World Population Prospects
The 2015 Revision

Key Findings and Advance Tables

United Nations
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WORLD POPULATION PROSPECTS: THE 2015 REVISION

SUMMARY AND KEY FINDINGS

Understanding the demographic changes that are likely to unfold over the coming years, as well as the challenges and opportunities that they present for achieving sustainable development, is important for designing and implementing the post-2015 development agenda. The 2015 Revision of World Population Prospects is the twenty-fourth round of official United Nations population estimates and projections that have been prepared by the Population Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat. The 2015 Revision builds on the previous revision by incorporating additional results from the 2010 round of national population censuses as well as findings from recent specialized demographic and health surveys that have been carried out around the world. The 2015 Revision provides the demographic data and indicators to assess population trends at the global, regional and national levels and to calculate many other key indicators commonly used by the United Nations system.

Snapshot of global population in 2015

According to the results of the 2015 Revision, the world population reached 7.3 billion as of mid-2015 (table 1), implying that the world has added approximately one billion people in the span of the last twelve years. Sixty per cent of the global population lives in Asia (4.4 billion), 16 per cent in Africa (1.2 billion), 10 per cent in Europe (738 million), 9 per cent in Latin America and the Caribbean (634 million), and the remaining 5 per cent in Northern America (358 million) and Oceania (39 million). China (1.4 billion) and India (1.3 billion) remain the two largest countries of the world, both with more than 1 billion people, representing 19 and 18 per cent of the world’s population, respectively.

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<th>Major area</th>
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In 2015, 50.4 per cent of the world’s population is male and 49.6 per cent is female (figure 1). The median age of the global population, that is, the age at which half the population is older and half is younger, is 29.6 years. About one-quarter (26 per cent) of the world’s people are under 15 years of age, 62 per cent are aged 15-59 years, and 12 per cent are 60 or over.
**Projected growth in the world population**

Currently, the world population continues to grow though more slowly than in the recent past. Ten years ago, world population was growing by 1.24 per cent per year. Today, it is growing by 1.18 per cent per year, or approximately an additional 83 million people annually. The world population is projected to increase by more than one billion people within the next 15 years, reaching 8.5 billion in 2030, and to increase further to 9.7 billion in 2050 and 11.2 billion by 2100 (figure 2).

As with any type of projection, there is a degree of uncertainty surrounding these latest population projections. The results presented above are based on the medium projection variant, which assumes a decline of fertility for countries where large families are still prevalent as well as a slight increase of fertility in several countries with fewer than two children per woman on average. Survival prospects are also projected to improve in all countries. The uncertainty surrounding the median trajectories is accounted for with statistical methods that enable the Population Division to make statements about the degree of uncertainty in these projections. For example, one can say with a 95 per cent degree of confidence that global population will be between 8.4 and 8.6 billion in 2030 and between 9.5 and 13.3 billion in 2100. In other words, global population is virtually certain to rise in the short-to-medium term future. Later in the century, global population is likely to continue to rise, but there is roughly a 23 per cent chance that it could stabilize or begin to fall before 2100.

Africa is the fastest-growing major area

More than half of global population growth between now and 2050 is expected to occur in Africa. Africa has the highest rate of population growth among major areas, growing at a pace of 2.55 per cent annually in 2010-2015 (figure 3). Consequently, of the additional 2.4 billion people projected to be added to the global population between 2015 and 2050, 1.3 billion will be added in Africa. Asia is projected to be the second largest contributor to future global population growth, adding 0.9 billion people between 2015 and 2050, followed by Northern America, Latin America and the Caribbean and Oceania, which are projected to have much smaller increments. In the medium variant, Europe is projected to have a smaller population in 2050 than in 2015.

![Figure 3. Average annual rate of population change by major area, estimates, 2000-2015, and medium-variant projection, 2015-2100](source)


A rapid population increase in Africa is anticipated even if there is a substantial reduction of fertility levels in the near future. The medium variant projection assumes that fertility will fall from 4.7 children per women in 2010-2015 to 3.1 in 2045-2050, reaching 2.2 by 2095-2100. After 2050, Africa is expected to be the only major area still experiencing substantial population growth. As a result, Africa’s share of global population is projected to grow to 25 per cent in 2050 and 39 per cent by 2100, while the share residing in Asia will fall to 54 per cent in 2050 and 44 per cent in 2100. Regardless of the uncertainty surrounding future trends in fertility in Africa, the large number of young people currently on the
continent who will reach adulthood in the coming years and have children of their own, ensures that the region will play a central role in shaping the size and distribution of the world’s population over the coming decades.

