

### III. ANALYSIS OF URBAN AND RURAL POPULATION GROWTH AT THE REGIONAL LEVEL

The marked differences among major areas discussed in the previous chapter become more varied when the regions that constitute them are considered. In Oceania, for instance, Australia/New Zealand, the most urbanized region of the world (85 per cent urban in 2000), coexists with Melanesia, the least urbanized (24 per cent urban). Micronesia and Polynesia have intermediate but still low levels of urbanization (ranging from 40 to 45 per cent). In Europe, Northern Europe and Western Europe are among the most highly urbanized regions of the world (more than 82 per cent urban) but Eastern Europe and Southern Europe have significantly lower levels of urbanization (table 20). In the Americas, South America has a slightly higher level of urbanization than Northern America (over 77 per cent each) but Central America and the Caribbean are considerably less urbanized. Nevertheless, in all the regions of Europe and the Americas, urbanization is far advanced and the proportion urban in each is at or above 63 per cent. In Africa and Asia, only Western Asia, with 70 per cent of its population urban, has reached a level of urbanization similar to those in Europe or the Americas. Among the other regions, urbanization levels are moderately high in Northern Africa and Southern Africa (at about 50 per cent) but they are considerably lower in the rest of Africa and Asia. Aside from Melanesia, Eastern Africa and South-central Asia are the least urbanized regions of the world, and urbanization levels are just slightly higher in Middle Africa, South-eastern Asia and Eastern Asia.

With low levels of urbanization and large populations, most of the regions of Asia account for high proportions of the rural population of the world. About a third of all rural inhabitants of the world live in South-central Asia, whereas Eastern Asia accounts for a further 29 per cent and South-eastern Asia for 10 per cent. Eastern Africa and Western Africa follow, each accounting for about 5 per cent. That is, in 2000, 4 out of every 5 rural dwellers live in these five regions and that proportion is unlikely to change significantly during 2000-2030, despite the fact that the rural populations of most of the regions of Africa and of

South-Central Asia will increase and those of Eastern Asia and South-eastern Asia will decline. Although rural population growth is expected to decline in all regions, it will still be sizeable in Eastern Africa, Middle Africa and Western Africa, as well as in Melanesia, Micronesia, Polynesia and Western Asia. Slow rural growth is likely to characterize South-central Asia, Central America and Northern Africa, but in all other regions, the rural population is expected to decline by 2030. Particularly rapid reductions of the rural population are likely in all the regions of Europe.

The urban population is also concentrated in a few regions, but it is not as highly concentrated as the rural population. Despite their low levels of urbanization, Eastern Asia and South-central Asia have the largest urban populations of the world and they jointly account for 36 per cent of all urban dwellers. South America, Northern America, Eastern Europe, South-eastern Asia and Western Europe, in decreasing order, follow as the regions housing the largest urban populations of the world but together with Eastern Asia and South-central Asia, they account for just 74 per cent of all urban dwellers. By 2030, seven regions will also account for approximately 73 per cent of the urban population, but they will include Western Asia and Western Africa instead of Eastern Europe and Western Europe. Indeed, during 2000-2030, the urban population of all regions of Europe is expected to increase very slowly, at rates lower than 0.21 per cent per year. No other region will exhibit such low rates of urban population growth. The urban populations of Australia/New Zealand and Northern America, whose growth rates are also expected to be on the low side, will grow at 0.9 per cent per year. All other regions are expected to have urban growth rates above 1.3 per cent per year. Particularly high urban growth rates, above 3 per cent per year, are likely in Eastern Africa, Middle Africa and Western Africa, as well as in Melanesia and Micronesia. The urban populations of South-central Asia, South-eastern Asia, Western Asia, Northern Africa and Polynesia are also expected to grow moderately fast.

