

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

Oct. 12 / Administration of William J. Clinton, 1999

The White House,
October 12, 1999.

Remarks at the Eighth Millennium Evening at the White House October 12, 1999

[*The First Lady began the program making brief remarks and introducing the evening's featured speakers: Dr. Vinton G. Cerf, senior vice president of Internet architecture and technology, MCI WorldCom, who discussed the evolution of Internet technology; and Dr. Eric Lander, director, Whitehead Institute/MIT Center for Genome Research, who discussed advances in genetic research and biotechnology.*]

The President. We have had many wonderful nights here, but I don't think I've ever been more stimulated by two talks in my life. Thank you, Dr. Cerf. Thank you, Dr. Lander.

I would like to also say a word of appreciation to Hillary. I think that, as our time here draws toward its close, it's clear that she has been I believe the most active and innovative First Lady since Eleanor Roosevelt, for perhaps these Millennium Evenings will last longer in the imagination of America than virtually anything any of us have done, and I thank her for that.

Also, being term-limited does have its compensations. Normally, at this time of year, in this kind of year, I'd be doing something else tonight. [*Laughter*] Yesterday I called the Vice President to rub it in and describe what I would be doing tonight. [*Laughter*] And I was having a very good time turning the screw about how fascinating this was going to be. And finally, he said, "That's okay, you need to be there more than I do." [*Laughter*] The jokes about my technological and scientific limitations are legion around the White House. [*Laughter*]

So I have been thinking of all these questions. Do I really want a mouse smart enough to go to Princeton? [*Laughter*] Won't it be sad to have an Internet connection with Mars if there are no Martians to write to or E-mail us? [*Laughter*] I am glad to know that the total connection of the Internet to the nervous system of human beings is a little ways out there in the future. I had been under the impression that that has already occurred among all children under 15 in America. [*Laughter*]

This is an amazing set of topics. Let me say just one other thing. I really loved seeing—on a slightly sad note, I loved seeing that wonderful, famous picture of Wilt Chamberlain and Willie Shoemaker. Some of you may know the great Wilt Chamberlain passed away today, one of the greatest athletes of the 20th century. So I hope you will have him and his family and friends in your thoughts and prayers tonight.

This is a fitting thing for us to do in the White House, because innovations in communication and technology are a very important part of the history of this old place. In 1858 the first transatlantic telegraph transmission was received here in a message that Queen Victoria sent to President Buchanan. Later, the first telephone in Washington, DC, was located in a room upstairs, and we now have a replica of that telephone in the same room upstairs. The first mobile phone call to the Moon was made here by President Nixon 30 years ago. Even these Millennium Evenings have made their own history. This is where we held the first-ever cyberspace at the White House.

So I want to thank the speakers for building on all of this and telling us what we can look forward to in the future and for reminding us that as we unlock age-old mysteries and make what we can think more possible to do, there are ways to do it that bring us together as a society.

So I would like to begin the questioning, if I might, with a question to Dr. Lander, because it bears on a great deal of the work we've done.

You talked about how we were 99.9 percent the same, but how if you looked at how many permutations there were in the one-tenth of a percent left, we could still be very different. I think it's very interesting—and I talk about this all the time—that as we're on the edge of this new millennium and we have these evenings and we imagine this future that you have sketched out to us, this is what we all like to think about, how exciting, how wonderful, how