

## CHAPTER V

### THE FUTURE GROWTH OF WORLD POPULATION

Whether either a catastrophe or deterioration of social conditions few persons in health of global proportions, a world population of between 6,000 and 7,000 millions by the end of the century, should now be expected almost as a matter of certainty<sup>1</sup> (See figure 1)

Mid projection of world population growth is based on the assumption that the rate of growth will continue to rise until the end of the century, despite past fertility decline in western countries, and despite fertility declines beginning in 1957 projected for other areas on the medium assumption (table 5). Because of declining mortality, population increase will probably be accelerated throughout the century in Africa, Latin America, and Asia, even if fertility may decline after 1975.

Why do we expect further decline in mortality in the continents of Asia, Latin America and Africa?

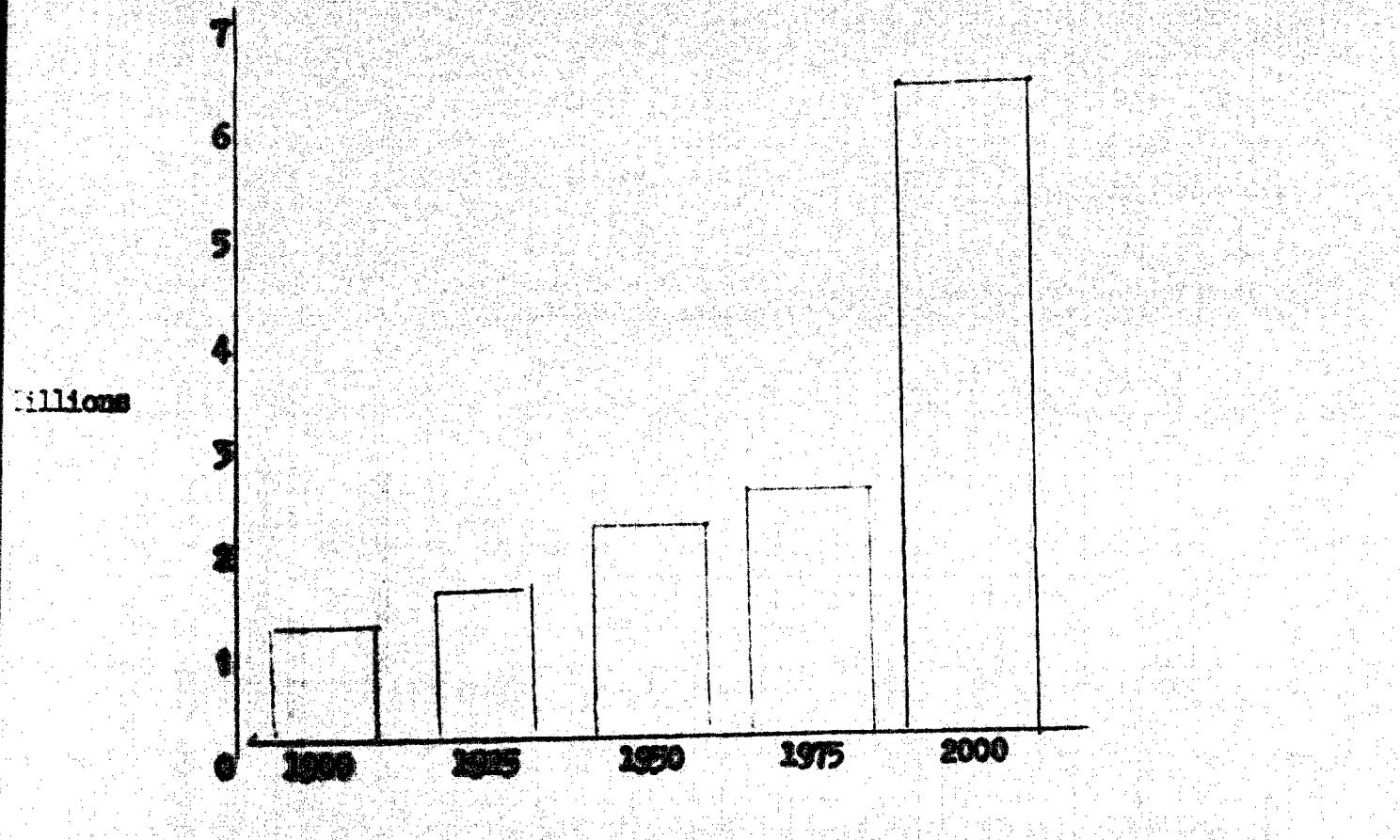
There is evidence of a progression of ameliorative measures with the beneficial effect of reducing sickness and mortality. This progress may well be expected to gain momentum in the coming years. Most governments of the underdeveloped countries of Asia, Latin America and Africa, recognize their responsibility to promote the welfare of the people. In India, for instance, large irrigation projects that are being executed will increase agricultural productivity by bringing million acres of new land under cultivation. With increase productivity, famine and disease will therefore be lessened. Moreover, the governments will also provide electrification on a large scale to facilitate the development of basic industries essential for the welfare of the country and an extension of cottage industries far into the countryside, in which over 80 per cent of the people live. All these steps taken by the governments concerned, tend to reinforce the effects of public health measures on the general mortality trend.

