

Global Population at a Glance: 2002 and Beyond

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International Brief

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At the dawn of the new millennium, global population continues to increase rapidly ...

... even though both the global rate of growth and net additions each year are decreasing,

... even though AIDS is devastating the populations of a number of African countries,

... even though 88 countries now have fertility levels lower than those required for replacement of their populations in the long run.

This brief highlights several of the most important global population trends in 2002 and describes the continuation and impacts

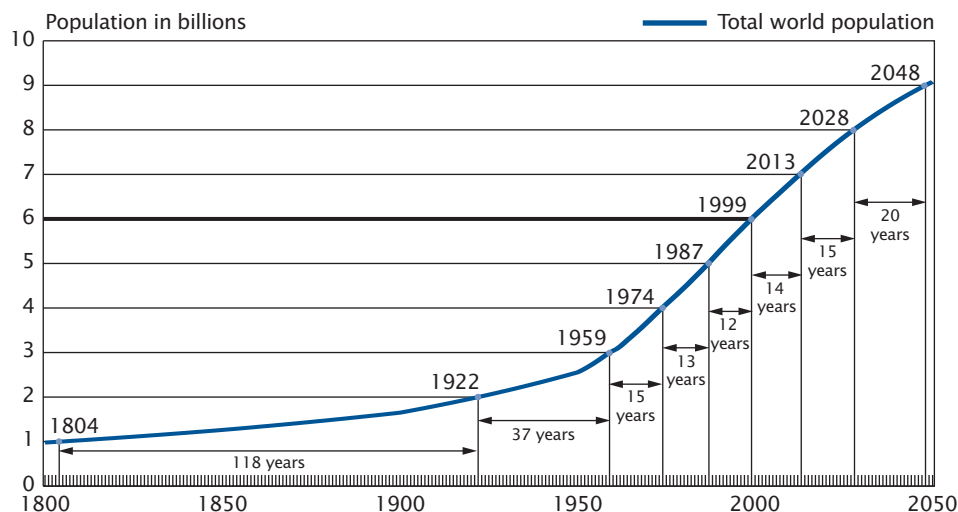
of these trends through 2050. The material discussed here, as well as demographic statistics for every country of the world, come from the U.S. Census Bureau's **Global Population Profile: 2002**.

Global Population Growth

According to U.S. Census Bureau estimates, world population hit the 6-billion mark in June 1999. This figure is over 3.5 times the size of the earth's population at the beginning of the 20th century and roughly double its size in 1960. The time required for global population to grow from 5 to 6 billion — 12 years — was shorter than the interval between any of the previous billions.

International Population Reports

Figure 1.
Annual Additions and the Annual Growth Rate of Global Population
The growth of global population has peaked.



Source: United Nations, *World Population Prospects: The 1994 Revision*; U.S. Census Bureau, International Programs Center, International Data Base and unpublished tables.

Demographic Programs

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In 2002, global population stood at 6.2 billion and was growing at 1.2 percent per annum. This is equivalent to a net addition of about 200,000 people per day, about 74 million people per year, and about 371 million people over a 5-year period (or nearly the size of all of Western Europe in 2002).

