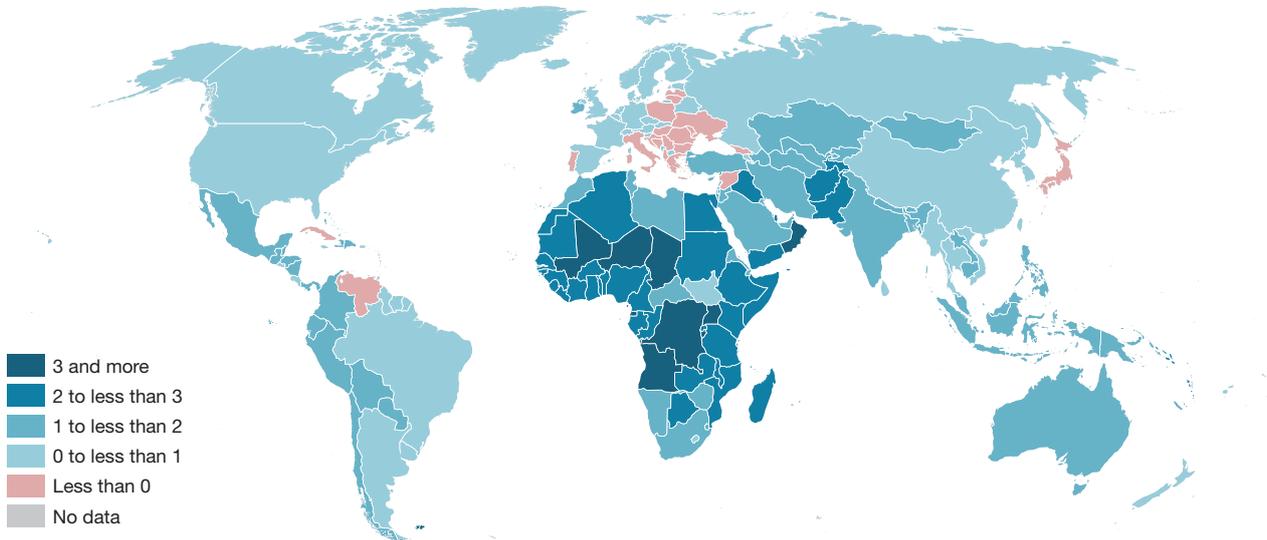




# Fact sheet #11: Total and urban population

**Map 1** | Annual population growth, 2018  
(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 the 1st of July of a given year (United Nations, 2019b, 2019c).

The figures for the years from 2015 to 2050 are based on the medium fertility variant projection. This assumes that the average fertility rate of the world will decline from 2.5 births per woman in the period 2010–2015 to 2.2 in the period 2045–2050. United Nations also produce other projection variants. Their outcome is highly dependent on the path that future fertility will take (United Nations, 2019b).

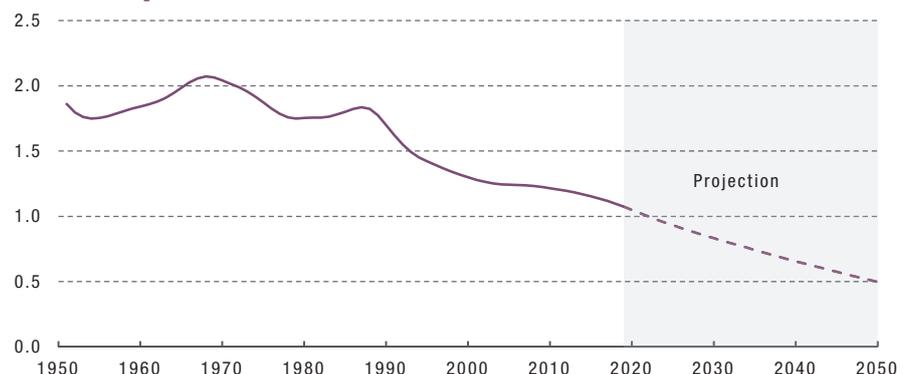
Urban population is defined as the population living in areas classified as urban according to the criteria used by each country or territory (United Nations, 2019d).

## Slowdown of world population growth

The steady slowdown in world population growth, taking place since the late 1980s, continued in 2018. The population grew by 1.1 per cent over the year, or 83 million people, to reach a global total of 7.6 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.

