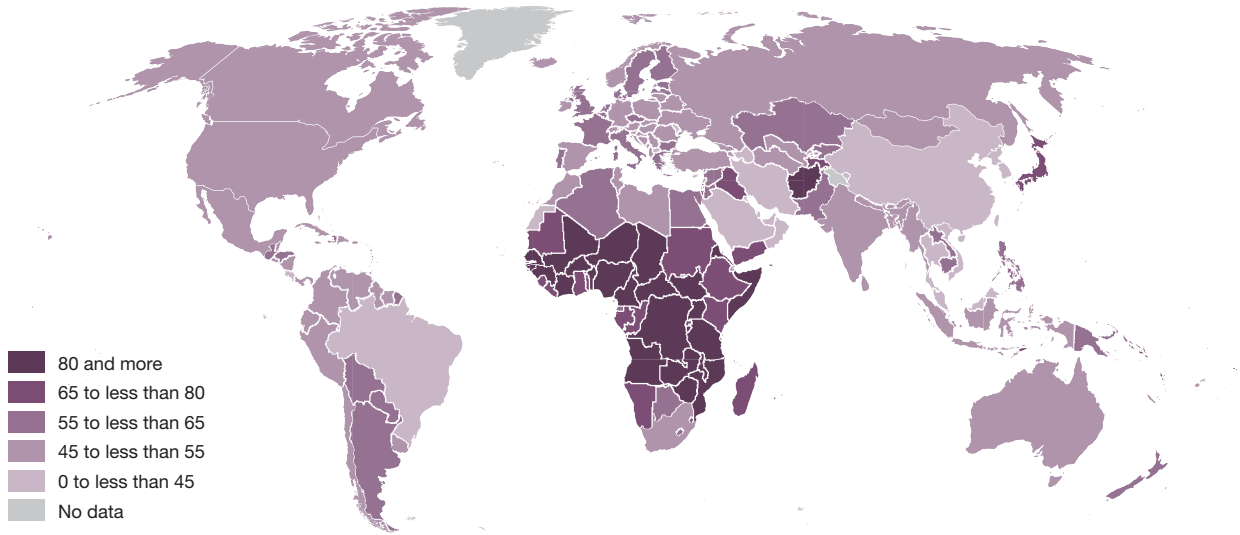




Fact sheet #12: Age structure

Map 1 | **Dependency ratio, 2019**
(Percentage)



Concepts and definitions

In this section, the term “persons of working age” refers to persons aged from 15 to 64 years. The term “children” refers to persons under the age of 15. The term “older persons” refers to persons over the age of 64.

The dependency ratio is defined as the number of children and older persons per hundred persons of working age. It can be expressed as the sum of the child dependency ratio and the old-age dependency ratio.

The child dependency ratio is defined as the number of children per hundred persons of working age.

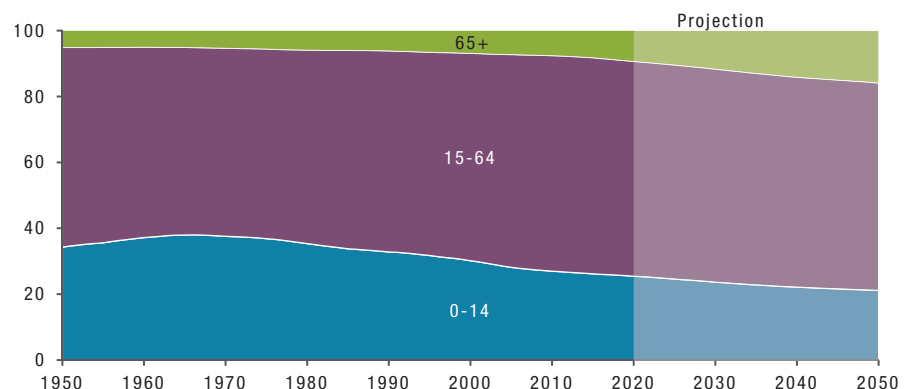
The old-age dependency ratio is defined as the number of older persons per hundred persons of working age.