Population growth remains especially high in the group of 48 countries designated by the United Nations as the least developed countries (LDCs), of which 27 are in Africa. Although the growth rate of the LDCs is projected to slow from its current 2.4 per cent annually, the population of this group is projected to double in size from 954 million inhabitants in 2015 to 1.9 billion in 2050 and further increase to 3.2 billion in 2100. Between 2015 and 2100, the populations of 33 countries, most of them LDCs, have a high probability of at least tripling. Among them, the populations of Angola, Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Malawi, Mali, Niger, Somalia, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia are projected to increase at least five-fold by 2100. The concentration of population growth in the poorest countries will make it harder for those governments to eradicate poverty and inequality, combat hunger and malnutrition, expand education enrolment and health systems, improve the provision of basic services and implement other elements of a sustainable development agenda to ensure that no-one is left behind.

**Europe projected to experience shrinking population**

In sharp contrast, the populations of 48 countries or areas in the world are expected to decrease between 2015 and 2050. Several countries are expected to see their populations decline by more than 15 per cent by 2050, including Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Hungary, Japan, Latvia, Lithuania, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Serbia, and Ukraine. Fertility in all European countries is now below the level required for full replacement of the population in the long run (around 2.1 children per woman, on average), and in the majority of cases, fertility has been below the replacement level for several decades. Fertility for Europe as a whole is projected to increase from 1.6 children per women in 2010-2015 to 1.8 in 2045-2050, but such an increase will not prevent a likely contraction of the total population size.

**Most of the increase in world population can be attributed to a short list of countries**

At the country level, much of the overall increase between now and 2050 is projected to occur either in high-fertility countries, mainly in Africa, or in countries with large populations. During 2015-2050, half of the world’s population growth is expected to be concentrated in nine countries: India, Nigeria, Pakistan, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, Indonesia and Uganda, listed according to the size of their contribution to the total growth.

The new projections include some notable findings at the country level. For example, within seven years, the population of India is expected to surpass that of China. Currently, the population of China is approximately 1.38 billion compared with 1.31 billion in India. By 2022, both countries are expected to have approximately 1.4 billion people. Thereafter, India’s population is projected to continue growing for several decades to 1.5 billion in 2030 and 1.7 billion in 2050, while the population of China is expected to remain fairly constant until the 2030s, after which it is expected to slightly decrease.

Among the ten largest countries in the world, one is in Africa (Nigeria), five are in Asia (Bangladesh, China, India, Indonesia, and Pakistan), two are in Latin America (Brazil and Mexico), one is in Northern America (United States of America), and one is in Europe (Russian Federation). Among these, Nigeria’s population, currently the seventh largest in the world, is growing the most rapidly. Consequently, the population of Nigeria is projected to surpass that of the United States by about 2050, at which point it would become the third largest country in the world. By 2050, six of the ten largest countries in the world are expected to exceed 300 million: China, India, Indonesia, Nigeria, Pakistan, and United States of America.
Future population growth is highly dependent on the path that future fertility will take

The population levels projected in the medium variant are an outcome of the substantial projected declines in fertility. According to the medium variant of the 2015 Revision, global fertility is projected to fall from 2.5 children per woman in 2010-2015 to 2.4 in 2025-2030 and 2.0 in 2095-2100. Steep reductions are projected for the least developed countries, from 4.3 in 2010-2015 to 3.5 in 2025-2030 and 2.1 in 2095-2100. However, for countries with high fertility there is significant uncertainty in the projection of fertility, even in the 15-year horizon of the post-2015 development agenda, and more so in the long-term projection to 2100. Slower-than-projected fertility declines would result in much higher population totals in all subsequent time periods. For example, a scenario in which all countries had a fertility rate that was consistently half a child higher than in the medium variant would produce a population of 16.6 billion in 2100, more than 5 billion higher than the medium-variant projection.

