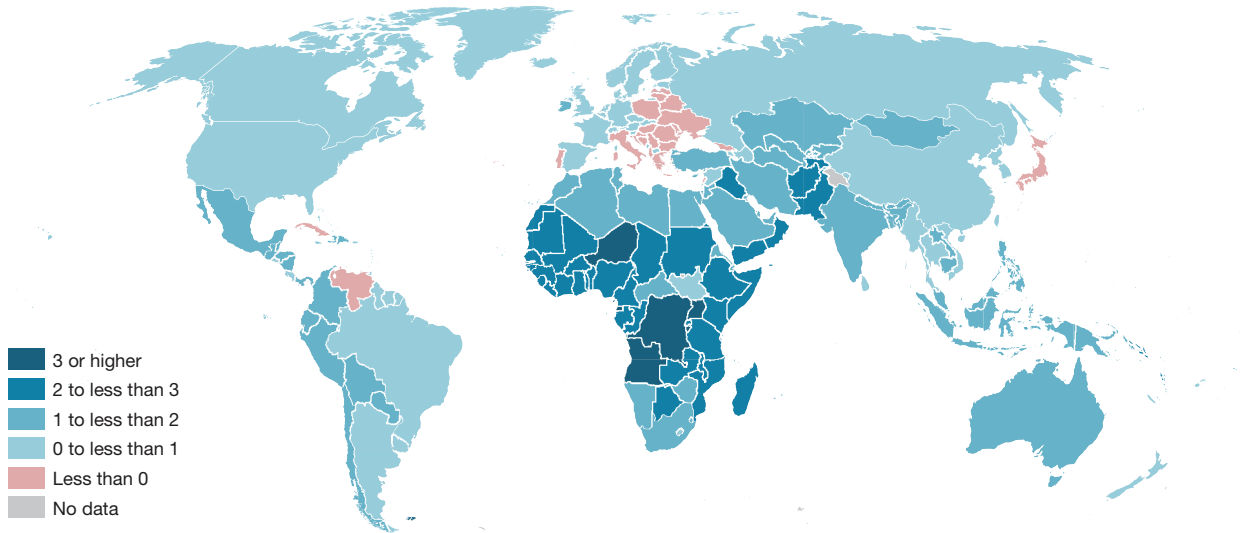




Fact sheet #11: Total and urban population

Map 1 | Annual population growth, 2019
(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 (United Nations, 2019a).

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 (United Nations, 2019b).

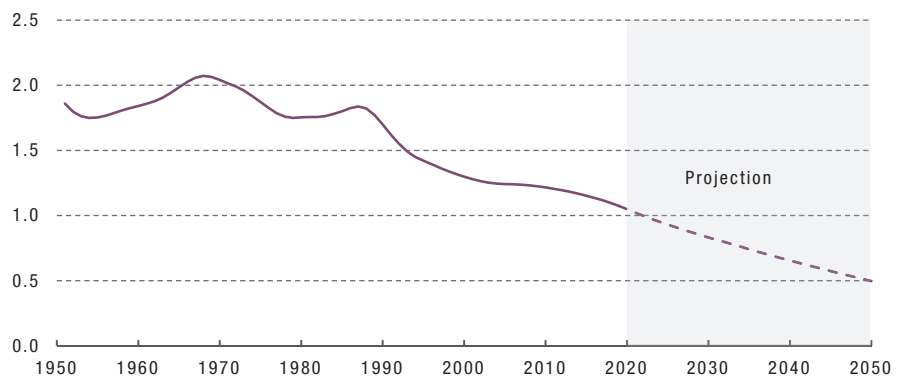
Urban population is defined as the population living in areas classified as urban according to the criteria used by each country or territory (United Nations, 2019c, 2019d).

