

International Brief

World Population at a Glance: 1998 and Beyond



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World Population Increase Gradually Slowing but Total to Hit 9 Billion in Next 50 Years

From the dawn of mankind to the turn of the nineteenth century, world population grew to a total of one billion people. During much of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, human numbers have increased at increasingly higher rates, and we approach the new millennium in a world populated by nearly 6 billion people.

Population growth has continued throughout the past three decades

in spite of the decline in fertility rates that began in many developing countries in the late 1970s, and in spite of the toll taken by the HIV/AIDS pandemic in some countries. While the rate of increase is slowing, in absolute terms world population growth continues to be substantial.

According to the current projections of the Census Bureau, world population will increase to nearly 8 billion people by the end of the next quarter century, and will reach 9.3 billion people — a number more than half again as large as today's total — by 2050.

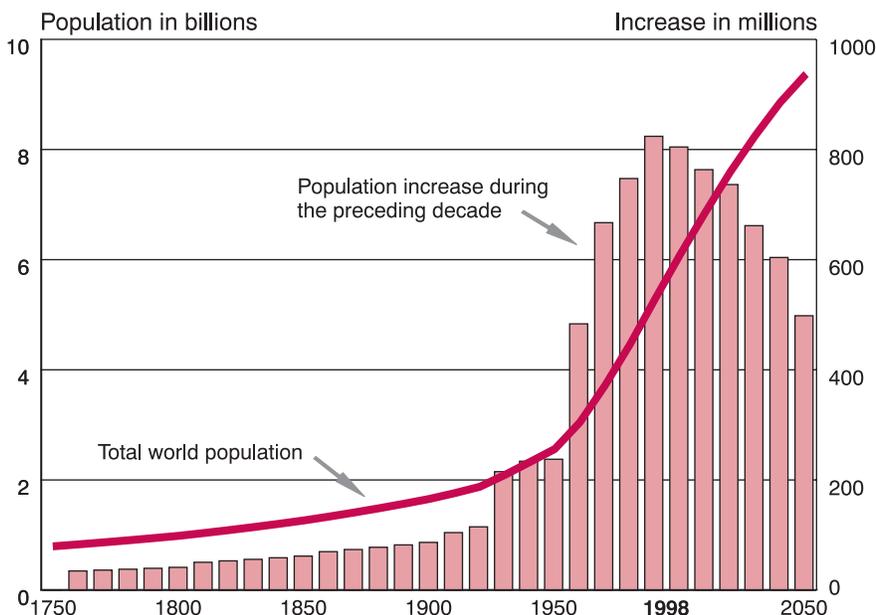
This brief describes trends in population growth and other key demographic indicators over the next quarter century. It summarizes the Census Bureau's latest estimates and projections of worldwide population, population growth, fertility, life expectancy, and infant mortality. Trends in family planning utilization, which are likely to play a key role in determining fertility and natural increase during the coming decades, and the increasingly important matter of population aging also are discussed.

More detailed statistics, including data for each country and implications of demographic trends for the goals of the International Conference on Population and Development, a special focus on the impact of the HIV/AIDS pandemic in the developing world, and a discussion of the estimation and projection procedures used are presented in the Census Bureau's **World Population Profile: 1998**.

Future World Growth Being Determined in Less Affluent Nations

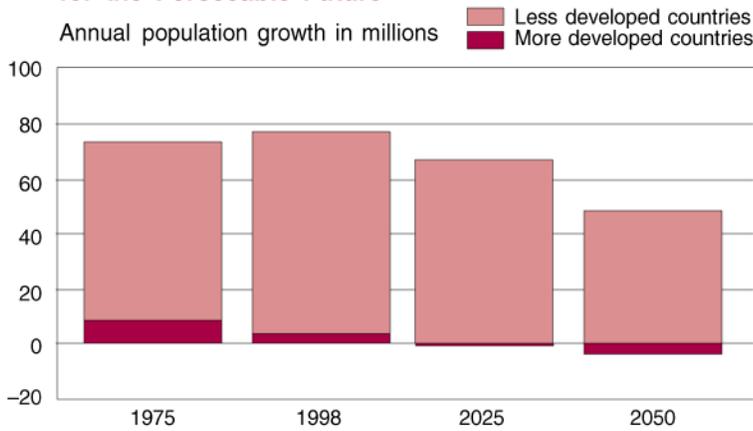
The growth of human population has been, is now, and in the future will be almost entirely determined in the world's less developed countries (LDCs). Ninety-nine percent of global natural increase — the difference between numbers of births and numbers of deaths — now occurs in the developing regions of Africa, Asia and Latin America.