To realize the substantial reductions in fertility projected in the medium variant, it is essential to invest in reproductive health and family planning, particularly in the least developed countries, so that women and couples can achieve their desired family size. In 2015, the use of modern contraceptive methods in the least developed countries was estimated at around 34 per cent among women of reproductive age who were married or in union, and a further 22 per cent of such women had an unmet need for family planning, meaning that they were not using any method of contraception despite a stated desire or intention to avoid or delay childbearing.

Large variations in fertility levels across countries and regions

In recent decades many countries have experienced major reductions in average family size. Today, countries of the world can be roughly classified into three groups depending on their current level of fertility. It is now estimated that 46 per cent of the world’s population lives in countries with low levels of fertility where women have fewer than 2.1 children, on average, over their life-times. Low-fertility countries now include all of Europe and Northern America, plus 20 countries of Asia, 17 in Latin America and the Caribbean, 3 in Oceania and 1 in Africa. The largest low-fertility countries are China, the United States, Brazil, the Russian Federation, Japan and Viet Nam.

Another 46 per cent of the world’s population lives in “intermediate fertility” countries that have already experienced substantial fertility decline and where women have on average between 2.1 and 5 children. Intermediate-fertility countries are found in many regions, with the largest being India, Indonesia, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Mexico, and the Philippines.

The remaining 9 per cent of the world’s population lives in “high-fertility” countries that have experienced only limited fertility decline to date. In these countries the average woman has 5 or more children over her lifetime. Of the 21 high-fertility countries, 19 are in Africa and 2 are in Asia. The largest are Nigeria, Democratic Republic of Congo, United Republic of Tanzania, Uganda and Afghanistan.

Adolescent childbearing can have important health and social consequences both for adolescent girls and for the children they bear. Although fertility in this age range has fallen in most countries, high adolescent fertility remains a concern in some areas. Among the major areas of the world, the adolescent birth rate (births per 1,000 women aged 15-19) in 2010-2015 was highest in Africa at 98 per 1,000 women, followed by Latin America and the Caribbean at 67 per 1,000.

Increasing longevity around the world; progress against major challenges

The 2015 Revision confirms that significant gains in life expectancy have been achieved in recent years. Globally, life expectancy at birth rose by 3 years between 2000-2005 and 2010-2015, that is from 67 to 70 years. All major areas shared in the life expectancy gains over this period, but the greatest
increases were in Africa, where life expectancy rose by 6 years in the 2000s after rising by only 2 years in the previous decade. Life expectancy in Africa in 2010-2015 stood at 60 years, compared to 72 years in Asia, 75 years in Latin America and the Caribbean, 77 years in Europe and in Oceania and 79 years in Northern America.

Under-five mortality, expressed as the probability of dying between birth and a child’s fifth birthday, is an important indicator of development and the well-being of children. Globally, deaths among children under age five fell from 71 per 1,000 live births in 2000-2005 to an estimated 50 per 1,000 in 2010-2015. Absolute declines were particularly large in Sub-Saharan Africa (142 to 99 per 1,000) and in the least developed countries (125 to 86 per 1,000). The reduction of under-five mortality, which has received intense global attention as the target of Millennium Development Goal 4, has proceeded swiftly in many countries in the past decade. In the majority of countries in Sub-Saharan Africa and the group of LDCs, the annual pace of decline in under-five mortality accelerated after 2000.

Globally, life expectancy at birth is projected to rise from 70 years in 2010-2015 to 77 years in 2045-2050 and to 83 years in 2095-2100. Africa is projected to gain about 19 years of life expectancy by the end of the century, reaching 70 years in 2045-2050 and 78 years in 2095-2100. Such increases are contingent on further reductions in the spread of HIV, and combating successfully other infectious as well as non-communicable diseases. Both Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean are projected to gain 13-14 years of life expectancy by 2095-2100, while Europe, Northern America and Oceania are projected to gain 10-11 years.

**Volume of international migration continues to be high**

Internal and international migration can be positive forces for economic and social development as they offer a mechanism to rebalance labour markets in areas of origin and destination, and to accelerate the diffusion of new ideas and technologies. Migration can also result in significant flows of remittances to areas of origin. Overall, international migration is a much smaller component of population change than births or deaths. However, in some countries and areas the impact of migration on population size is significant, including in countries that send or receive proportionately large numbers of economic migrants or those affected by refugee flows.