TABLE 20. VARIOUS INDICATORS OF URBANIZATION FOR THE REGIONS OF THE WORLD, 1950, 2000 AND 2030

Major area, region	Urban population (millions)			Percentage urban			Urban growth rate (percentage)		Growth rate of the total population (percentage)		Urbanization rate (percentage)	
	1950	2000	2030	1950	2000	2030	1950-2000	2000-2030	1950-2000	2000-2030	1950-2000	2000-2030
<b>Africa</b>												
Eastern Africa.....	3	65	205	5.3	26.1	44.1	5.88	3.86	2.68	2.11	3.21	1.75
Middle Africa.....	4	34	109	14.2	35.4	53.2	4.41	3.90	2.58	2.54	1.83	1.35
Northern Africa.....	13	88	174	24.7	50.8	66.2	3.80	2.27	2.36	1.38	1.44	0.89
Southern Africa.....	6	23	36	38.2	48.1	62.0	2.66	1.57	2.20	0.72	0.46	0.84
Western Africa.....	6	88	242	10.2	39.8	58.2	5.31	3.36	2.58	2.09	2.73	1.27
<b>Asia</b>												
Eastern Asia.....	121	572	933	18.0	38.5	54.6	3.11	1.63	1.59	0.47	1.52	1.16
South-central Asia.....	83	455	1 027	16.6	30.6	47.9	3.41	2.71	2.19	1.21	1.22	1.50
South-eastern Asia.....	27	193	397	14.8	37.2	55.9	3.94	2.41	2.09	1.05	1.84	1.36
Western Asia.....	13	132	248	26.7	70.2	79.1	4.57	2.10	2.64	1.70	1.93	0.40
<b>Europe</b>												
Eastern Europe.....	86	219	226	39.3	71.2	80.1	1.86	0.11	0.67	-0.29	1.19	0.39
Northern Europe.....	57	79	84	72.7	83.8	88.4	0.66	0.21	0.38	0.03	0.28	0.18
Southern Europe.....	48	96	101	44.2	66.4	76.3	1.37	0.16	0.56	-0.30	0.82	0.46
Western Europe.....	96	151	160	67.9	82.6	87.8	0.92	0.19	0.53	-0.02	0.39	0.21
<b>Latin America and the Caribbean</b>												
Caribbean.....	6	24	36	35.4	63.0	73.3	2.76	1.33	1.61	0.82	1.15	0.51
Central America.....	15	91	150	39.8	67.2	75.9	3.65	1.66	2.59	1.26	1.05	0.40
South America.....	48	276	419	42.8	79.8	87.3	3.48	1.39	2.24	1.09	1.24	0.30
Northern America.....	110	239	314	63.9	77.2	84.4	1.56	0.91	1.18	0.61	0.38	0.30
<b>Oceania</b>												
Australia/New Zealand...	7.6	19.3	25.4	74.6	84.9	88.7	1.88	0.91	1.62	0.76	0.26	0.15
Melanesia.....	0.1	1.5	4.1	5.7	23.7	39.0	5.11	3.29	2.26	1.63	2.85	1.66
Micronesia.....	0.0	0.2	0.6	25.8	45.1	61.1	3.68	3.22	2.55	2.21	1.13	1.01
Polynesia.....	0.1	0.3	0.5	20.9	40.3	53.5	3.25	2.36	1.95	1.41	1.30	0.95

The different patterns of urban and rural population growth at the regional level will result in a redistribution of the urban and rural population at the world level and will lead to different patterns of urbanization. Those aspects of the urbanization process are discussed in more detail below.

#### A. URBAN POPULATION GROWTH

In 1950, the most urbanized regions of the world were those of Europe, Australia/New Zealand and Northern America and they generally had large numbers of urban dwellers. However, because of their large populations, certain regions of the developing world also had large numbers of urban dwellers even if their levels of urbanization were low. Thus, in 1950 Eastern Asia had the largest urban population in the world although its level of urbanization was a modest 18 per cent (tables 20 and 21). Similarly, South-central Asia, with 16.6 per cent of its population living in urban areas, ranked fifth among all regions when ordered by urban population size. In addition, South America, with an urbanization level of 42.8 per cent in 1950, higher than that of Eastern Europe, ranked seventh. But despite those exceptions, most of the regions with large numbers of urban dwellers in 1950 were in the developed world: Northern America and the four regions of Europe, in particular, were among the eight regions with the highest number of urban inhabitants in 1950 when their levels of urbanization varied between 39.3 per cent in Eastern Europe and 72.7 per cent in Northern Europe.

