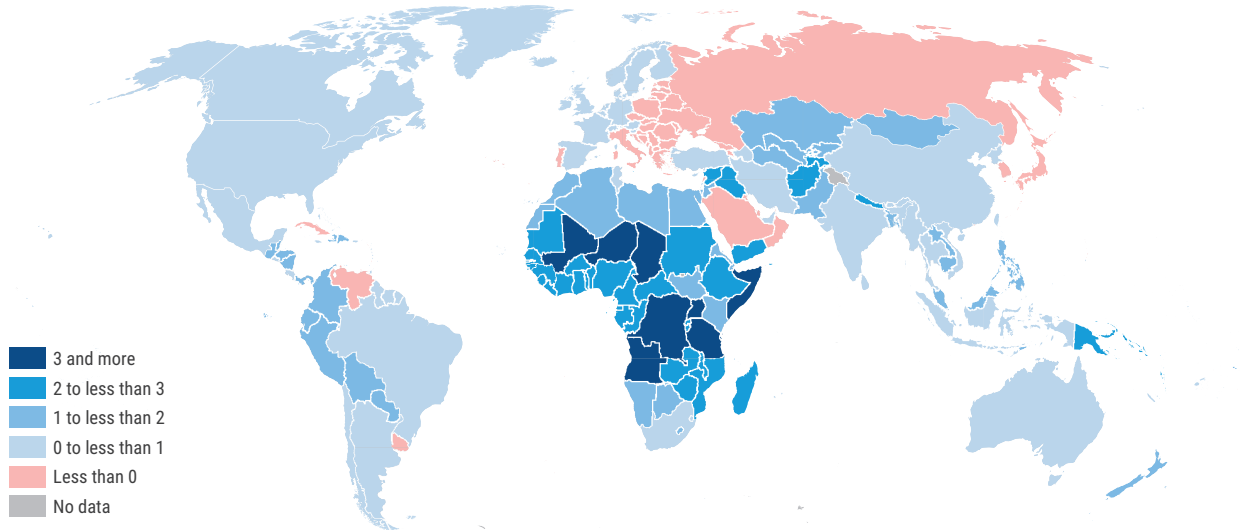




# Fact sheet #11: Total and urban population

**Map 1 Annual population growth, 2021**  
(Percentage)



## Concepts and definitions

The population estimates and projections reported in this chapter were made in 2022 and represent the population present in an economy (including residents, migrants and refugees) as of 1 July of a given year (UN DESA, 2022a, 2022b).

The figures for the years from 2022 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 2.3 births per woman in 2021 to 2.1 in 2050. The United Nations also produce other projection variants. Their outcome is highly dependent on the path that future fertility takes (UN DESA, 2022b).

Urban population is defined as the population living in areas classified as urban according to the criteria used by each country or territory. The latest estimates and projections for urban population were made in 2018 (UN DESA, 2018, 2019).

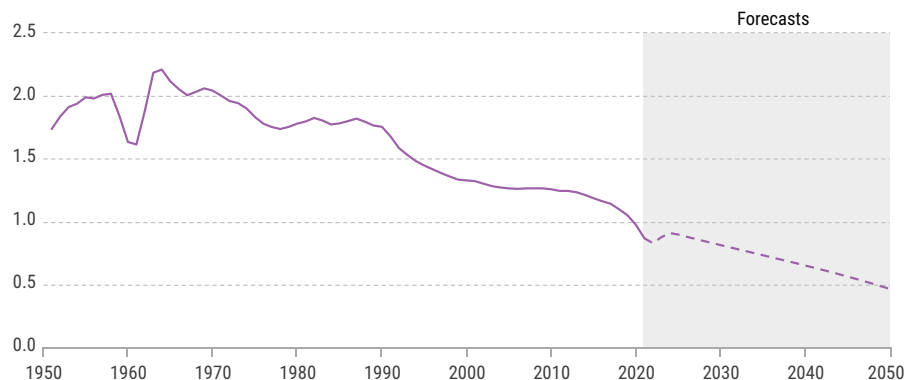
## Slowdown of world population growth

The world population is estimated to have grown by 0.9 per cent in 2021 and is projected to surpass 8 billion in 2022. The growth rate has slowed down faster since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 than during the gradual slowdown taking place from the late 1980s. It is expected to rebound in 2023 before continuing its decent towards a forecast 0.5 per cent growth in 2050.