The population of Africa is growing especially fast. In 2018, with a rate of 2.5 per cent, it increased at more than double the pace of the world total. Several central African economies, such as Niger, Uganda, Equatorial Guinea, Angola and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, recorded growth rates well above 3 per cent. Rates higher than world average were also common in Western, Southern and South-Eastern Asia and in Central and Western-Andean South America. Developed economies experienced generally low population growth, 0.3 per cent on average. Several Eastern and Southern European economies, as well as Cuba, Venezuela, Syria, Georgia and Japan, saw their population decline.

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



Note: Annual exponential rate of growth of the population (see UNCTAD Handbook of Statistics 2019, annex 6.3).

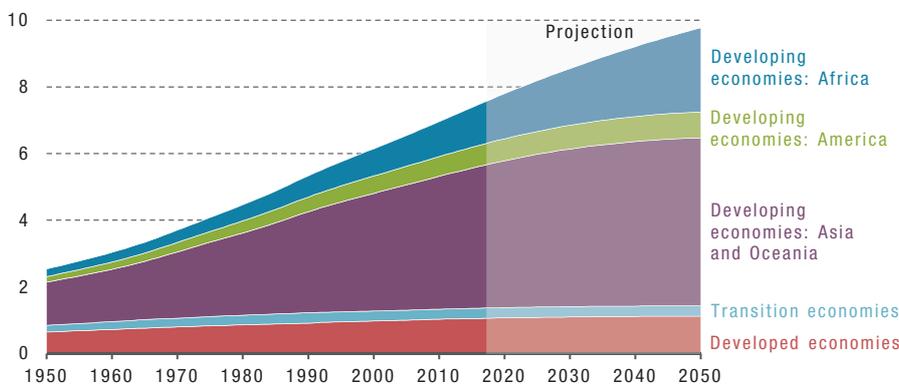


### Developing economies drive population growth

Over the last 30 years, the world population has increased by 2.5 billion people. More than 90 per cent of this growth occurred in developing economies, mainly Asia and Oceania. Today, four in five people live in a developing economy. In 1988, this was only the case for three in four.

In the next 30 years, the world is projected to host an additional 2.0 billion. Most of that increase will be accounted for by the developing world. The population of Africa alone will grow by 1.1 billion. One fourth of the world population will live in Africa, as compared to one sixth today.

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

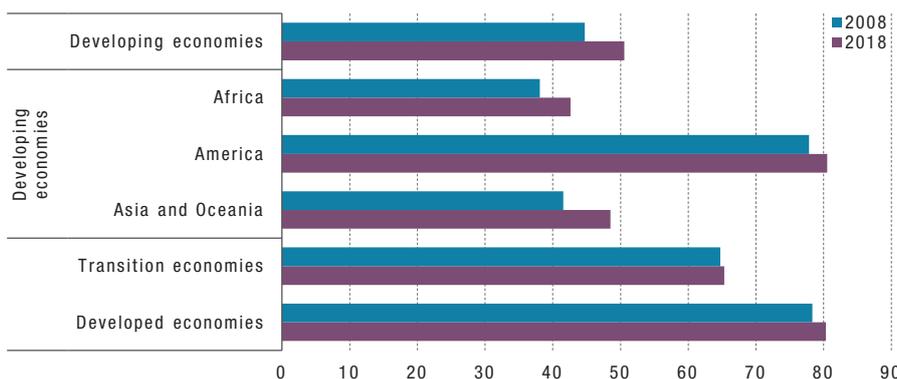


### Urbanization continues

All over the world, a growing proportion of the population lives in cities. Ten years ago, 50.6 per cent lived in urban areas. By 2018, the share of urban population increased to 55.3 per cent. It is generally higher in the developed (80 per cent in 2018) than in the developing world (51 per cent), with transition economies in between the two (65 per cent).

Over the last ten years, urbanization has been most pronounced in developing economies, especially in developing Asia and Oceania, which saw the urbanization rate increase from 41.5 in 2008 to 48.5 per cent in 2018. By contrast, further urbanization in the developing economies of America has been relatively modest. But urbanization levels in this region are already comparable to developed economies' levels.

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



For references, see UNCTAD Handbook of Statistics 2019, annex 6.4.