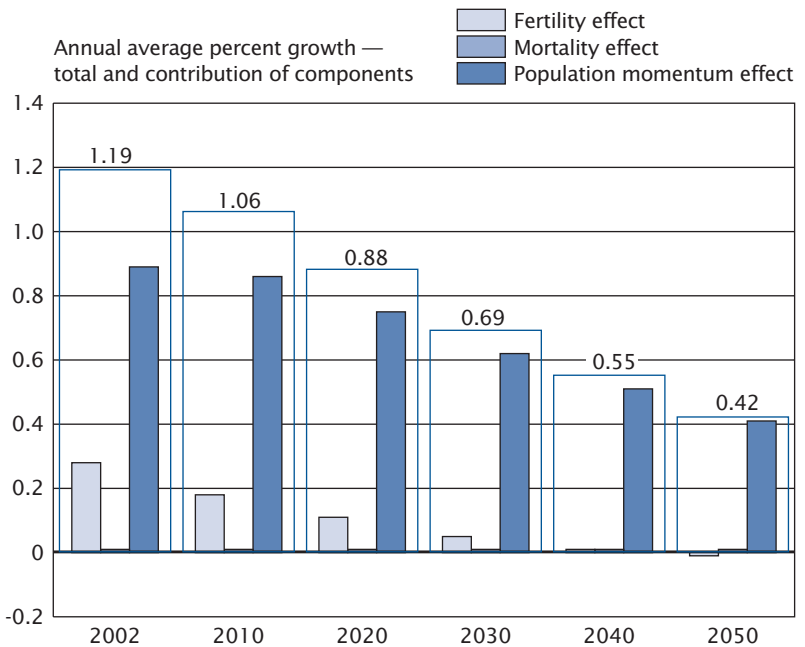
However, as Figure 1 indicates, the pace of global population increase actually peaked some years ago. The 74 million people added in 2002 is a substantially lower increment than the high of 87 million people added in 1989-90, and the growth rate was well below the high of 2.2 percent in 1963-64. Census Bureau projections show this slowdown in population growth continuing into the foreseeable future.

The slowdown in the growth of the world's population can be traced primarily to declines in fertility. In 1990, the world's women, on average, were giving birth to 3.3 children over their lifetimes. By 2002, the average was 2.6 — less than one-half of a child more than the level needed to assure the replacement of the population. Although fertility rates in some parts of the world are expected to remain above replacement level for quite some time (e.g., in Sub-Saharan Africa), Census Bureau projections suggest that the level of fertility for the world as a whole will drop below replacement level before 2050.

Population momentum accounts for much of the continued growth of global population in 2002 and beyond.

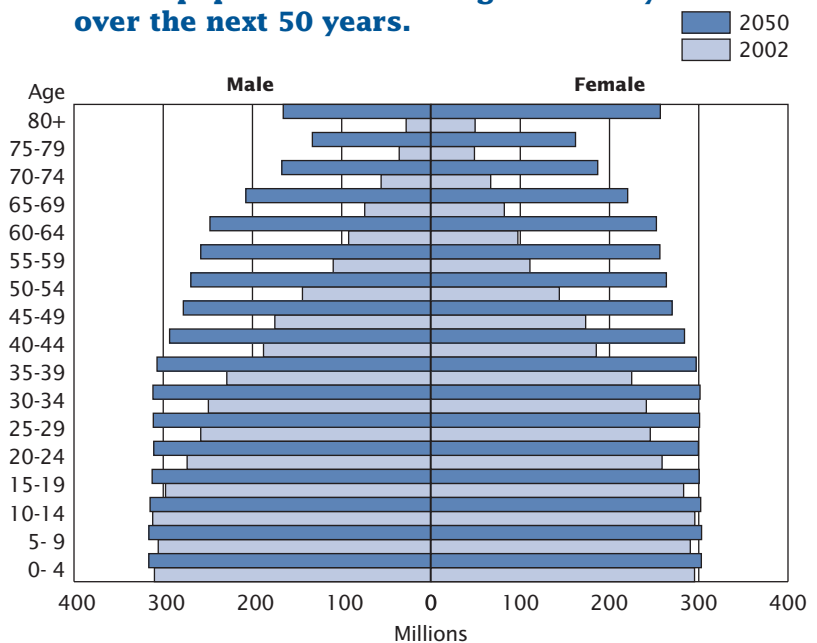
National, regional, and global declines in fertility are not projected to translate directly into equivalent declines in the growth of population. The lack of correspondence in fertility and population declines is due to the fact that numbers of women in their child-bearing years are

Figure 2.
The Components of Yearly World Population Growth: 2002-2050
Fertility's contribution to global growth will cease by 2050.