A population decrease was seen in 52 economies in 2021. The population of 22 of those was growing five years earlier. Of these economies with newly negative population growth, 11 were expected to still have decreasing populations in 2026. The last group includes Montserrat, San Marino, Belarus, Cuba, North Macedonia and Russian Federation.

The population of Africa is growing much faster than that of any other continent. Of the 30 economies with the fastest growing population, only Afghanistan, the Syrian Arab Republic and Solomon Islands are outside Africa.

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



Note: Annual exponential rate of growth of the population (see UNCTAD Handbook of Statistics 2022, annex 6.3).



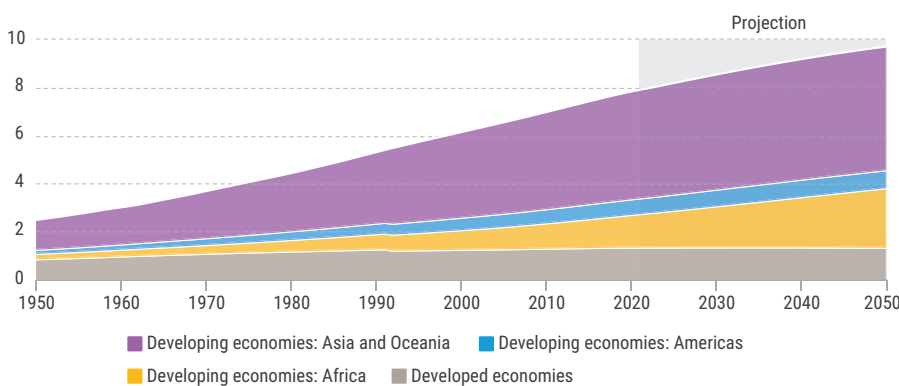
### Developing economies drive population growth

Over the last 25 years, the world population has increased by 2.1 billion people. Almost all this growth has occurred in developing economies, mainly in Asia and Oceania (+1.2 billion) and Africa (+0.7 billion). In 2021, five in six people in the world lived in a developing economy.

In the coming 25 years, global population is projected to grow by 1.6 billion people. The population of the economies that are today considered developing will continue to grow. Africa is expected to lead this growth (+0.9 billion) followed by developing economies in Asia and Oceania (+0.6 billion).

**Figure 2 World population by group of economies**

(Billions)



World population projected to surpass 8 billion in 2022



World population growth rate dipped down to

0.9%

in 2021

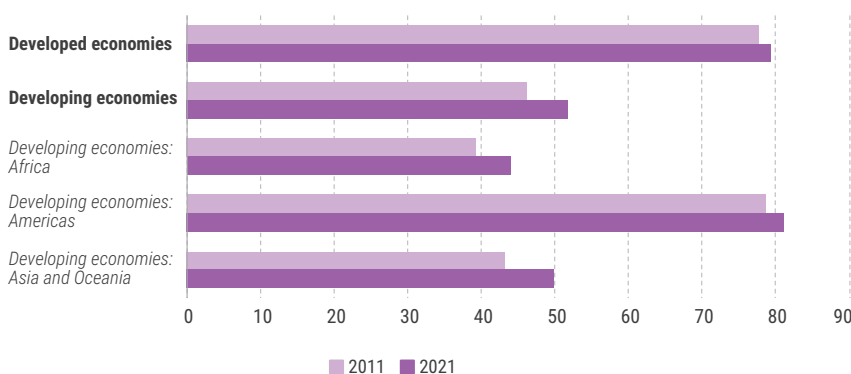
### Urbanization continues

All over the world, a growing proportion of the population lives in cities. In 2011, 52.0 per cent lived in urban areas. The share of urban population was projected to have increased to 56.5 per cent in 2021. It is generally higher in the developed (79.5 per cent in 2021) than in the developing world (51.8 per cent). In LDCs, the people living in urban areas are in the minority (35.3 per cent).