Regional distribution of dependency ratios and trends over time

Globally, in 2019, for every 100 persons of working age there were 53 persons who were younger or older. This figure, the dependency ratio, varies considerably across regions. In most economies of Western, Middle and Eastern Africa it is higher than 65 per cent, whereas in Western, Eastern and South-Eastern Asia, it is often lower than 45 per cent. Notable exceptions include Japan (68 per cent) and Israel (67 per cent), as well as Yemen (73 per cent), Timor-Leste (71 per cent), Iraq (71 per cent) and economies around the Hindu Kush.

Globally, for every 100 persons of working age there were 39 children and 14 older persons. The proportion of children in the population has steadily declined from the peak of 38 per cent in 1966, to 26 per cent in 2019, while the proportion of the older than 64 rose from 5 to 9 per cent over the same period. The net effect has been a decline of the dependency ratio from 76 to 53 per cent. The aging of the world population is projected to continue in the coming decades.

Figure 1 | **World population by age group**
(Percentage)



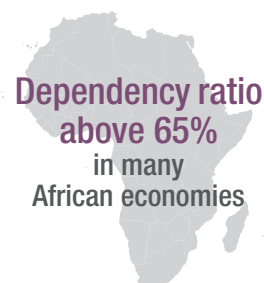
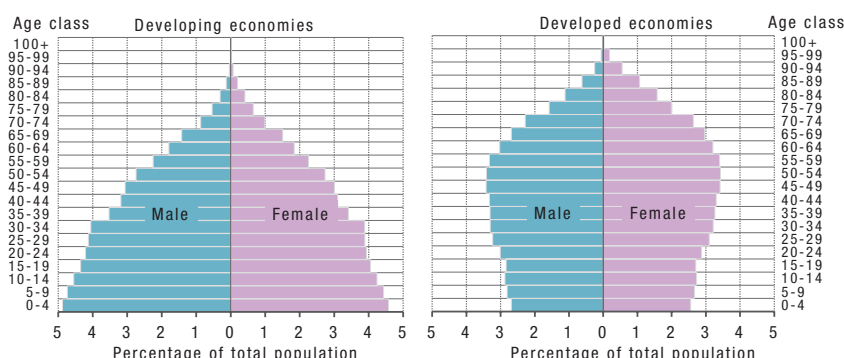


Non-pyramid shape of developed economies' population pyramid

Comparing population pyramids, we find that in developing economies, older age classes are successively smaller than younger classes. In developed economies, this pattern is reversed, so that the proportions of older age groups are larger and younger age groups are smaller than in developing economies.

In both the developing and developed world, women are the majority for older age groups, whereas the majority of children are boys. In 2019, 49.6 per cent of the world population was female.

Figure 2 | Population pyramids, 2019



Globally, the proportion of children fell from 38% in 1966 to 26% in 2019

Less child dependency, more old-age dependency

Over the next 30 years, the total dependency ratio is projected to rise in most regions. Child dependency ratios will decrease, but it is forecast that this will be compensated for by rising old-age dependency ratios. Africa is the exception, featuring both decreasing child and overall dependency ratios (child: from 72 per cent in 2019 to 52 per cent in 2050, overall: from 79 to 61 per cent). In general, child dependency ratios are projected to fall fastest where they are currently highest.

Unlike child dependency, old-age dependency is forecast to increase most in the groups of economies where it is already comparatively high, especially in developed economies, where an increase from 31 in 2019 to 47 per cent is expected by 2050.

