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FUTURE WORLD POPULATION GROWTH TO BE CONCENTRATED IN URBAN AREAS OF WORLD

According to New Report Issued by United Nations Population Division

NEW YORK, 21 March (DESA) -- Virtually all the population growth expected at the world level during the next 30 years will be concentrated in urban areas. Also, for the first time in the world's history, the number of urban dwellers will equal the number of rural dwellers in 2007.

These findings are from just-released United Nations official estimates and projections of urban, rural and city populations, prepared by the Population Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs.

Major findings of the study "World Urbanization Prospects: The 2001 Revision" are:

-- Half the world population is expected to live in urban areas in 2007. The world's urban population reached 2.9 billion in 2000 and is expected rise to 5 billion by 2030. Whereas 30 per cent of the world population lived in urban areas in 1950, the proportion of urban dwellers rose to 47 per cent by 2000 and is projected to attain 60 per cent by 2030.

-- Almost all of the population increase expected during 2000-2030 will be absorbed by the urban areas of the less developed regions. During that period the urban population of the less developed regions is expected to increase by 2.0 billion persons, nearly as much as will be added to the world population, 2.2 billion.

-- In 1995-2000, the world's urban population grew at a rate of 2.2 per cent per year. During 2000-2030, it is projected to grow at an average annual rate of 1.8 per cent; at that rate of growth, the world's urban population will double in 38 years.

-- The urban growth rate of less developed regions reached 3.0 per cent per year in 1995-2000 compared to 0.5 per cent in more developed regions. The urban growth rate will continue to be particularly rapid in the urban areas of less developed regions, averaging 2.4 per cent per year during 2000-2030, consistent with a doubling time of 29 years.

-- In contrast, the rural population of the less developed regions is expected to grow very slowly, at just 0.2 per cent per year during 2000-2030. The world rural population will remain nearly stable during 2000-2030, varying between 3.2 billion and 3.3 billion.

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-- The process of urbanization is already very advanced in the more developed regions, where 75 per cent of the population lived in urban areas in 2000. Nevertheless, the concentration of population in cities is expected to continue so that, by 2030, 84 per cent of the inhabitants of more developed countries will be urban dwellers.

-- The level of urbanization is considerably lower in the less developed regions, where 40 per cent of the population lived in urban areas in 2000. This proportion is expected to rise to 56 per cent by 2030.

-- There are marked differences in the level and pace of urbanization among the major areas constituting the less developed regions of the world. Latin America and the Caribbean as a whole are highly urbanized, with 75 per cent of the population living in urban settlements in 2000, a proportion higher than that of Europe. Moreover, this proportion is twice as high as the one estimated for Africa or Asia. With 37 per cent of their respective populations living in urban areas in 2000, Africa and Asia are considerably less urbanized and, consequently, are expected to experience rapid rates of urbanization during 2000-2030. It is expected that by 2030, 53 per cent and 54 per cent, respectively, of their inhabitants will live in urban areas. At that time, 84 per cent of the population of Latin America and the Caribbean will be urban, a level similar to that of North America, the most highly urbanized area of the world, by 2030

-- The proportion of people living in very large urban agglomerations or mega-cities is small. In 2000, 3.7 per cent of the world population resided in cities of 10 million inhabitants or more and by 2015 that proportion is expected to rise to 4.7 per cent.

-- In 2000, 24.8 per cent of the world population lived in urban settlements with fewer than 500,000 inhabitants and by 2015 that proportion will likely rise to 27.1 per cent. In 2000, 41.8 per cent of the population in developed countries lived in urban settlements with fewer than 500,000 inhabitants and by 2015 that proportion is expected to rise to 43.0 per cent. In less developed regions, where the majority of the population still resides in rural areas, the proportion of people living in small cities was 20.7 per cent in 2000 and will rise to 23.8 per cent by 2015.

-- In 2000, 52.5 per cent of all urban dwellers lived in settlements with fewer than 500,000 inhabitants, a proportion that is expected to decline slightly by 2015 but still remain over 50 per cent. Consequently, the trend towards concentration of the population in larger urban settlements has not yet resulted in a marked decline of either the proportion or the number of persons living in smaller urban settlements.

-- Large urban agglomerations do not necessarily experience fast population growth. In fact, some of the fastest growing cities have small populations and, as population size increases, the growth rate of a city's population tends to decline.

-- With 26.5 million inhabitants, Tokyo is the most populous urban agglomeration in the world, followed by São Paulo (18.3), Mexico City (18.3), New York (16.8) and Mumbai (16.5). By 2015, Tokyo will remain the largest urban agglomeration with 27.2 million inhabitants, followed by Dhaka, Mumbai, São Paulo, Delhi and Mexico City, all of which are expected to have more than 20 million inhabitants.