Overall, between 1950 and 2015, the major areas of Europe, Northern America and Oceania have been net receivers of international migrants, while Africa, Asia and Latin and the Caribbean have been net senders, with the volume of net migration generally increasing over time. From 2000 to 2015, average annual net migration to Europe, Northern America and Oceania averaged 2.8 million persons per year. When countries are grouped by income rather than geography, the attraction of high-income countries is even more evident: from 2000 to 2015, high-income countries received an average of 4.1 million net migrants annually from lower- and middle-income countries. In the future, net migration is projected to be a major contributor to population growth in many high-income countries. Between 2015 and 2050, total births in the group of high-income countries are projected to exceed deaths by 20 million, while the net gain in migrants is projected to be 91 million. Thus, in the medium variant, net migration is projected to account for 82 per cent of population growth in the high-income countries.

The movement of people from Asia, Africa and Latin America to Europe, Northern America and Oceania have dominated the world migration patterns for almost half a century, but flows among developing countries have also been important. Several high-income and middle-income countries in the “global south” have also been attracting migrants in large numbers for several years.
Large and persistent economic and demographic asymmetries between countries are likely to remain powerful generators of international migration within the foreseeable future. Between 2015 and 2050, the top net receivers of international migrants (more than 100,000 annually) are projected to be the United States of America, Canada, the United Kingdom, Australia, Germany, the Russian Federation and Italy. The countries projected to have net emigration of more than 100,000 annually include India, Bangladesh, China, Pakistan and Mexico.

**Populations in many parts of the world are still young; opportunity for demographic dividend**

Populations in many regions are still young. In Africa, children under age 15 account for 41 per cent of the population in 2015 and young persons aged 15 to 24 account for a further 19 per cent. Latin America and the Caribbean and Asia, which have seen greater declines in fertility, have smaller percentages of children (26 and 24 per cent, respectively) and similar percentages of youth (17 and 16 per cent, respectively). In total, these three regions are home to 1.7 billion children and 1.1 billion young persons in 2015. Providing these generations with health care, education, and employment opportunities, including in the poorest countries and groups, is a pivotal focus of the post-2015 agenda.

Proportions of children in the populations of many countries of these regions are projected to decline further in the near-term future, while the size and the proportion of populations in the prime working ages can be expected to grow. Countries with a relatively high ratio of working to dependent populations have the possibility of benefitting from a “demographic dividend,” provided that appropriate labour market and other policies allow for a productive absorption of the growing working-age population and for increased investments in the human capital of children and youth.

**Globally, population aged 60 or over is the fastest growing**

As fertility declines and life expectancy rises, the proportion of the population above a certain age rises. This phenomenon, known as population ageing, is occurring throughout the world.

In 2015, there are 901 million people aged 60 or over, comprising 12 per cent of the global population. The population aged 60 or above is growing at a rate of 3.26 per cent per year. Currently, Europe has the greatest percentage of its population aged 60 or over (24 per cent), but rapid ageing will occur in other parts of the world as well, so that, by 2050, all major areas of the world except Africa will have nearly a quarter or more of their populations aged 60 or over. The number of older persons in the world is projected to be 1.4 billion by 2030 and 2.1 billion by 2050, and could rise to 3.2 billion in 2100. In the short-to-medium term, higher numbers of older population are inevitable, given that the relevant cohorts are already alive.

Population ageing is projected to have a profound effect on the number of workers per retiree in various countries, as measured by the Potential Support Ratio (PSR), defined as the number of people aged 20 to 64 divided by the number of people aged 65 and over. Currently, African countries, on average, have 12.9 people aged 20 to 64 for every person aged 65 or above, while Asian countries have PSRs of 8.0, Latin America and the Caribbean 7.6, Oceania 4.8 and Europe and Northern America at or under 4. Japan, at 2.1, has the lowest PSR in the world, although seven European countries also have PSRs below 3. By 2050, seven Asian countries, 24 European countries, and four countries of Latin America and the Caribbean are expected to have PSRs below 2, underscoring the fiscal and political pressures that the health care systems as well as the old-age and social protection systems of many countries are likely to face in the not-too-distant future.
Key Findings

1. In July 2015, world population reached 7.3 billion. The world has added one billion people since 2003 and two billion since 1990. In 2015, 50.4 per cent of the world was male and 49.6 per cent was female. In 2015, 9.1 per cent of the world’s population was under age 5, 26.1 per cent was under age 15, 12.3 per cent was 60 or over and 1.7 per cent was 80 or over.