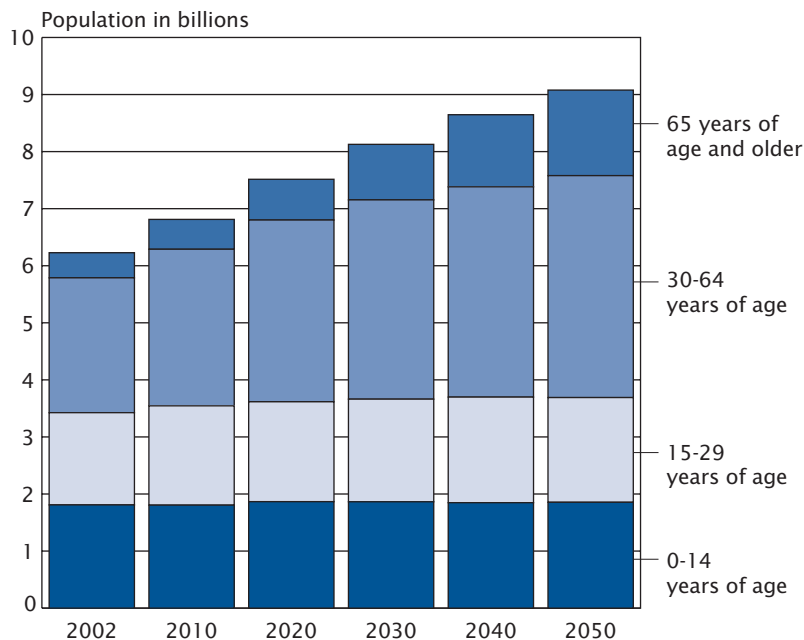
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, International Programs Center, International Data Base and unpublished tables.

Figure 3.
Age-Sex Structure of World Population: 2002 and 2050
Global population will change markedly over the next 50 years.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, International Programs Center, International Data Base.

Figure 4.
**Population Growth of Specific Age Groups:
 2002 to 2050**
**The elderly population is projected
 to grow most rapidly.**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, International Programs Center, International Data Base.

increasing both in absolute terms and relative to the rest of the population (as a result of past, higher fertility), an effect that demographers refer to as “population momentum.” The increase in the ratio of women of reproductive age to total population was responsible for about three-fourths of global population growth in 2002. Census Bureau projections suggest that by 2050, virtually all of the growth of the globe’s population will be due to this age-sex composition effect (Figure 2).

GLOBAL POPULATION COMPOSITION

The transition to lower fertility and mortality accounts for the aging of global population now and during the coming 50 years.

Largely as a result of past, higher fertility, children (ages 0-14)

outnumbered all other age groups in 2002, with each successively higher age group being slightly smaller (Figure 3). Children made up just under 30 percent of the world’s population.

Over the next five decades, the absolute number of children is expected to remain relatively stable, but their number relative to total global population is expected to decline to 20 percent. The number of women in their childbearing years is expected to increase by more than 25 percent between 2002 and 2050; however, their proportion of total population slowly decreases (from 26 percent to 23 percent). The population of labor force age is expected to grow steadily while its proportion of the total stays approximately the same. The world’s elderly

population, on the other hand, is projected to grow considerably in both absolute and relative terms (Figure 4). The elderly are projected to be more than three times as many in 2050 as today, and to comprise nearly 17 percent of global population, compared with 7 percent in 2002.

How fast global population grows over the next five decades will be determined in part by two factors that are relatively difficult to forecast. These are the pace of fertility decline in parts of the developing world and the future course taken by the AIDS pandemic.

CONTRACEPTIVE PREVALENCE IN THE DEVELOPING WORLD

High fertility remains the dominant factor dictating the future size, growth, and composition of the populations of many developing nations. Contraceptive use, in turn, is one of the primary determinants of the level of fertility in a population and of differences in fertility between populations. Contraceptive use is also important as an indicator of the extent to which couples have access to reproductive health services.

Though contraceptive prevalence has risen dramatically since the 1960s, there are at least 100 million women in the world’s developing countries today who would like to space or limit their pregnancies but are not using contraception. These women, considered to have “unmet need for family planning,” are found in greater numbers in Asia than in other world regions but make up higher proportions of the populations of Sub-Saharan African countries than of countries in other parts of the world.

THE AIDS PANDEMIC IN THE 21ST CENTURY

Since the beginning of the AIDS pandemic two decades ago, more than 20 million people have died of AIDS. Twice that many — 40 million — are now living with HIV, the virus that causes AIDS. Barring some major breakthrough, most of these people are expected to die during the next 10 years or so.