In 2000, only three of the more developed regions remain among the eight with the largest urban populations (Northern America, Eastern Europe and Western Europe) and they all have seen their ranks drop as the growth of their urban populations has failed to keep pace with that of the number of urban dwellers in certain developing regions (table 21). Thus, South-central Asia has moved to second place, South America has moved to third place, South-eastern Asia to sixth, and Western Asia to eighth. In addition, Eastern Asia remains as the region with the largest number of urban dwellers in the world. Consequently, all the regions of Asia are among those having the

largest numbers of urban inhabitants, particularly among those in the developing world.

At the other end of the spectrum, Melanesia, Micronesia and Polynesia remain as the regions with the smallest urban populations, largely because their overall populations are also small (table 21). Among regions with medium-sized urban populations, Central America with 91 million urban dwellers has maintained its rank at number 10, and the Caribbean with 24 million urban dwellers has passed from fifteenth to sixteenth place between 1950 and 2000. More important changes in rank have occurred among the regions of Africa, particularly Eastern Africa and Middle Africa, which moved to fourteenth and fifteenth place in 2000 after having ranked seventeenth or higher in 1950.

Over the projection period the urban population of South-central Asia is expected to grow more rapidly than that of Eastern Asia so that by 2030 the former will have the largest urban population of the world (table 21). South America will keep its third rank, but South-eastern Asia and Western Asia will move up the ranks to fourth and sixth place, respectively. Furthermore, Western Africa will rise to seventh place and Eastern Africa to ninth. As a consequence, the more developed regions will see their ranks drop further. Only Northern America and Eastern Europe will remain among the eight regions with the largest urban populations, and Western Europe will drop to eleventh place, following Northern Africa. Southern Europe will drop from ninth place in 2000 to fourteenth place in 2030, and Northern Europe will move from thirteenth place to fifteenth. Only Australia/New Zealand will not experience a change of rank, largely because of the large drop it experienced between 1950 and 2000 when it passed from thirteenth to eighteenth place.

Changes in the ranks of regions according to urban population size are produced by the differential growth rates that those populations have experienced in the past and are expected to experience over the projection period. Clearly, between 1950 and 2000, the urban populations of less developed regions have grown faster than those of more developed regions. Particularly high rates of urban

TABLE 21. THE REGIONS OF THE WORLD ACCORDING TO THE SIZE OF THEIR URBAN POPULATIONS IN 1950, 2000 AND 2030

<i>Rank</i>	<i>Region</i>	<i>Urban population (millions) 1950</i>	<i>Rank</i>	<i>Region</i>	<i>Urban population (millions) 2000</i>	<i>Rank</i>	<i>Region</i>	<i>Urban population (millions) 2030</i>
1	Eastern Asia	120.8	1	Eastern Asia	571.7	1	South-central Asia	1 026.6
2	Northern America	109.7	2	South-central Asia	455.5	2	Eastern Asia	932.9
3	Western Europe	95.6	3	South America	275.9	3	South America	418.6
4	Eastern Europe	86.3	4	Northern America	239.0	4	South-eastern Asia	397.4
5	South-central Asia	82.9	5	Eastern Europe	218.6	5	Northern America	313.7
6	Northern Europe	56.8	6	South-eastern Asia	192.7	6	Western Asia	247.9
7	South America	48.4	7	Western Europe	151.4	7	Western Africa	241.7
8	Southern Europe	48.2	8	Western Asia	132.0	8	Eastern Europe	225.6
9	South-eastern Asia	26.9	9	Southern Europe	95.8	9	Eastern Africa	205.3
10	Central America	14.7	10	Central America	90.9	10	Northern Africa	173.7
11	Western Asia	13.4	11	Western Africa	88.2	11	Western Europe	160.2
12	Northern Africa	13.1	12	Northern Africa	87.9	12	Central America	149.7
13	Australia/New Zealand	7.6	13	Northern Europe	79.1	13	Middle Africa	109.0
14	Western Africa	6.2	14	Eastern Africa	64.6	14	Southern Europe	100.5
15	Caribbean	6.0	15	Middle Africa	33.9	15	Northern Europe	84.3
16	Southern Africa	6.0	16	Caribbean	24.0	16	Southern Africa	36.1
17	Middle Africa	3.7	17	Southern Africa	22.5	17	Caribbean	35.7
18	Eastern Africa	3.4	18	Australia/New Zealand	19.3	18	Australia/New Zealand	25.4
19	Melanesia	0.1	19	Melanesia	1.5	19	Melanesia	4.1
20	Polynesia	0.1	20	Polynesia	0.3	20	Micronesia	0.6
21	Micronesia	0.0	21	Micronesia	0.2	21	Polynesia	0.5

