

UNITED NATIONS



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THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

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MESSAGE ON WORLD POPULATION DAY

11 July 2011

This year's World Population Day falls during a milestone year, when we anticipate the birth of the earth's seven billionth inhabitant. This is an opportunity to celebrate our common humanity and our diversity. It is also a reminder of our shared responsibility to care for each other and our planet.

Reaching a global population of seven billion is a numerical landmark, but our focus should always be on people. That is why I am pleased that the United Nations Population Fund is giving meaning to the number by launching its campaign for "7 Billion Actions" to contribute to a better world.

More than ever, individuals can make a difference by uniting together through social networks and working for change. We have seen many examples this year of the immense power of people to embrace hope over despair, to seek fair treatment where they are suffering discrimination, and to demand justice over tyranny.

They are aspiring to attain universal rights that the United Nations proudly upholds and relentlessly works to realize.

When we act on our shared values, we contribute to our common future. Ending poverty and inequality unleashes vast human potential. Promoting the Millennium Development Goals fosters prosperity and peace. And protecting our planet safeguards the natural resources that sustain us all.

Later this year, a seven billionth baby will be born into our world of complexity and contradiction. We have enough food for everyone, yet nearly a billion go hungry. We have the means to eradicate many diseases, yet they continue to spread. We have the gift of a rich natural environment, yet it remains subjected to daily assault and exploitation. All people of conscience dream of peace, yet too much of the world is in conflict and steeped in armaments.

Overcoming challenges of this magnitude will demand the best in each of us. Let us use this World Population Day to take determined actions to create a better future for our world's seven billionth inhabitant and for generations to come.