadequate nutrition. Adolfo Chavez Villasana, director of the Health Ministry's nutrition department, said the incidence of severe malnutrition affecting children in rural areas has doubled in the last 15 years, from 7.5% in 1974 to 15% in 1989. He added that Mexican nutrition programs are obsolete, reminiscent of European efforts pre-dating the first world war. (Sources: El Financiero, 10/23/90, 10/31/90; Notimex, 10/26/90)

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