Figure 1.
World Population Still Far From Stabilizing



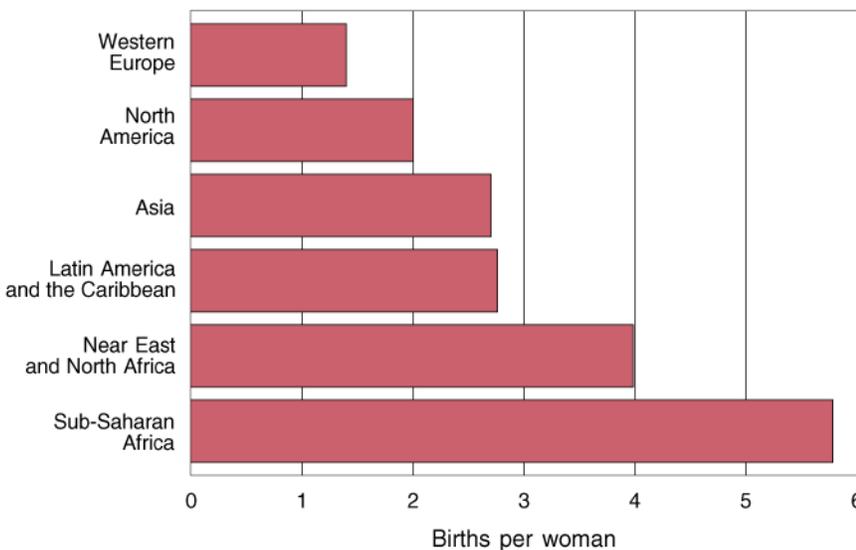
Source: United Nations (1995:97) and U.S. Bureau of the Census, International Data Base.

Figure 2.
World Population Growth Will Be Concentrated in Developing Countries for the Forseeable Future



Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, International Data Base.

Figure 3.
Total Fertility Rates in 1998



Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, International Data Base.

Census Bureau projections indicate that early in the next century numbers of deaths will exceed numbers of births in the world's more developed countries (MDCs), and **all** of the net annual gain in global population will, in effect, come from the world's developing countries.

Underlying Changes in Fertility and Mortality

Fertility and mortality continue to decline in most world regions, and both have reached levels unprecedented in human history.

However, substantial gaps exist, and will continue to exist, between the world's more developed and less developed regions in numbers

Infant mortality in 1998

(infant deaths per 1000 live births)

Western Europe	6
North America	6
Latin America and the Caribbean	33
Near East and North Africa	51
Asia	59
Sub-Saharan Africa	92

Life expectancy at birth in 1998

(years)

Western Europe	78
North America	76
Latin America and the Caribbean	69
Near East and North Africa	68
Asia	65
Sub-Saharan Africa	49

of children born to a woman, on average, and in the risks of dying at every age faced by those children. On average, the number of children born to a woman in the developing world is double the number born to a woman living in one of the world's more developed regions. Fertility remains especially high in Sub-Saharan Africa (nearly 6 births per woman, on average) and in the Middle East and North Africa (4 per woman).

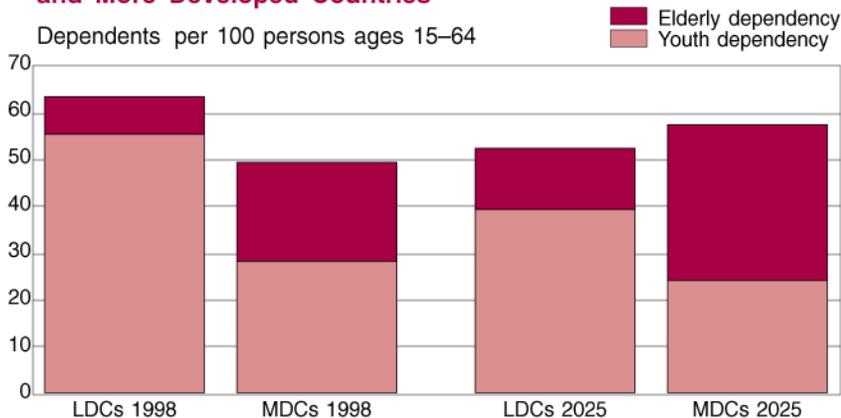
A baby born in Sub-Saharan Africa is far more likely to die in infancy than a child born in another developing region, and has a lower life expectancy than a child born anywhere else. A child born in Latin America or Asia can expect to live between 7 and 13 fewer years on average than one born in one of the world's more affluent regions.

This year, about 7.7 million children worldwide will die before their first birthday.