2. In 2016, it is projected that 83 million people will be added to the world’s population. Even assuming that fertility levels will continue to decline, the global population is still expected to reach 8.5 billion in 2030, 9.7 billion in 2050 and 11.2 billion in 2100, according to the medium projection variant.

3. Continued population growth until 2050 is almost inevitable, even if the decline of fertility accelerates. There is an 80 per cent probability that the population of world will be between 8.4 and 8.6 billion in 2030, between 9.4 and 10 billion in 2050 and between 10 and 12.5 billion in 2100.

4. Future population growth is highly dependent on the path that future fertility will take, as relatively small changes in fertility behaviour, when projected over several decades, can generate large differences in total population. In the medium-variant projection, global fertility declines from 2.5 children per women in 2010-2015 to 2.25 children per women in 2045-2050 and 2.0 children per women in 2095-2100. If fertility were to be consistently half a child above those levels, world population would reach 10.8 billion by 2050 and 16.6 billion by 2100. Fertility levels consistently half a child below the medium variant would lead to a population of 8.7 billion by mid-century and 7.3 billion by 2100.

5. In recent years, fertility has declined in virtually all major areas of the world. In Africa, where fertility levels are the highest of any major area, total fertility has fallen from 4.9 children per woman in 2005-2010 to 4.7 children per woman in 2010-2015. Fertility levels have also fallen in Asia and Oceania over the same period, from 2.3 to 2.2 children per woman in Asia and from 2.5 to 2.4 children per woman in Oceania. Recent fertility declines have been slightly larger in Latin America and the Caribbean where fertility has fallen from 2.3 to 2.15 and in Northern America where fertility has fallen from 2.0 in 2005-2010 to 1.86 in 2010-2015. Europe is the only major area that was an exception to this trend. In recent years, total fertility in Europe has increased slightly from 1.55 children per woman in 2005-2010 to 1.6 children per woman in 2010-2015.

6. The 48 least developed countries (LDCs) as a whole still have high total fertility (4.3 children per woman in 2010-2015) and fast growing populations, at 2.4 per cent per year. Although this rate of increase is expected to slow significantly over the next decades, the population of the LDCs, 954 million in 2015, is projected to increase 39 per cent between 2015 and 2030, and to double to 1.9 billion persons by mid-century.

7. The slowdown in population growth brought about by a reduction in fertility is associated with population ageing; that is, as the population growth rate falls over time, the proportion of older persons increases while that of younger persons decreases. In 2015, there were more than twice as many children under the age of 15 in the world as there are older persons aged 60 or above. By 2050, however, there will be almost complete global parity between the number of older persons aged 60 and above and the number of children under the age of 15.

8. In Europe, 24 per cent of the population is already aged 60 years or over and that proportion is projected to reach 34 per cent in 2050 and 35 per cent in 2100. Other major areas of the world
are also projected to experience significant population ageing over the next several decades. For Latin America and the Caribbean, the population will be transformed from having just 11 per cent of the total aged 60 or over in 2015 to having 26 per cent aged 60 or over by 2050. Similarly, Asia is expected to shift from 12 per cent aged 60 or over to 25 per cent by 2050, Northern America from 21 per cent to 28 percent by 2050, and Oceania from 16 per cent to 23 per cent by 2050. Africa has the youngest age distribution of any major area. Nevertheless, it is also projected to age rapidly over the next 35 years, with the percentage of its population aged 60 or over rising from 5 per cent in 2015 to 9 per cent by 2050.

9. Globally, the number of persons aged 60 and above is expected to more than double by 2050 and more than triple by 2100, increasing from 901 million in 2015 to 2.1 billion in 2050 and 3.2 billion in 2100. Sixty-six per cent of the increase between 2015 and 2050 will occur in Asia, 13 per cent in Africa, 11 per cent in Latin America and the Caribbean, and the remaining 10 per cent in other areas.