Slowdown of world population growth

The steady slowdown in world population growth, observed since the late 1980s, continued in 2019. According to the latest estimates, world population grew by 1.1 per cent over the year, or 82 million people, to reach a global total of 7.7 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 2019, with a rate of 2.5 per cent, it increased at more than double the pace of the world total. Several central African economies recorded growth rates well above 3 per cent. Rates higher than the 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, for example, Venezuela, Cuba, Georgia and Japan, saw their populations decline.

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



Note: Annual exponential rate of growth of the population (see UNCTAD Handbook of Statistics 2020, annex 6.3).

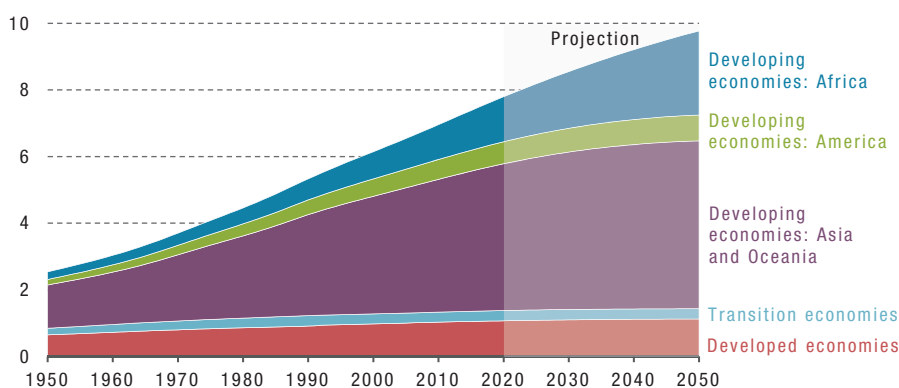


Developing economies drive population growth

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 1989, 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 people. Most of that increase will be accounted for by the developing world. 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)

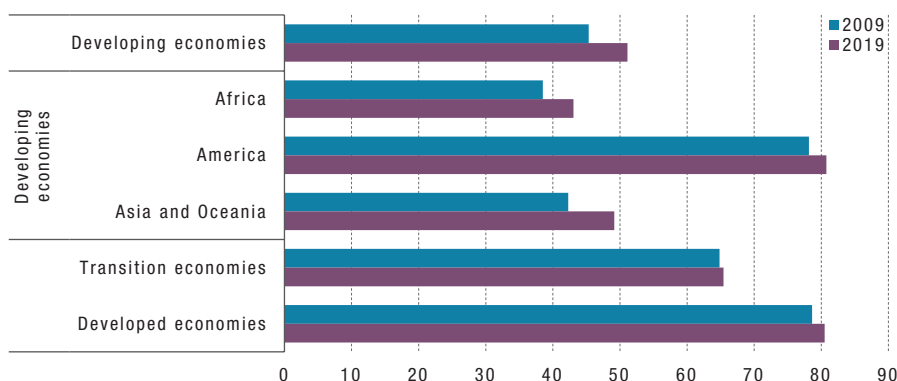


Urbanization continues

All over the world, a growing proportion of the population lives in cities. Ten years ago, 51.1 per cent lived in urban areas. By 2019, the share of urban population increased to 55.7 per cent. It is generally higher in the developed (80.5 per cent in 2019) than in the developing world (51.1 per cent), with transition economies in between the two (65.4 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 42.3 in 2009 to 49.1 per cent in 2019. 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.

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



For references, see UNCTAD Handbook of Statistics 2020, annex 6.4.

