

World Population Surpasses 8 Billion People, India To Overtake China Next Year

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The global population surpassed 8 billion people as of Tuesday, according to a projection from the United Nations.

The organization forecasts that the human race will have a membership of 8.5 billion people by 2030 and 9.7 billion people by 2050, although worldwide fertility rates have reached their lowest levels since 1950. India will surpass China next year as the world's most populous nation.

“This is an occasion to celebrate our diversity, recognize our common humanity, and marvel at advancements in health that have extended lifespans and dramatically reduced maternal and child mortality rates,” United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres said in a press release. “At the same time, it is a reminder of our shared responsibility to care for our planet and a moment to reflect on where we still fall short of our commitments to one another.”

More than half of global population growth over the next three decades is slated to occur in eight countries: Egypt, Ethiopia, India, Nigeria, Pakistan, the Philippines, Tanzania, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, according to the United Nations. As the populations of most Western countries grow older, most countries in sub-Saharan Africa, as well as parts of Asia and Latin America, are witnessing younger average working populations, signaling the possibility of a more productive workforce presuming gains in education and technology.

The expanding human population, despite lower worldwide birth rates following the lockdown-induced recession, has been the subject of concern for many climate activists. Referencing the purported need to further reduce fertility, United Nations Undersecretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs Liu Zhenmin commented in the press release that “rapid population growth makes eradicating poverty, combatting hunger and malnutrition, and increasing the coverage of health and education systems more difficult.”

Claims that decreasing population growth is beneficial for humanity, however, often overlook the robust innovation and productive capacity that can emerge from larger populations. Cato Institute Senior Fellow Marian Tupy, who has authored multiple books about the fallacy of planetary resource depletion, said during an interview with The Daily Wire that “the more people you have, the greater the number of people who are likely to be inventors or innovators.”

“The world’s population in the last 200 years has risen from 1 billion people to 8 billion people, and yet the world is much richer than it was before. Not just that, but we are living longer, we are healthier, we are better educated, we are more moral in many aspects,” he remarked. “Only human beings can have new ideas that lead to innovations, inventions, productivity gains, and increased standards of living. If any progress is going to come, it has to come from the human mind. The more people you have, the more ideas you have, the more innovations you have.”

Tupy, acknowledging that only a fraction of the population innovates in the way he described, noted that population growth is by no means the only factor for productivity. “If a large population was all that mattered, then China would be by far the richest country, because they have been the most populous country for the past 2,000 years,” he continued. “You need to have a modicum of freedom, whereby people are free to think, publish, and associate.”

With respect to climate change, Tupy cited innovation as a mechanism to harness resources in a more efficient manner, specifically pointing to the role of fracking in reducing carbon dioxide emissions and the role of aquaculture in preserving fish populations.

“Yes, human beings are contributing to climate change, but they are also contributing to solving climate change,” he remarked. “Every human being comes into the world not just with an empty stomach, but also with a brain, and it is on those brains that we rely on to create wealth.”