In developed economies, people in their 50s form the largest age cohort

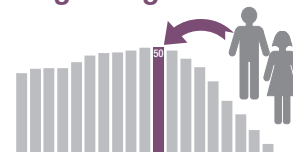
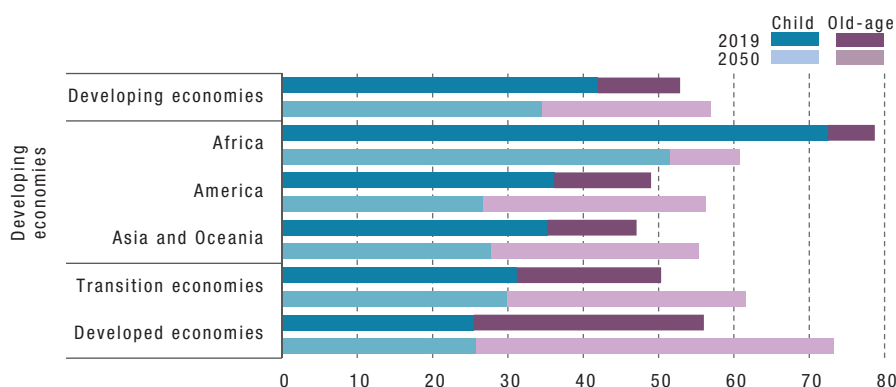


Figure 3 | Dependency ratio by age structure (Percentage)



Note: The total dependency ratio is the sum of the child and old-age dependency ratios.

Old-age dependency in developed economies forecast to increase

to 47% by 2050 from 31% in 2019

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

Table 1 | Age structure and dependency ratio

Group of economies	Year	Population			Dependency ratio		
		(Millions)			(Percentage)		
		0-14	15-64	65+	Child (0-14)	Old-age (65+)	Total
World	1950	870	1 538	129	56.5	8.4	64.9
	2019	1 975	5 035	703	39.2	14.0	53.2
	2050	2 056	6 131	1 549	33.5	25.3	58.8
Developing economies	1950	636	991	64	64.2	6.5	70.7
	2019	1 737	4 146	455	41.9	11.0	52.9
	2050	1 833	5 299	1 185	34.6	22.4	57.0
Developing economies: Africa	1950	94	126	7	74.6	5.9	80.5
	2019	530	731	45	72.5	6.2	78.7
	2050	797	1 548	143	51.5	9.2	60.7
Developing economies: America	1950	67	93	6	72.2	6.2	78.4
	2019	156	432	56	36.1	12.9	49.0
	2050	130	485	144	26.7	29.6	56.3
Developing economies: Asia and Oceania	1950	475	772	51	61.5	6.6	68.1
	2019	1 051	2 982	354	35.2	11.9	47.1
	2050	906	3 266	899	27.8	27.5	55.3
Transition economies	1950	59	128	12	45.7	9.5	55.2
	2019	65	207	40	31.2	19.2	50.3
	2050	58	195	62	29.9	31.6	61.5
Developed economies	1950	175	419	53	41.7	12.5	54.2
	2019	174	682	208	25.5	30.5	56.0
	2050	164	636	302	25.8	47.5	73.3
Selected groups							
Developing economies excluding China	1950	448	650	39	68.9	6.1	74.9
	2019	1 482	3 131	290	47.3	9.3	56.6
	2050	1 635	4 461	819	36.7	18.4	55.0
Developing economies excluding LDCs	1950	556	883	58	62.9	6.5	69.5
	2019	1 333	3 553	418	37.5	11.8	49.3
	2050	1 262	4 113	1 065	30.7	25.9	56.6
LDCs	1950	80	108	6	74.4	5.9	80.3
	2019	404	592	37	68.3	6.2	74.5
	2050	571	1 186	120	48.1	10.1	58.2
LLDCs	1950	32	42	2	76.2	5.4	81.5
	2019	204	297	20	68.7	6.6	75.2
	2050	274	593	60	46.2	10.1	56.3
SIDS (UNCTAD)	1950	2	2	0	69.8	6.9	76.7
	2019	3	8	1	41.7	11.4	53.0
	2050	3	10	2	34.3	22.0	56.3
HIPCs (IMF)	1950	52	67	4	77.3	5.9	83.2
	2019	315	402	22	78.4	5.5	83.9
	2050	484	925	73	52.3	7.9	60.2
BRICS	1950	411	719	49	57.1	6.9	64.0
	2019	707	2 213	296	31.9	13.4	45.3
	2050	574	2 226	682	25.8	30.6	56.4
G20	1950	645	1 221	107	52.8	8.7	61.6
	2019	1 026	3 291	547	31.2	16.6	47.8
	2050	862	3 305	1 110	26.1	33.6	59.7