population growth have been recorded in the regions of Africa (with the exception of Southern Africa) and in Western Asia, South-eastern Asia and Melanesia (table 22). Urban growth rates in these seven regions during 1950-2000 ranged from 3.8 per cent per year in Northern Africa to 5.9 per cent per year in Eastern Africa. In fact, Eastern Africa, Western Africa and Melanesia have all experienced sustained annual rates of urban growth above 5 per cent. As a result, the urban population of Eastern Africa increased from just 3 million persons in 1950 to 65 million in 2000, and that of Western Africa increased nearly fifteen-fold, rising from 6 million in 1950 to 88 million in 2000. But, despite such rapid growth in the urban population, Eastern Africa remains among the least urbanized regions of the world, with just 26 per cent of its population living in urban areas today, and Western Africa has reached only a moderate level of urbanization (40 per cent). Consequently, there is still considerable room for the continued increase of their urban populations and, as table 22 indicates, both regions are expected to experience some of the highest rates of urban population growth projected after 2000. Indeed, by 2030, both regions

are projected to have jointly an urban population of 447 million, larger than the urban population expected for Eastern and Western Europe combined.

Middle Africa has also experienced fast urban population growth during 1950-2000. Increasing at an annual average rate of 4.4 per cent, its urban population rose from 4 million in 1950 to 34 million in 2000 and is expected to experience the most rapid increase of any region during 2000-2030, growing at a rate of 3.9 per cent per year. At that speed, the urban population will reach 109 million in 2030, a number just slightly higher than that expected for the urban population of Southern Europe.

Fast urban growth has also characterized and is expected to remain characteristic of Melanesia and Micronesia but, given their small urban populations, the numbers involved are not as striking as those relative to Africa. Nevertheless, since many of the countries or areas in these two regions are small islands, the rapid urban growth expected may strain available resources. In 2000, Melanesia is estimated to have 1.5 million urban

TABLE 22. REGIONS OF THE WORLD ACCORDING TO THE AVERAGE ANNUAL URBAN RATE OF GROWTH DURING 1950-2000 AND 2000-2030

<i>Rank</i>	<i>Region</i>	<i>Urban growth rate (percentage) 1950-2000</i>	<i>Rank</i>	<i>Region</i>	<i>Urban growth rate (percentage) 2000-2030</i>
1	Eastern Africa	5.88	1	Middle Africa	3.90
2	Western Africa	5.31	2	Eastern Africa	3.86
3	Melanesia	5.11	3	Western Africa	3.36
4	Western Asia	4.57	4	Melanesia	3.29
5	Middle Africa	4.41	5	Micronesia	3.22
6	South-eastern Asia	3.94	6	South-central Asia	2.71
7	Northern Africa	3.80	7	South-eastern Asia	2.41
8	Micronesia	3.68	8	Polynesia	2.36
9	Central America	3.65	9	Northern Africa	2.27
10	South America	3.48	10	Western Asia	2.10
11	South-central Asia	3.41	11	Central America	1.66
12	Polynesia	3.25	12	Eastern Asia	1.63
13	Eastern Asia	3.11	13	Southern Africa	1.57
14	Caribbean	2.76	14	South America	1.39
15	Southern Africa	2.66	15	Caribbean	1.33
16	Australia/New Zealand	1.88	16	Australia/New Zealand	0.91
17	Eastern Europe	1.86	17	Northern America	0.91
18	Northern America	1.56	18	Northern Europe	0.21
19	Southern Europe	1.37	19	Western Europe	0.19
20	Western Europe	0.92	20	Southern Europe	0.16
21	Northern Europe	0.66	21	Eastern Europe	0.11

dwellers and Micronesia 200,000. During 2000-2030, the urban population of each region is expected to increase at more than 3 per cent per year, rising to 4.1 million by 2030 in the case of Melanesia and to 600,000 in Micronesia.

