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U.N. Issues Report On World Population Projections

by John Neagle

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According to a report issued June 20 by the UN Population Division, the world population in mid-1988 was 5.1 billion, and is increasing at a rate of 1.73% per year. The report, released every two years, said an average 87 million people are expected to be added to the total every year in the 1985-1990 period. The global population rose from 2.5 billion in 1950 to 4.8 billion in 1985. It will reach 6.2 billion in the year 2000 and 8.4 billion in 2025, according to the projections. From 1995 to 2000 about 97 million people will be added every year. After 2000 the annual increase is expected to decline. According to one projection, the average increase between 2020 and 2025 will be 81 million. In 1985, said the report, slightly less than 25% of the world's population lived in the more developed regions, including Australia, Europe, Japan, New Zealand, North America and the Soviet Union. By the year 2000, this proportion is expected to decline to one-fifth and by 2025 to one-sixth. In the 1985-1990 period, the most rapidly growing regions (over 2.5%) include Western Africa at 3.3%, Eastern Africa at 3.1%, Middle Africa at 2.9%, and Melanesia at 2.6%. The slowest growth regions (under 1%) are eastern, northern, southern and Western Europe, the Soviet Union and North America. In 1985, the median age of the world population was 23.4 years, and is expected to rise to 26 years by 2000, and 31.1 years in 2025. On a global level, of every 1,000 babies born, 71 are expected to die before their first birthday. The lowest infant mortality rates under 10 per 1,000, are observed in northern and western Europe, the report says. (Basic data from AP, 06/21/89)

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