**Table 2** | Population by age class, 2019

Group of economies	Population (Millions)	Percentage of total						
		All age classes	0-14	15-24	25-39	40-64	65-74	75+
World	7 713	100.0	25.6	15.6	22.4	27.2	5.7	3.4
Developing economies	6 338	100.0	27.4	16.5	22.9	26.0	4.8	2.4
Developing economies: Africa	1 307	100.0	40.6	19.3	20.5	16.2	2.4	1.0
Developing economies: America	644	100.0	24.3	16.7	23.4	27.0	5.3	3.4
Developing economies: Asia and Oceania	4 387	100.0	23.9	15.7	23.5	28.7	5.4	2.6
Transition economies	311	100.0	20.7	11.2	23.7	31.5	7.6	5.1
Developed economies	1 065	100.0	16.3	11.4	19.4	33.3	10.6	9.0
Selected groups								
Developing economies excluding China	4 904	100.0	30.2	17.9	22.9	23.1	3.9	2.0
LDCs	1 033	100.0	39.1	20.0	20.7	16.6	2.4	1.1
LLDCs	521	100.0	39.2	19.7	20.8	16.5	2.5	1.2
SIDS (UNCTAD)	13	100.0	27.2	17.0	23.2	25.1	4.7	2.7
Selected economies								
China	1 434	100.0	17.8	12.0	22.9	35.9	7.9	3.6
India	1 366	100.0	26.6	18.1	24.1	24.8	4.3	2.0
Brazil	211	100.0	21.0	16.0	24.4	29.4	5.8	3.5
Nigeria	201	100.0	43.7	19.3	19.2	15.1	2.1	0.7
Russian Federation	146	100.0	18.2	9.4	23.4	33.9	9.0	6.1
Japan	127	100.0	12.6	9.3	16.6	33.6	14.0	14.0

Table 3 | Female population by age class, 2019

Group of economies	Population (Millions)	Percentage female						
		All age classes	0-14	15-24	25-39	40-64	65-74	75+
World	3 824	49.6	48.4	48.3	48.9	50.1	52.9	58.9
Developing economies	3 120	49.2	48.3	48.3	48.9	49.8	52.2	57.0
Developing economies: Africa	654	50.0	49.3	49.6	50.1	51.2	54.0	58.2
Developing economies: America	327	50.8	49.0	49.4	50.3	52.0	54.3	59.0
Developing economies: Asia and Oceania	2 138	48.7	47.7	47.6	48.3	49.3	51.6	56.5
Transition economies	164	52.6	48.5	48.7	49.7	53.6	61.1	71.1
Developed economies	541	50.8	48.7	48.8	49.3	50.4	53.0	59.7
Selected groups								
Developing economies excluding China	2 421	49.4	48.6	48.6	49.0	50.1	52.7	57.1
LDCs	519	50.3	49.4	49.7	50.8	51.5	53.9	56.6
LLDCs	263	50.4	49.3	49.6	51.0	52.0	55.5	59.5
SIDS (UNCTAD)	6	49.5	49.2	48.5	48.2	50.5	52.7	56.7
Selected economies								
China	698	48.7	46.5	46.8	48.3	49.3	51.3	56.8
India	656	48.0	47.5	47.1	47.5	48.8	50.7	54.0
Brazil	107	50.8	48.9	49.3	50.1	51.8	54.9	60.3
Nigeria	99	49.3	48.9	49.2	49.3	50.2	52.5	53.3
Russian Federation	78	53.7	48.7	48.9	49.9	54.3	62.5	73.5
Japan	65	51.2	48.7	48.7	48.8	49.5	52.1	60.7