Emerging Changes in Age Structure

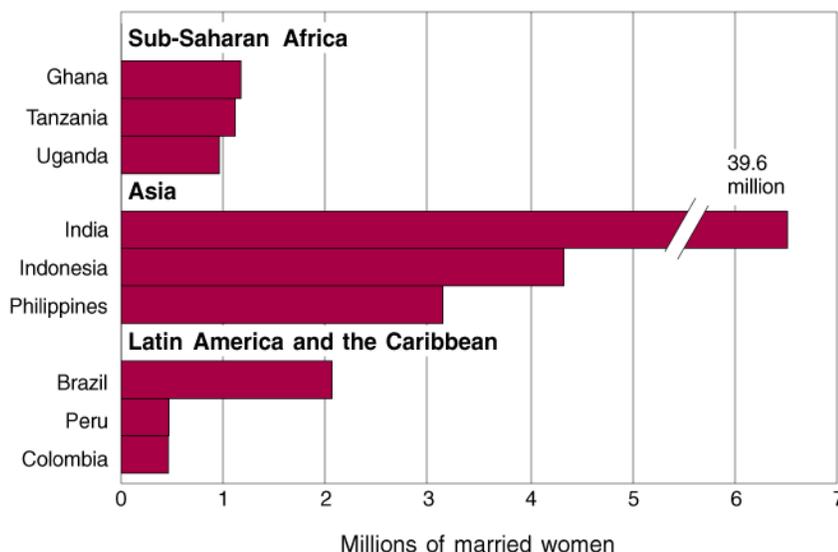
Over the course of the next 25 years, the age structure of world population will continue to shift, with older age groups making up an

Figure 4.
Elderly Becoming Growing Part of Overall
Dependency Ratios in Both Less Developed
and More Developed Countries



Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, International Data Base.

Figure 5.
Married Women of Reproductive Age With Unmet
Need for Contraception, Selected Countries: 1998



Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, *World Population Profile: 1998*.

increasingly larger share of the total. For example, during the 1998-2025 period, the world's elderly population (ages 65 and above) will more than double while the world's youth (population under age 15) will grow by 6 percent, and the number of children under age 5 will increase by less than 5 percent. As a result, world population will become progressively older during the coming decades.

Because of population aging, elderly dependency ratios — the ratio of the population ages 65 and over to the working age population (ages 15 to 64) — will rise in every major world region during the next 25 years. And the world community as a whole will face an elderly support burden nearly 50 percent larger in 2025 than in 1998.

Even with the rapid growth of the elderly, however, the bulk of the

dependent population worldwide will remain children during the coming quarter century. Nearly 9 in every 10 people making up the combined dependent age groups in the less developed regions of Africa, Asia and Latin America are under age 15 today. And children will still account for three-fourths of all dependents in these regions in 2025. Only in the United States and other more developed countries will the elderly come to outnumber population under the age of 15 over the course of the next 25 years.

The net effect of decreasing youth dependency and growing old-age dependency will differ in the world's MDCs and LDCs. The total dependency ratio, which compares the size of the combined populations under age 15 and ages 65 and over to the working age population, will decline over the 1998-2025 period in the less developed countries and for the world as a whole, while rising in more developed nations.

As We Approach the End of the Decade . . .

Regional and global population change in the coming years will be determined by the interplay of a number of factors. These include:

- the size of the populations of the world's more affluent and less affluent regions and continuing differences in fertility and mortality exhibited by these populations;
- the extent to which couples will have access to reproductive health services, including family planning services, in those nations where fertility remains relatively high; and
- the course of the HIV/AIDS pandemic.

Fertility remains the driving force behind natural increase in the vast majority of countries that contribute the most to world population growth. A key determinant of current fertility, and of the

future path of fertility, in these countries is the extent to which couples use — or fail to use — contraception to regulate the number and spacing of their children. In spite of the rapid growth in the number of women using modern contraception worldwide over the past 20 years, substantial numbers of women who would prefer to control their fertility are not doing so. This group of women, deemed to have “unmet need” for contraceptive services and products, is estimated to include at least 120 million married women in the world’s developing regions in 1998.

Current estimates indicate over 40 million people have become infected with HIV since the beginning of the pandemic in the late 1970s, and over 11 million of these people have already died. While the majority of the infections have occurred in Sub-Saharan Africa up to now, the spread of the disease in Asia during the coming years may result in many more infections in that region than in Sub-Saharan Africa.

HIV/AIDS has had, and continues to have, substantial and sometimes dramatic impacts on mortality levels in countries most seriously affected. However, AIDS will not overcome the momentum of population growth at the regional level, even in Sub-Saharan Africa. This will be true particularly if changes in behavior, already observed in some settings, bring about an early curtailment of HIV infections in affected countries.

