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Global Population At 5.2 Billion

by John Neagle

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On Nov. 6 in Amsterdam, participants in a United Nations conference on population growth were told by Nafis Sadiq, director of the UN Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA), that annual growth rates are at their highest level ever. World population is currently at 5.2 billion, and will reach 6 billion in 1998. With the overall growth rate still increasing, the annual increase will be 95 million by the year 2000. Sadiq said 90% of the annual increase will occur in Third World nations. Certain improvements in the status of women have occurred, said Sadiq, but they have not been as rapid or as comprehensive as necessary to slow world population growth. He said easier access to contraceptives and introduction of compulsory schooling for girls should be established by 2000. Until that year, 56% of women should be able to use contraceptives and 70% should be literate. Many UN studies have indicated a strong link between birth rates and women's education. (Basic data from DPA, 11/06/89)

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