Over the last ten years, urbanization has been most pronounced in developing economies, especially in Asia and Oceania, which saw the urban rate increase from 43.3 in 2011 to 50.0 per cent in 2021. Africa has seen a 4.6 percentage point increase in the same period. By contrast, further urbanization in the developing economies of the Americas 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)



Five in six people



live in a developing economy

57% of the world's population live in urban areas



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

Group of economies	Population			Annual growth rate <sup>a</sup>		
	(Millions)			(Percentage)		
	2016	2021	2050	2016–2021	2021	2021–2050
<b>World</b>	<b>7 513</b>	<b>7 909</b>	<b>9 709</b>	<b>1.0</b>	<b>0.9</b>	<b>0.7</b>
Developed economies	1 329	1 343	1 332	0.2	0.0	-0.0
Developing economies	6 184	6 566	8 377	1.2	1.0	0.8
Developing economies: Africa	1 231	1 392	2 483	2.5	2.4	2.0
Developing economies: Americas	625	652	745	0.8	0.7	0.5
Developing economies: Asia and Oceania	4 329	4 521	5 149	0.9	0.7	0.4
<b>Selected groups</b>						
Developing economies excluding China	4 783	5 140	7 065	1.4	1.3	1.1
Developing economies excluding LDCs	5 209	5 466	6 449	1.0	0.8	0.6
LDCs	975	1 100	1 928	2.4	2.4	1.9
LLDCs	490	551	954	2.4	2.4	1.9
SIDS (UN-OHRLLS)	66	70	84	1.0	0.9	0.6
HIPCs (IMF)	706	812	1 559	2.8	2.7	2.3
BRICS	3 149	3 252	3 421	0.6	0.4	0.2
G20	4 771	4 914	5 181	0.6	0.4	0.2

<sup>a</sup> Annual exponential rate of growth (see UNCTAD Handbook of Statistics 2022, annex 6.3).

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

Group of economies	Urban population			Share in total population		
	(Millions)			(Percentage)		
	2016	2021	2050	2016	2021	2050
<b>World</b>	<b>4 081</b>	<b>4 470</b>	<b>6 605</b>	<b>54.3</b>	<b>56.5</b>	<b>68.0</b>
Developed economies	1 044	1 068	1 153	78.6	79.5	86.6
Developing economies	3 037	3 401	5 451	49.1	51.8	65.1
Developing economies: Africa	513	613	1 463	41.7	44.0	58.9
Developing economies: Americas	500	530	654	80.1	81.3	87.7
Developing economies: Asia and Oceania	2 023	2 259	3 334	46.7	50.0	64.8
<b>Selected groups</b>						
Developing economies excluding China	2 241	2 510	4 400	46.9	48.8	62.3
Developing economies excluding LDCs	2 719	3 013	4 438	52.2	55.1	68.8
LDCs	318	388	1 013	32.6	35.3	52.5
LLDCs	148	174	435	30.2	31.6	45.6
SIDS (UN-OHRLLS)	39	42	56	59.4	60.5	67.4
HIPCs (IMF)	248	305	839	35.2	37.6	53.8
BRICS	1 562	1 726	2 316	49.6	53.1	67.7
G20	2 792	3 008	3 814	58.5	61.2	73.6


**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)	
	2021	2016–2021	2021–2050	2021	2016–2021	2021–2050
China	1 426	0.3	-0.3	62.5	2.3	0.6
India	1 408	1.0	0.6	35.4	2.3	2.0
United States of America	340	0.6	0.4	83.0	0.8	0.6
Indonesia	274	0.9	0.5	57.3	2.1	1.3
Pakistan	231	1.6	1.6	37.4	2.3	2.7
Brazil	214	0.7	0.3	87.3	1.0	0.5
Nigeria	213	2.5	2.0	52.7	4.1	2.9
Bangladesh	169	1.2	0.6	38.9	3.3	2.0
Russian Federation	145	-0.0	-0.3	74.9	0.2	0.1
Mexico	127	0.8	0.4	81.0	1.2	0.7
Japan	125	-0.4	-0.6	91.9	-0.3	-0.5
Ethiopia	120	2.7	2.0	22.2	4.9	4.0
Philippines	114	1.6	1.1	47.7	2.2	2.0
Egypt	109	1.8	1.3	42.9	1.9	2.2
Viet Nam	97	0.9	0.3	38.1	2.9	1.7
Congo, Dem. Rep. of the	96	3.3	2.8	46.2	4.6	3.9
Türkiye	88	1.1	0.4	76.3	1.7	0.8
Iran (Islamic Republic of)	85	0.9	0.4	76.6	1.6	0.8
Germany	83	0.3	-0.2	77.5	0.3	0.1
Thailand	72	0.3	-0.2	52.2	1.8	0.8

<sup>a</sup> Annual exponential rate of growth (see UNCTAD Handbook of Statistics 2022, annex 6.3).