World's 'seven billionth baby' is born

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Danica May Camacho, a girl born in Philippine capital Manila, is chosen by UN to symbolically mark global population milestone

A baby girl named Danica Camacho has been chosen symbolically as the world's seven billionth baby. Photograph: Erik De Castro/AFP/Getty Images

The world's seven billionth baby has been born in a packed government-run hospital in the Philippines.

Weighing 2.5kg (5.5lb), Danica May Camacho was chosen by the United Nations to be one of several children around the world who will symbolically represent the global population milestone.

She was delivered just before midnight on Sunday amid an explosion of press camera flashes at Manila's Jose Fabella Memorial Hospital.

"She looks so lovely," her mother, Camille Dalura, whispered softly as she cradled her tiny newborn.

"I can't believe she is the world's seven billionth."

Danica's name means morning star. She is a second child for Camille Dalura and Florante Camacho.

The parents and the baby were met by officials from the UN, which named 31 October Seven Billion Day, aiming to draw attention to the challenges of the world's growing population.

The accuracy of the projection has been questioned, with some groups arguing that the figure is more likely to be reached next year.

UN officials nevertheless presented the baby and her parents with a small cake as she lay on her mother's chest wearing a knitted red hat.

The family also received a scholarship grant for Danica's education from wellwishers and some money to help them open a shop.
Previous children picked out at birth by the UN to mark world population milestones have complained that the international body forgot about them later in life.

Both 12-year-old Adnan Nevic of Bosnia Herzegovina, the sixth billionth baby, and Matej Gaspar from Croatia, who was number five billion, have complained that the UN chose them at birth then largely ignored them.

"We saw Kofi Annan as almost like a godfather to him," Adnan's father, Jasminko, told the Guardian.

Adnan said: "He held me up when I was two days old but since then we have heard nothing from them."

The UN Population Fund hopes to raise awareness about reproductive health, women's rights and inequality through the campaign.

Countries around the world have held celebrations to mark the occasion, including a song contest in Zambia and a concert in Vietnam.

The Philippines has 94.9 million people, according to a UN report, and 10% of girls aged 15 to 19 have been pregnant.

Enrique Ona, the country's health secretary, said the birth offered his country an opportunity to address population-related problems.