Further, a programme of social action is in progress, with the emphasis on a permanent improvement of the standards of life of the lower sections of the people. The application of new sanitary measures

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<sup>1</sup> United Nations, The Future Growth of World Population, New York, 1958  
P. 25

Figure 1



Period	World	Africa	North America	Latin America	Europe (excluding USSR)	Oceania
1900-25	32	22	88	177	19	19
1935-50	31	95	39	65	35	14
1950-75	53	82	42	86	60	71
1975-2000	64	71	30	98	78	40

Source:- The Future Growth of World Population, New York 1955, p. 22

and the control of insect-borne diseases also help to reduce death rates. In addition, United Nations, United States and Colombo Plan are giving financial and technical assistance to the underdeveloped countries, making available to them scientific methods of dealing with sickness and disease, and of improving the standard of living of the people. Finally the governments of the developed countries, and the development of communications are making provision for alleviating the effects of large scale suffering, sickness and reducing deaths due to disasters such as famine, floods, and earthquakes. Hence, a further decline in death rates is expected to occur.

Since there remains considerable scope for rapid decreases in the death rates, the rates of population growth therefore tend to accelerate. As a result of rapid increases in population, the population of most continents is likely to be quadrupled in the course of our century. The exceptions are Europe (including Soviet Union) whose population, more than doubles, and Latin America, whose population is likely to increase ten-fold (table 6).

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<sup>2</sup>Falling death rates, however, may encounter certain possible obstacles. Mortality decline, it has been suggested, depends on the continuity of the operations of the factors affecting it. This implies that any discontinuity may prevent death rates from falling. According to the United Nations experts, 'if the internal changes slow down the process of construction work going on in those countries in the fields of health and social welfare, or if they reverse the process altogether, then the expectation of a progressive fall in the death rates will naturally not be borne out. The process of construction may slacken as several of the countries in question are too poor to operate it. However, with the continuance of help and guidance from international sources, the governments may be able to provide adequate services to the people. Another possibility is that the present death control measures may turn out to be ineffective in the near future. Evidence from Greece suggests that the anopheline mosquito is rapidly developing resistance to DDT and other insecticides. The situation may well prepare the ground for renewed large scale outbreak of the disease. Such a renewal of outbreak of the disease, is however, unlikely to happen for it is assured that future scientific weapon against the disease would take care of the problem. Death rates in the underdeveloped countries that are expected to continue falling as long as the developed nations and the international bodies are prepared to prolong their aid programmes, and as long as scientists are making research on new ways of combating the disease.

Changes in the distribution of world population among continents are also expected to take place (table 7). Africa's share in the world total may change, but only slightly. Latin America's share will increase throughout the century, outstripping the population of both Northern America and Africa within 1950-75 period. More than half of world's people live in Asia and the proportion is likely to surpass three-fifths before the century is ended. There will be a continuous decline in the relative importance of Europe including Soviet Union. Early in the century, there was one European for every two Asians, by end of the century, this ratio may have become one to four.

The future growth of world population would therefore be influenced mainly by the continents of Asia, Latin America and Africa. This it will now take a mere 50 years for the world's human population to add another 2,000 million while it took a 100,000 years for the population to reach 2,500 millions. With the current rate of population growth, it is therefore not surprising that in 600 years, the number of human beings on the earth will be such that there will be only one square meter for each to live on.

1957 and 2000

Year	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
Scenarios																															
High	100.0	7.7	8.2	8.8	9.3	9.8	10.3	10.8	11.3	11.8	12.3	12.8	13.3	13.8	14.3	14.8	15.3	15.8	16.3	16.8	17.3	17.8	18.3	18.8	19.3	19.8	20.3	20.8	21.3		
Medium	100.0	8.0	8.6	9.1	9.6	10.1	10.6	11.1	11.6	12.1	12.6	13.1	13.6	14.1	14.6	15.1	15.6	16.1	16.6	17.1	17.6	18.1	18.6	19.1	19.6	20.1	20.6	21.1	21.6	22.1	
Low	100.0	8.3	8.9	9.4	9.9	10.4	10.9	11.4	11.9	12.4	12.9	13.4	13.9	14.4	14.9	15.4	15.9	16.4	16.9	17.4	17.9	18.4	18.9	19.4	19.9	20.4	20.9	21.4	21.9	22.4	
Very Low	100.0	8.6	9.2	9.7	10.2	10.7	11.2	11.7	12.2	12.7	13.2	13.7	14.2	14.7	15.2	15.7	16.2	16.7	17.2	17.7	18.2	18.7	19.2	19.7	20.2	20.7	21.2	21.7	22.2	22.7	
Very High	100.0	9.0	9.6	10.1	10.6	11.1	11.6	12.1	12.6	13.1	13.6	14.1	14.6	15.1	15.6	16.1	16.6	17.1	17.6	18.1	18.6	19.1	19.6	20.1	20.6	21.1	21.6	22.1	22.6	23.1	

Source - U.N., The Nature Growth of World Population, New York, 1955, p.24.