In 2019, the world population grew by 82 million people



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

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



In developed economies, 81% live in cities




Table 1 Total population by group of economies

Group of economies	Population			Annual growth rate ^a		
	(Millions)			(Percentage)		
	2014	2019	2050	2014–2019	2019	2019–2050
World	7 295	7 713	9 735	1.1	1.1	0.8
Developing economies	5 944	6 338	8 318	1.3	1.2	0.9
Developing economies: Africa	1 151	1 307	2 488	2.5	2.5	2.1
Developing economies: America	613	644	759	1.0	0.9	0.5
Developing economies: Asia and Oceania	4 180	4 387	5 072	1.0	0.9	0.5
Transition economies	305	311	315	0.4	0.3	0.0
Developed economies	1 046	1 065	1 102	0.4	0.3	0.1
Selected groups						
Developing economies excluding China	4 545	4 904	6 916	1.5	1.5	1.1
Developing economies excluding LDCs	5 025	5 304	6 441	1.1	1.0	0.6
LDCs	919	1 033	1 877	2.3	2.3	1.9
LLDCs	463	521	926	2.4	2.3	1.9
SIDS (UNCTAD)	12	13	16	1.1	1.0	0.7
HIPCs (IMF)	644	740	1 482	2.8	2.7	2.2
BRICS	3 097	3 216	3 482	0.8	0.7	0.3
G20	4 693	4 864	5 277	0.7	0.7	0.3

^a Annual exponential rate of growth (see UNCTAD Handbook of Statistics 2020, annex 6.3).

Table 2 Urban population by group of economies

Group of economies	Urban population			Share in total population		
	(Millions)			(Percentage)		
	2014	2019	2050	2014	2019	2050
World	3 901	4 300	6 656	53.5	55.7	68.4
Developing economies	2 870	3 239	5 458	48.3	51.1	65.6
Developing economies: Africa	469	563	1 470	40.8	43.1	59.1
Developing economies: America	487	520	665	79.5	80.8	87.7
Developing economies: Asia and Oceania	1 913	2 156	3 323	45.8	49.2	65.5
Transition economies	199	204	234	65.1	65.4	74.1
Developed economies	833	857	965	79.6	80.5	87.6
Selected groups						
Developing economies excluding China	2 111	2 374	4 336	46.4	48.4	62.7
Developing economies excluding LDCs	2 581	2 887	4 473	51.4	54.4	69.4
LDCs	289	352	985	31.5	34.1	52.5
LLDCs	138	162	422	29.7	31.0	45.5
SIDS (UNCTAD)	6	6	9	45.2	46.0	55.7
HIPCs (IMF)	219	269	793	34.0	36.4	53.5
BRICS	1 494	1 667	2 374	48.2	51.8	68.2
G20	2 697	2 929	3 901	57.5	60.2	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)	
	2019	2014–2019	2019–2050	2019	2014–2019	2019–2050
China	1 434	0.5	-0.1	60.3	2.6	0.8
India	1 366	1.1	0.6	34.5	2.3	2.0
United States of America	332	0.6	0.5	82.6	0.8	0.7
Indonesia	271	1.2	0.6	56.0	2.4	1.5
Pakistan	217	2.1	1.4	36.9	2.7	2.6
Brazil	211	0.8	0.3	86.8	1.1	0.5
Nigeria	201	2.6	2.2	51.2	4.3	3.2
Bangladesh	163	1.1	0.5	37.4	3.3	2.0
Russian Federation	146	0.2	-0.2	74.6	0.3	0.1
Mexico	128	1.2	0.6	80.4	1.5	0.9
Japan	127	-0.2	-0.6	91.7	-0.1	-0.5
Ethiopia	112	2.7	2.0	21.2	4.9	3.9
Philippines	108	1.5	0.9	47.1	1.9	1.8
Egypt	100	2.1	1.5	42.7	2.0	2.4
Viet Nam	96	1.0	0.4	36.6	3.0	1.9
Congo, Dem. Rep. of the	87	3.3	2.6	45.0	4.6	3.7
Germany	84	0.5	-0.1	77.4	0.5	0.1
Turkey	83	1.5	0.5	75.6	2.2	0.9
Iran (Islamic Republic of)	83	1.4	0.7	75.4	2.1	1.1
Thailand	70	0.3	-0.2	50.7	1.9	0.8

^a Annual exponential rate of growth (see UNCTAD Handbook of Statistics 2020, annex 6.3).