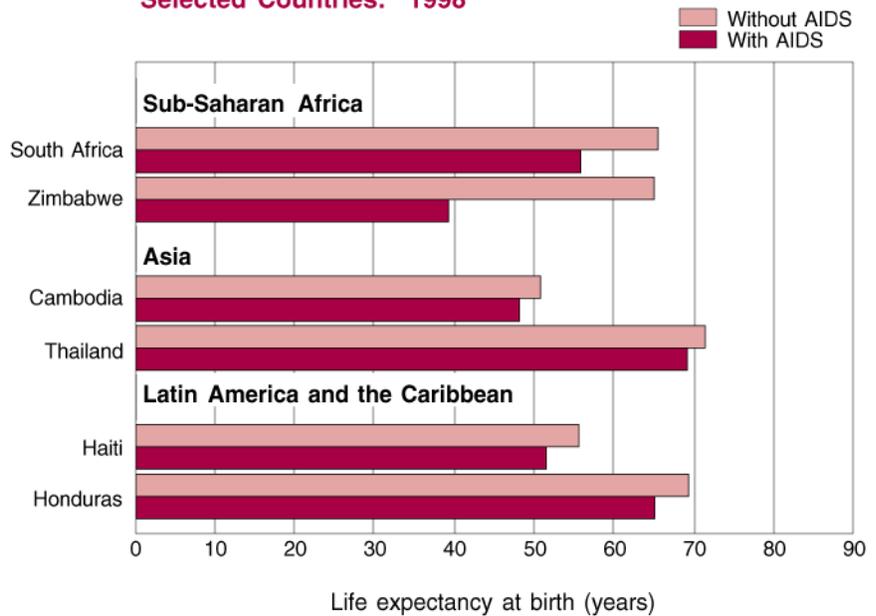
References

United Nations, 1995. *World Population Prospects: The 1994 Revision*. Department for Economic and Social Information and Policy Analysis, Population Division. ST/ESA/SER.A/145. New York.

More Information

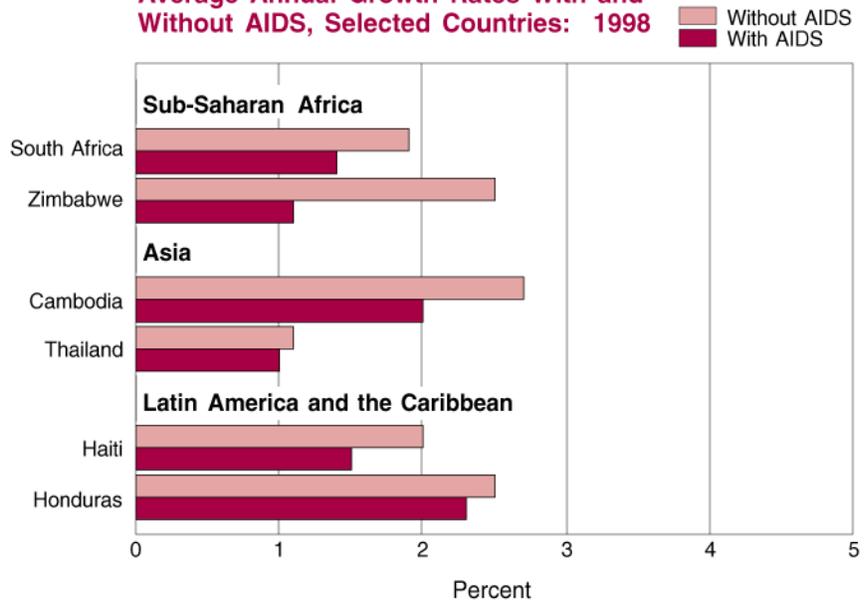
World Population Profile: 1998. Report WP/98. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

Figure 6. **Life Expectancy With and Without AIDS, Selected Countries: 1998**



Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, International Data Base and unpublished tables.

Figure 7. **Average Annual Growth Rates With and Without AIDS, Selected Countries: 1998**



Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, International Data Base and unpublished tables.

This report may be found on the worldwide web at <http://www.census.gov/ipc/www/wp98.html>

The International Programs Center (IPC) collects, assesses, and analyzes population and related statistics from all countries. Based on these data, IPC produces the

demographic estimates and projections used in this series of reports. Additional information is available from the International Programs Center, Population Division, Bureau of the Census, Washington, DC 20233-8860 (Internet e-mail: ipc@census.gov).