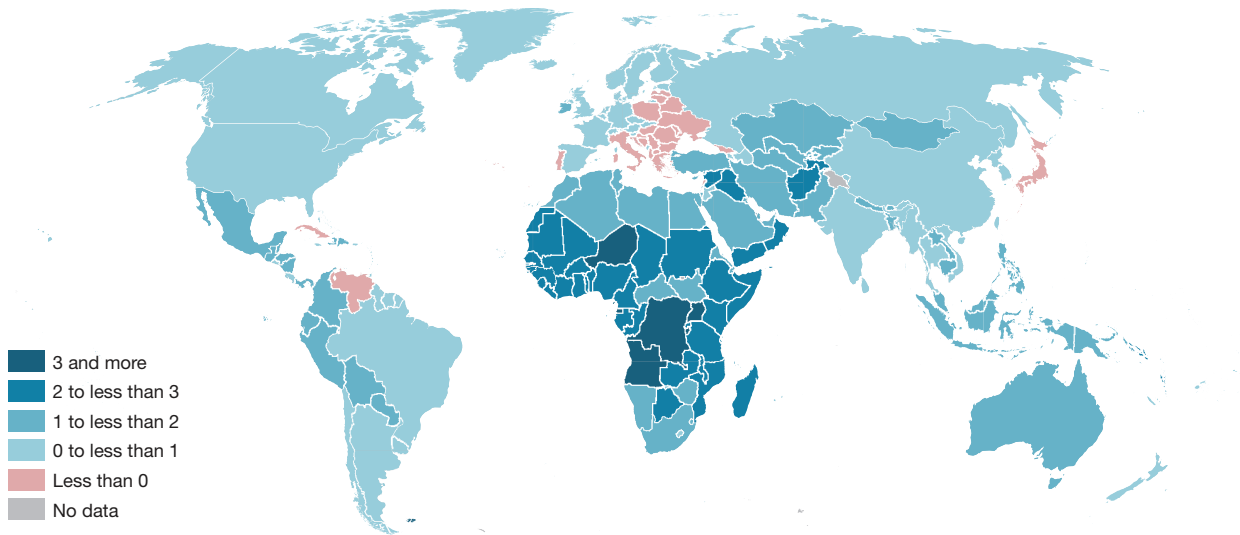




Fact sheet #11: Total and urban population

Map 1 | Annual population growth, 2020
(Percentage)



Concepts and definitions

The population estimates and projections reported in this chapter represent the population present in an economy (including residents, migrants and refugees) as of 1 July of a given year (UN DESA, 2019a, 2019b).

The figures for the years from 2020 to 2050 are based on the medium fertility variant projection. The assumptions for these projections imply that the average fertility rate of the world will decline from 2.5 births per woman in 2019 to 2.2 in 2050. The United Nations also produce other projection variants. Their outcome is highly dependent on the path that future fertility takes (UN DESA, 2019b). Projections were made in 2019 and the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic are currently unknown (UN DESA, 2021).

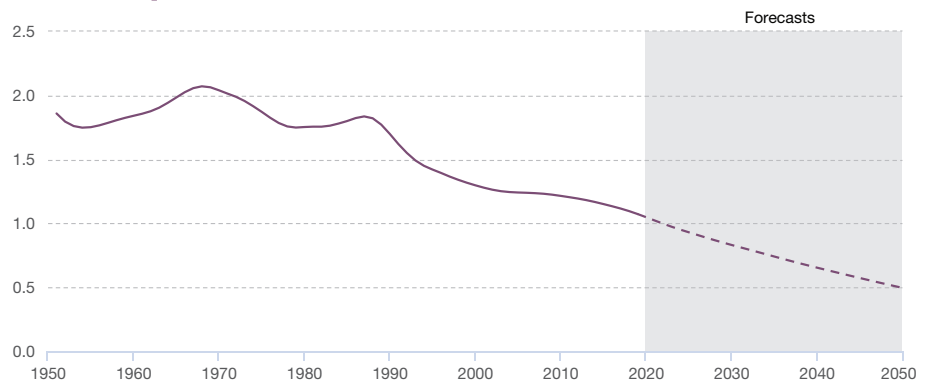
Urban population is defined as the population living in areas classified as urban according to the criteria used by each country or territory (UN DESA, 2018, 2019c).

Slowdown of world population growth

The steady slowdown in world population growth, taking place since the late 1980s, continued in 2020. According to projections from 2019, not considering the outbreak of COVID-19, world population grew by 1.0 per cent in 2020, or 81 million people, to reach a global total of 7.8 billion. In the coming decades, the slowdown in the rate of population growth is projected to continue. By 2050, it is forecast to fall below 0.5 per cent per year.