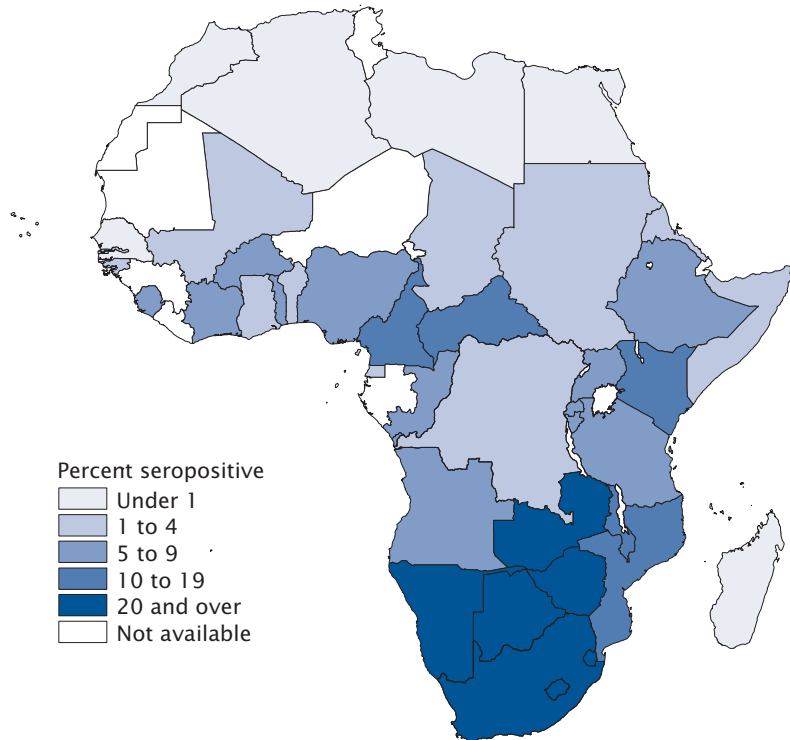
The pandemic continues to have its greatest impact in the developing countries of Africa, Asia, and Latin America, with Sub-Saharan Africa at its epicenter. The latest estimates released by UNAIDS and the World Health Organization show infection rates among the adult population exceed 35 percent in Botswana and 10 percent in eleven other countries in Sub-Saharan Africa (Figure 5). As a result of AIDS mortality, Census Bureau projections indicate that a number of African countries will experience levels of mortality during this decade that will bring the average life expectancy at birth down to around 30 years by 2010, levels not seen since the beginning of the 20th century.

Consequently, some of these countries are expected to begin to experience population decline before 2010. Moreover, AIDS mortality is likely to produce age-sex distributions that have never been seen before.

The news is not all bad, however.

While child mortality rates in 2010 are expected to be much higher with AIDS than they would have been without AIDS, if prevention of mother-to-child transmission programs are dramatically scaled up, then the course of future child mortality rates can be changed. Moreover, several countries, including Thailand, Senegal, and

Figure 5.
Adult HIV Prevalence in Africa: December 2001
A dozen Sub-Saharan African countries now have HIV infection rates in excess of 10 percent of the adult population ages 15-49.



Source: Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS and the World Health Organization, *Report on the Global HIV/AIDS Epidemic July 2002*.

Uganda, have managed to stem the tide of the pandemic. These examples give hope that the AIDS pandemic can be successfully curtailed in other countries.

MORE INFORMATION

Global Population Profile: 2002. Report WP/02. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

This report may be found on the Internet at www.census.gov/ipc/www/wp02.html.

The International Programs Center (IPC) collects, assesses, and

analyzes population and related statistical information from all countries. Based on these data, IPC produces demographic estimates and projections used in **Global Population Profile: 2002** and other reports. Additional information is available from the International Programs Center, Population Division, U.S. Census Bureau, Washington, DC. 20233-8860. (Internet site: www.census.gov/ipc/www/index.html; e-mail: ipc@census.gov).