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The "2001 Revision" presents estimates and projections of urban and rural populations for major areas, regions and countries of the world for the period 1950-2030. It also provides population estimates and projections of urban agglomerations with 750,000 or more inhabitants in 2000 for the period 1950-2015, and the population of all capitals in 2001. A forthcoming publication will provide detailed data tables and expanded analyses of the results. Selected results of the "World Urbanization Prospects: The 2001 Revision" may also be accessed on the Population Division Web site at www.unpopulation.org.

Further information may be obtained from the office of Joseph Chamie, Director, Population Division, United Nations, New York, NY, 10017, USA; tel. 1-212-963-3179; fax 1-212-963-2147.

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TABLE 1. SELECTED INDICATORS FOR THE URBAN AND RURAL POPULATION
BY DEVELOPMENT GROUP, 1995-2030

<i>Development group</i>	<i>Population (billions)</i>			<i>Growth rate (percentage)</i>		<i>Doubling time (years)</i>	
	<i>1995</i>	<i>2000</i>	<i>2030</i>	<i>1995-2000</i>	<i>2000-2030</i>	<i>1995-2000</i>	<i>2000-2030</i>
<i>A. Population size and growth</i>							
Total population							
World	5.66	6.06	8.27	1.35	1.04	51	67
More developed regions	1.17	1.19	1.22	0.30	0.07	235	998
Less developed regions	4.49	4.87	7.05	1.61	1.24	43	56
Urban population							
World	2.57	2.86	4.98	2.19	1.85	32	38
More developed regions	0.88	0.90	1.00	0.50	0.38	138	185
Less developed regions	1.69	1.96	3.98	3.01	2.35	23	29
Rural population							
World	3.10	3.19	3.29	0.63	0.10	111	714
More developed regions	0.30	0.29	0.21	-0.32	-1.09		
Less developed regions	2.80	2.90	3.08	0.72	0.20	96	352
<i>B. Urban indicators</i>							
	<i>Percentage urban</i>			<i>Urbanization rate</i>		<i>Doubling time</i>	
	<i>1995</i>	<i>2000</i>	<i>2030</i>	<i>(percentage)</i>		<i>(years)</i>	
	<i>1995</i>	<i>2000</i>	<i>2030</i>	<i>1995-2000</i>	<i>2000-2030</i>	<i>1995-2000</i>	<i>2000-2030</i>
World	45.3	47.2	60.2	0.84	0.81	83	86
More developed regions	74.6	75.4	82.6	0.21	0.31		
Less developed regions	37.7	40.4	56.4	1.39	1.11	50	62

Source: United Nations Population Division, *World Urbanization Prospects: The 2001 Revision*.

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TABLE 2. POPULATION OF CITIES WITH 10 MILLION INHABITANTS OR MORE, 1950, 1975, 2001 AND 2015
(millions)

<i>1950</i>		<i>1975</i>		<i>2001</i>		<i>2015</i>	
<i>City</i>	<i>Population</i>	<i>City</i>	<i>Population</i>	<i>City</i>	<i>Population</i>	<i>City</i>	<i>Population</i>
1 New York	12.3	1 Tokyo	19.8	1 Tokyo	26.5	1 Tokyo	27.2
		2 New York	15.9	2 São Paulo	18.3	2 Dhaka	22.8
		3 Shanghai	11.4	3 Mexico City	18.3	3 Mumbai	22.6
		4 Mexico City	10.7	4 New York	16.8	4 São Paulo	21.2
		5 São Paulo	10.3	5 Mumbai	16.5	5 Delhi	20.9
				6 Los Angeles	13.3	6 Mexico City	20.4
				7 Calcutta	13.3	7 New York	17.9
				8 Dhaka	13.2	8 Jakarta	17.3
				9 Delhi	13.0	9 Calcutta	16.7
				10 Shanghai	12.8	10 Karachi	16.2
				11 Buenos Aires	12.1	11 Lagos	16.0
				12 Jakarta	11.4	12 Los Angeles	14.5
				13 Osaka	11.0	13 Shanghai	13.6
				14 Beijing	10.8	14 Buenos Aires	13.2
				15 Rio de Janeiro	10.8	15 Metro Manila	12.6
				16 Karachi	10.4	16 Beijing	11.7
				17 Metro Manila	10.1	17 Rio de Janeiro	11.5
						18 Cairo	11.5
						19 Istanbul	11.4
						20 Osaka	11.0
						21 Tianjin	10.3

Source: United Nations Population Division, *World Urbanization Prospects: The 2001 Revision*.

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