The population of Africa is growing especially fast. In 2020, with a rate of 2.5 per cent, it increased at more than double the pace of the world total. Several economies in Sub-Saharan Africa recorded growth rates well above 3 per cent. Rates higher than the global average were also common in Western, Southern and South-Eastern Asia and in parts of South America. Developed economies experienced generally low population growth, 0.2 per cent on average. In 2020, population was expected to have declined in several Eastern and Southern European economies, as well as, for example, Venezuela, Cuba, Georgia and Japan.

Figure 1 | Annual growth rate of world population
(Percentage)



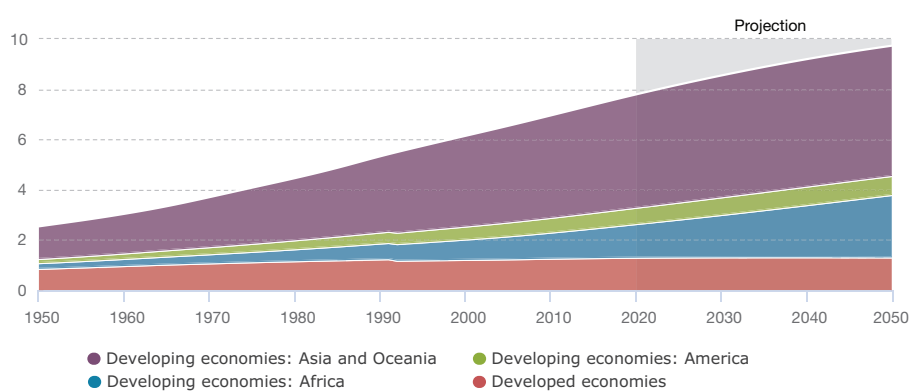


Developing economies drive population growth

Over the last 30 years, the world population has increased by 2.5 billion people. Most of this growth occurred in developing economies, mainly in Asia and Oceania. Today, 84 per cent of the world's population live in a developing economy. In 1990, this figure was only 77 per cent.

In the next 30 years, global population is projected to grow by 1.9 billion people. The population of the developing world will continue to grow. The population of Africa alone is projected to grow by 1.1 billion. One quarter of the world population will live in Africa, as compared to one sixth today.

Figure 2 | World population by group of economies (Billions)



World population has increased by 2.5 billion people in the last 30 years



Population of Africa growing at more than double the pace of the world average: 2.5% per year

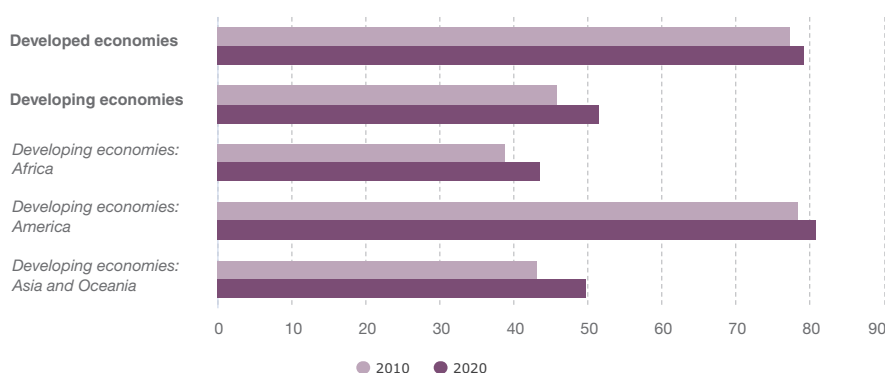


Urbanization continues

All over the world, a growing proportion of the population lives in cities. In 2010, 51.6 per cent lived in urban areas. By 2020, the share of urban population increased to 56.2 per cent. It is generally higher in the developed (79.2 per cent in 2020) than in the developing world (51.6 per cent). In LDCs, the people living in urban areas are in the minority (34.6 per cent).

Over the last ten years, urbanization has been most pronounced in developing economies, especially in Asia and Oceania, which saw the urbanization rate increase from 43.1 in 2010 to 49.8 per cent in 2020. By contrast, further urbanization in the developing economies of America has been relatively modest. Urbanization levels in this region are already comparable to developed economies.