10. The number of persons aged 80 or over is projected to more than triple by 2050 and to increase more than seven-fold by 2100. Globally, the number of persons aged 80 or over is projected to increase from 125 million in 2015 to 434 million in 2050 and 944 million in 2100. In 2015, 28 per cent of all persons aged 80 and over lived in Europe, but that share is expected to decline to 16 per cent by 2050 and 9 per cent by 2100 as the populations of other major areas continue to increase in size and to grow older themselves.

11. Although the populations of all countries are expected to age over the foreseeable future, the population will remain relatively young, at least in the short-term, in countries where fertility is still high.

12. The median age, that is, the age that divides the population in two halves of equal size, is an indicator of population ageing. Globally, the median age is projected to increase from 30 to 36 years between 2015 and 2050 and to 42 years in 2100. The median age is higher in countries or regions that have been experiencing low fertility for a long time. Europe today has the oldest population, with a median age of 42 years in 2015, which is expected to reach 46 years in 2050 and then 47 years in 2100. By comparison, the median age for the least developed countries as a whole is 20 years in 2015 and is projected to reach 26 years in 2050 and 36 years in 2100.

13. Africa continues to experience very high rates of population growth. Between 2015 and 2050, the populations of 28 African countries are projected to more than double. By 2100, ten African countries are projected to increase by at least five-fold: Angola, Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Malawi, Mali, Niger, Somalia, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia.

14. Forty-eight countries or areas are projected to experience population decline between 2015 and 2050. Eleven countries are expected to see their populations decline by more than 15 per cent by 2050: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Hungary, Japan, Latvia, Lithuania, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Serbia, and Ukraine.

15. Nine countries are expected to account for more than half of the world’s projected population increase over the period 2015-2050: India, Nigeria, Pakistan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, the United Republic of Tanzania, the United States of America, Indonesia, and Uganda, listed according to the size of their contribution to global population growth.

16. The 2015 Revision confirms that fertility has continued to fall in the vast majority of countries, particularly those where it was recently at high levels. Among countries with at least 90,000 inhabitants in 2015, the number with high fertility (5 children or more per woman) has roughly
halved from 40 countries in 2000-2005 to 21 in 2010-2015. Afghanistan and Timor-Leste were the only two countries outside of Africa where total fertility was above 5 children per woman during 2010-2015. Among 126 countries where total fertility was above the replacement level (2.1 children per woman) in 2005-2010, fertility has fallen in 108 of them between 2005-2010 and 2010-2015.

17. More and more countries now have below-replacement fertility and in many cases have had below-replacement fertility for several decades. Eighty-three countries had below-replacement fertility during 2010-2015, and in 25 of those countries, fertility was below 1.5 children per woman. In a number of countries, fertility rates have fluctuated slightly in the recent past. Fifty-four countries with below-replacement fertility in 2010-2015 recorded a slight increase in fertility at some point between 2000-2005 and 2010-2015, although 21 of these countries subsequently experienced slight downturns in 2010-2015. Only four European countries have experienced above-replacement fertility during any 5-year period since 1990-1995.

18. In 2010-2015, the 83 countries with below-replacement fertility accounted for 46 per cent of the world’s population. The most populous countries with below replacement fertility are China, the United States of America, Brazil, the Russian Federation, Japan, Viet Nam, Germany, the Islamic Republic of Iran, and Thailand, in order of population size.

19. Globally, total fertility is expected to fall from 2.5 children per woman in 2010-2015 to 2.25 in 2045-2050 and to 2.0 in 2095-2100 according to the medium-variant projection. However, in Europe and Northern America, total fertility is projected to increase between 2010-2015 and 2045-5050 from 1.6 to 1.8 children per woman in Europe and from 1.86 to 1.9 children per woman in Northern America. In Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Oceania, fertility is expected to fall between 2010-2015 and 2045-2050, with the largest reductions projected to occur in Africa. Thus, in all major areas of the world, fertility levels are projected to converge to a level at or just below the replacement level by 2095-2100.

20. Adolescent childbearing, which can have important health and social consequences both for adolescent girls and for the children they bear, has fallen in most countries. Nevertheless, high adolescent fertility remains a concern in certain parts of the world. Among major areas, the adolescent birth rate (births per 1,000 women aged 15-19) in 2010-2015 was highest in Africa, at 98 per 1,000 women, followed by Latin America and the Caribbean at 67 per 1,000.