In 2018 the world population grew by 83 million people



4 out of 5 live in a developing economy



By 2048, an additional 2 billion people will live on earth



Proportion of urban population increased from 50.6% to 55.3% over the last decade




**Table 1** Total population by group of economies

Group of economies	Population			Annual growth rate <sup>a</sup>		
	(Millions)			(Percentage)		
	2013	2018	2050	2013–2018	2018	2018–2050
<b>World</b>	<b>7 211</b>	<b>7 631</b>	<b>9 735</b>	<b>1.1</b>	<b>1.1</b>	<b>0.8</b>
Developing economies	5 865	6 260	8 318	1.3	1.3	0.9
Developing economies: Africa	1 122	1 275	2 488	2.6	2.5	2.1
Developing economies: America	606	638	759	1.0	1.0	0.5
Developing economies: Asia and Oceania	4 137	4 347	5 072	1.0	0.9	0.5
Transition economies	304	310	315	0.4	0.4	0.1
Developed economies	1 042	1 061	1 102	0.4	0.3	0.1
<b>Selected groups</b>						
Developing economies excluding China	4 473	4 832	6 916	1.5	1.5	1.1
Developing economies excluding LDCs	4 967	5 250	6 441	1.1	1.1	0.6
LDCs	898	1 010	1 877	2.3	2.3	1.9
LLDCs	452	509	926	2.4	2.4	1.9
SIDS (UNCTAD)	12	13	16	1.1	1.1	0.7
HIPCs (IMF)	626	720	1 482	2.8	2.8	2.3
BRICS	3 072	3 193	3 482	0.8	0.7	0.3
G20	4 656	4 832	5 277	0.7	0.7	0.3

<sup>a</sup> Annual exponential rate of growth (see UNCTAD Handbook of Statistics 2019, annex 6.3).

**Table 2** Urban population by group of economies

Group of economies	Urban population			Share in total population		
	(Millions)			(Percentage)		
	2013	2018	2050	2013	2018	2050
<b>World</b>	<b>3 823</b>	<b>4 220</b>	<b>6 656</b>	<b>53.0</b>	<b>55.3</b>	<b>68.4</b>
Developing economies	2 798	3 165	5 458	47.7	50.6	65.6
Developing economies: Africa	452	543	1 470	40.3	42.6	59.1
Developing economies: America	481	514	665	79.3	80.5	87.7
Developing economies: Asia and Oceania	1 865	2 108	3 323	45.1	48.5	65.5
Transition economies	198	203	234	65.1	65.3	74.1
Developed economies	828	852	965	79.4	80.3	87.6
<b>Selected groups</b>						
Developing economies excluding China	2 060	2 320	4 336	46.1	48.0	62.7
Developing economies excluding LDCs	2 520	2 826	4 473	50.7	53.8	69.4
LDCs	278	339	985	31.0	33.6	52.5
LLDCs	133	157	422	29.5	30.8	45.5
SIDS (UNCTAD)	5	6	9	45.1	45.8	55.7
HIPCs (IMF)	210	258	793	33.6	35.9	53.5
BRICS	1 460	1 633	2 374	47.5	51.1	68.2
G20	2 650	2 884	3 901	56.9	59.7	73.9


**Table 3** | **Most populated economies**

Economy	Total			Urban		
	Population	Annual growth rate <sup>a</sup>		Share in total population	Annual growth rate <sup>a</sup>	
	(Millions)	(Percentage)		(Percentage)	(Percentage)	
	2018	2013–2018	2018–2050	2018	2013–2018	2018–2050
China	1 428	0.5	-0.1	59.2	2.7	0.9
India	1 353	1.1	0.6	34.0	2.3	2.0
United States of America	330	0.6	0.5	82.4	0.9	0.7
Indonesia	268	1.2	0.7	55.3	2.5	1.5
Pakistan	212	2.1	1.5	36.7	2.7	2.6
Brazil	209	0.8	0.3	86.6	1.1	0.5
Nigeria	196	2.6	2.2	50.3	4.4	3.3
Bangladesh	161	1.1	0.6	36.6	3.3	2.0
Russian Federation	146	0.2	-0.2	74.4	0.3	0.1
Japan	127	-0.2	-0.6	91.6	-0.1	-0.5
Mexico	126	1.2	0.6	80.2	1.6	0.9
Ethiopia	109	2.7	2.0	20.8	4.9	3.9
Philippines	107	1.5	0.9	46.9	1.9	1.8
Egypt	98	2.1	1.5	42.7	2.1	2.3
Viet Nam	96	1.0	0.4	35.9	3.1	1.9
Dem. Rep. of the Congo	84	3.3	2.6	44.5	4.6	3.7
Germany	83	0.5	-0.1	77.3	0.5	0.2
Turkey	82	1.6	0.5	75.1	2.3	0.9
Iran (Islamic Republic of)	82	1.3	0.7	74.9	2.1	1.2
Thailand	69	0.4	-0.2	49.9	1.9	0.9

<sup>a</sup> Annual exponential rate of growth (see UNCTAD Handbook of Statistics 2019, annex 6.3).