Figure 3 | Urban population by group of economies (Percentage of total population)



By 2050, an additional 2 billion people will live on earth



In developed economies, 79% of people live in cities




Table 1 Total population by group of economies

Group of economies	Population			Annual growth rate ^a		
	(Millions)			(Percentage)		
	2015	2020	2050	2015–2020	2020	2020–2050
World	7 380	7 795	9 735	1.1	1.0	0.7
Developed economies	1 271	1 288	1 299	0.3	0.2	0.0
Developing economies	6 108	6 506	8 436	1.3	1.2	0.9
Developing economies: Africa	1 181	1 339	2 488	2.5	2.5	2.1
Developing economies: America	619	650	759	1.0	0.9	0.5
Developing economies: Asia and Oceania	4 308	4 517	5 189	0.9	0.9	0.5
Selected groups						
Developing economies excluding China	4 702	5 067	7 033	1.5	1.5	1.1
Developing economies excluding LDCs	5 168	5 449	6 560	1.1	1.0	0.6
LDCs	941	1 057	1 876	2.3	2.3	1.9
LLDCs	474	533	926	2.4	2.3	1.8
SIDS (UN-OHRLLS)	65	68	84	1.1	1.1	0.7
HIPCs (IMF)	662	760	1 482	2.8	2.7	2.2
BRICS	3 122	3 237	3 482	0.7	0.7	0.2
G20	4 729	4 894	5 277	0.7	0.6	0.3

^a Exponential growth rate (see UNCTAD Handbook of Statistics 2021, annex 6.3).

Table 2 Urban population by group of economies

Group of economies	Urban population			Share in total population		
	(Millions)			(Percentage)		
	2015	2020	2050	2015	2020	2050
World	3 980	4 380	6 656	53.9	56.2	68.4
Developed economies	995	1 020	1 125	78.3	79.2	86.6
Developing economies	2 985	3 359	5 531	48.9	51.6	65.6
Developing economies: Africa	487	583	1 470	41.2	43.5	59.1
Developing economies: America	494	526	665	79.8	81.0	87.7
Developing economies: Asia and Oceania	2 004	2 250	3 396	46.5	49.8	65.4
Selected groups						
Developing economies excluding China	2 204	2 475	4 408	46.9	48.8	62.7
Developing economies excluding LDCs	2 684	2 993	4 546	51.9	54.9	69.3
LDCs	301	366	985	32.0	34.6	52.5
LLDCs	142	167	422	30.0	31.3	45.5
SIDS (UN-OHRLLS)	38	42	57	59.5	60.9	67.7
HIPCs (IMF)	228	280	793	34.5	36.8	53.5
BRICS	1 529	1 700	2 374	49.0	52.5	68.2
G20	2 744	2 974	3 901	58.0	60.8	73.9


Table 3 | Most populated economies

Economy	Total			Urban		
	Population	Annual growth rate ^a		Share in total population	Annual growth rate ^a	
	(Millions)	(Percentage)		(Percentage)	(Percentage)	
	2020	2015–2020	2020–2050	2020	2015–2020	2020–2050
China	1 439	0.5	-0.1	61.4	2.5	0.8
India	1 380	1.0	0.6	34.9	2.3	2.0
United States of America	334	0.6	0.4	82.8	0.8	0.7
Indonesia	274	1.1	0.6	56.6	2.3	1.5
Pakistan	221	2.0	1.4	37.2	2.7	2.6
Brazil	213	0.8	0.2	87.1	1.1	0.4
Nigeria	206	2.6	2.2	52.0	4.2	3.2
Bangladesh	165	1.1	0.5	38.2	3.2	1.9
Russian Federation	146	0.1	-0.2	74.8	0.3	0.1
Mexico	129	1.1	0.6	80.7	1.5	0.9
Japan	126	-0.2	-0.6	91.8	-0.1	-0.5
Ethiopia	115	2.6	1.9	21.7	4.8	3.9
Philippines	110	1.4	0.9	47.4	1.9	1.8
Egypt	102	2.0	1.5	42.8	2.0	2.4
Viet Nam	97	1.0	0.4	37.3	3.0	1.8
Congo, Dem. Rep. of the	90	3.2	2.6	45.6	4.5	3.7
Turkey	84	1.4	0.5	76.1	2.1	0.9
Iran (Islamic Republic of)	84	1.4	0.7	75.9	2.0	1.1
Germany	84	0.5	-0.1	77.5	0.5	0.1
Thailand	70	0.3	-0.2	51.4	1.8	0.8

^a Exponential growth rate (see UNCTAD Handbook of Statistics 2021, annex 6.3).