21. The 2015 Revision confirms that substantial improvements in life expectancy have occurred in recent years. Globally, life expectancy at birth has risen from 65 years for men and 69 years for women in 2000-2005 to 68 years for men and 73 years for women in 2010-2015. The highest levels of life expectancy at birth in 2010-2015 are to be found in China, Hong Kong SAR (84 years, both sexes combined) followed by Japan, Italy, Switzerland, Singapore, Iceland, Spain, Australia, and Israel, in descending order. Globally, life expectancy is projected to rise from 70 years in 2010-2015 to 77 years in 2045-2050 and eventually to 83 years in 2095-2100.

22. Life expectancy at birth has increased significantly in the least developed countries in recent years. The six-year average gain in life expectancy among the poorest countries, from 56 years in 2000-2005 to 62 years in 2010-2015, is roughly double the increase recorded in the rest of the world. While significant differences in life expectancy across major areas and income groups are projected to continue, they are expected to diminish significantly by 2045-2050.

23. The under-five mortality rate, expressed as the probability of dying between birth and age 5, is an important indicator of development and the well-being of children. Target 4.a of the Millennium Development Goals was to reduce the under-five mortality rate by two thirds
between 1990 and 2015. While the MDG Target will not be achieved globally by the end of 2015, progress in reducing under-five mortality has been very significant and wide-reaching in recent years. Between 2000-2005 and 2010-2015, under-five mortality has decreased by more than 20 per cent in 156 countries, with widespread reductions of 20 per cent or more recorded in Africa (42 out of 57 countries), Asia (43 out of 51 countries), Europe (39 out of 40 countries), Latin America and the Caribbean (24 out of 38 countries), and Oceania (8 out of 13 countries). Between 2000-2005 and 2010-2015, under-five mortality fell by more than 30 per cent in 86 countries, of which 13 countries saw a decline of more than 50 per cent.

24. Although the HIV/AIDS epidemic continues to be a major global health concern, HIV/AIDS-related adult mortality appears to have reached a peak over the past decade in most countries highly affected by the epidemic due to the widespread availability of antiretroviral treatment. Nevertheless, in countries where HIV prevalence has been high, the impact of the epidemic in terms of morbidity, mortality and slower population growth continues to be evident. Thus, in Southern Africa, the region with the highest prevalence of the disease, life expectancy fell from 62 years in 1990-1995 to 52 years in 2000-2005, then increased to 57 years in 2010-2015. Life expectancy in Southern Africa is not expected to return to the level where it was in the early 1990s until the year 2030.

25. A number of Eastern European countries experienced reductions in life expectancy at birth in the late 1980s and 1990s. By 2010-2015 life expectancy in the region had recovered substantially, but at 72 years, life expectancy in Eastern Europe lags far behind the level in the rest of Europe. Belarus, the Republic of Moldova, the Russian Federation and Ukraine have the lowest levels of life expectancy at birth in Europe (around 70-71 years).

26. Since 1990, 58 countries have experienced declining life expectancy at least once between two consecutive five-year periods. These included countries highly affected by the HIV/AIDS epidemic, countries in conflict, and countries experiencing increased mortality after the breakup of the Soviet Union. The number of countries experiencing decreases in life expectancy in any given five-year period has fallen dramatically, from a high of 38 in 1990-1995, to 17 in 2000-2005, to 2 in 2010-2015.

27. From 2000 to 2015, annual net migration to Europe, Northern America and Oceania averaged 2.8 million persons per year. When countries are grouped by income rather than geography, the attraction of high-income countries is even more evident: from 2000 to 2015, high-income countries received an average of 4.1 million net migrants annually from lower- and middle-income countries. Economic and demographic asymmetries across countries are likely to remain powerful generators of international migration within the medium-term future. Large-scale refugee movements have also had a profound influence on the level of net migration experienced by some countries, including those affected recently by the Syrian crisis.

28. In countries or areas where fertility is already below the replacement level, the total population is expected to contract unless the excess of deaths over births is counterbalanced by a gain due to net migration. However, international migration at, or around, current levels will be unable to compensate fully for the expected loss of population due to low levels of fertility. Between 2015 and 2050, the excess of deaths over births in Europe is projected to be 63 million, whereas the net number of international migrants to Europe is projected to be approximately 31 million, implying an overall shrinking of Europe’s population by about 32 million.