

with my Administration's overall initiative to cover uninsured children.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

Statement on World Population Growth

October 12, 1999

Today we mark the day that the world's population reportedly reaches 6 billion. It took just 12 years—from 1987 to today—for the world's population to expand from 5 to 6 billion people. We should be thankful that people today live longer and healthier lives than ever before. But over the next few years, this rapid growth and its effect on our environment and quality of life will pose difficult challenges for all of us.

In 1994 the United States helped forge a consensus at the International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo, Egypt, on a comprehensive approach to stabilizing world population growth. We agreed to work with other nations to help prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS, to improve the status of women, to enhance educational opportunities for children, and to support voluntary family planning and related health care.

My administration has made important strides in meeting these objectives. At home, we have increased funding for family planning and reproductive health services, which have helped reduce teen pregnancies and abortions. Overseas, we have invested more than \$5.5 billion in over 100 countries on health and population initiatives and on women's empowerment.

We have also worked to protect our environment and ensure that it can sustain the development needs of a growing population. We are

learning that technology can help developing countries grow while bypassing some of the environmental costs of the industrial age. We must promote that technology so that we can address both climate change and the challenge of providing clean energy for all the world's citizens.

Finally, we have recognized that the best way to stabilize population growth is to fight poverty and to build healthy, growing economies in the developing world. The debt relief package the world's wealthiest nations agreed to in Cologne this year will help us do that. Last month, I went even further, announcing that the United States will forgive 100 percent of the debt owed us by the world's least developed countries if they will use the savings to address basic human needs. And I committed the United States to a new effort to accelerate the development of vaccines for diseases that devastate the developing world.

As we mark this day, the central question we face is not simply how many people will live on this planet, but how they will live. We must refuse to accept a future in which one part of humanity lives on the cutting edge of a new economy, while another part lives on the edge of survival. And we must work for the day when all people have the education, health, security, safe environment, and freedom to lift their lives.

Message to the Congress Transmitting a Report on the Operation of the Caribbean Basin Economic Recovery Act

October 12, 1999

To the Congress of the United States:

As required by section 214 of the Caribbean Basin Economic Recovery Expansion Act of 1990 (19 U.S.C. 2702(f)), I transmit herewith

to the Congress the Third Report on the Operation of the Caribbean Basin Economic Recovery Act.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON