

Eight billion prosperous beings?

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The world surpassed 8 billion inhabitants this Tuesday

By Roberto Morejón

Analysts of the hegemonic press prefer to bask in the milestone for Humanity represented by the arrival of eight billion inhabitants, but other experts take advantage of the occasion to issue alarms about the deep inequalities that exist.

As UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres pointed out, this represents a demographic advance, but at the same time, he stressed, it poses complex links between development, poverty and climate change.

These factors are closely intertwined, even though experts on the subject may try to confine themselves to the numerical fact and the unquestionable progress in science, health and nutrition that made it possible.

Without denying those successes that have led to an increase in life expectancy, it is realistic to dwell on what Guterres points out, the enormous gap between rich and poor, an element that if it is not overcome,

he said, the world will be full of tensions and mistrust, crises and conflicts.

Rivalries are flaring up and the industrialized North is looking to the impoverished South to inspect what it calls the observance of human rights, while it is withholding aid for development or the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.

As if that were not enough, population growth, reported mainly in sub-Saharan Africa, makes it difficult to reduce poverty, hunger and malnutrition.

In any case, if this increase were to slow down, it would be difficult to concentrate resources on tackling the planet's pressing problems, such as, among others, those derived from climate change.

In the midst of this battle not with projectiles, humanity will have 10.4 billion people in the 2080s.

This prognosis is cause for reflection because, as the Population Fund pointed out, the international community must ensure that all countries have the capacity to provide a good quality of life for all their inhabitants.

This will be closely related to the decoupling of economic activity from excessive subordination to fossil fuel energy.

And it will also be imperative to defeat inequality, based on greater spending of state resources, donations from the affluent, relief from the onerous burden of foreign debt on the coffers of the South, and preferential treatment for the most vulnerable.

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