As table 22 shows, the two regions of Asia that have exhibited the highest rates of urban population growth during 1950-2000 are South-eastern Asia and Western Asia, with 3.9 per cent and 4.6 per cent respectively. Between 1950 and 2000, the urban population of South-eastern Asia rose seven-fold, passing from 27 million to 193 million. In Western Asia, the urban population increased ten-fold, from 13 million to 132 million. Even though the rate of urban population growth is expected to decline substantially in both regions, the size of the urban population already attained by 2000 ensures that even modest rates of growth will produce substantial increases in absolute terms. Thus, South-eastern Asia, with an expected urban growth rate of 2.4 per cent per year, is projected to have 397 million urban dwellers in 2030, while Western Asia, whose rate of urban population growth is expected to drop by more than half (to 2.1 per cent per year), will attain an urban population of 248 million persons. These changes imply that by 2030 these two regions combined will have more urban dwellers than the whole of Europe.

Rapid urban growth has also occurred in Northern Africa, the most urbanized region of the African continent today. Growing at 3.8 per cent per year, the urban population of the region increased from 13 million to 88 million between 1950 and 2000 and, although its growth rate is expected to fall by 40 per cent between 1950-2000 and 2000-2030, to an average of 2.3 per cent per year, its urban population is projected to rise to 174 million in 2030.

Just as in the case of Northern Africa, Central America and South America have also experienced urban growth rates above 3 per cent per year during 1950-2000. As a result, their urban populations that, especially in the case of South America, were already moderate in size in 1950, increased considerably, to reach 91 million in Central America and 276 million in South America by 2000. Although the urban growth rates ex-

pected for both regions during 2000-2030 will be markedly lower than those of all regions that have preceded in this discussion (of the order of 1.4 to 1.7 per cent), the large population base already attained means that the absolute increases expected will be sizable. Thus, Central America is expected to attain 150 million urban dwellers by 2030 and South America 419 million.

Eastern Asia, Polynesia and South-central Asia are the other three regions exhibiting moderately high urban growth rates during 1950-2000. Polynesia, just as the other developing regions of Oceania, has a very small urban population that is estimated today at 300,000 and will likely rise to half a million by 2030. In contrast, Eastern Asia and South-central Asia have the two largest urban populations in the world, at 572 million and 455 million respectively. Given the large total population of these two regions and their considerable potential for urban growth because of their still low to moderate levels of urbanization, it is not surprising that they will both maintain ascendancy over other regions in terms of urban population size. However, they will differ considerably with regard to their expected future rates of urban growth. South-central Asia, whose urban population is estimated to have grown at 3.4 per cent per year during 1950-2000, is expected to experience a rate of urban growth of 2.7 per cent per year during 2000-2030, whereas Eastern Asia, whose 1950-2000 annual rate of urban growth was 3.1 per cent, is expected to see it decline to 1.6 per cent per year. The difference in expected urban growth rates produces the reversal already noted in the ranks of the two regions with respect to population size: by 2030 South-central Asia, with 1,027 million urban dwellers, will have surpassed Eastern Asia's urban population of 933 million by almost 100 million.

Only two less developed regions, the Caribbean and Southern Africa, experienced moderately low rates of urban population growth during 1950-2000, of the order of 2.7-2.8 per cent per year (table 22). The low overall rate of population growth of the Caribbean coupled with its moderate level of urbanization even as early as 1950 (35 per cent) explains the relatively low growth of the urban population. Nevertheless, the urban population of the Caribbean increased four-fold from 1950 to

2000 and is expected to rise by 50 per cent over the next thirty years when the average annual rate of urban growth in the region is projected to be 1.3 per cent. In Southern Africa, the most urbanized region of the continent in 1950, the low rate of urban growth stems from a very low rate of urbanization coupled with the lowest rate of overall population growth recorded in Africa. Both figures are likely to reflect mostly the situation in the Republic of South Africa, which accounts for 86 per cent of the population in the region. Population growth has been lower in Southern Africa because its fertility has tended to be lower than in rest of Africa and, more recently, because of increasing mortality due to the high prevalence of HIV/AIDS. Furthermore, the increase in the level of urbanization has been slower than previously expected. Nevertheless, Southern Africa is and is expected to remain the second most urbanized region of Africa and its urban population, which stands today at an estimated 23 million persons is expected to increase at an annual rate of 1.6 per cent during 2000-2030 to reach 36 million in 2030.

The regions having the lowest rates of urban population growth during 1950-2000 are those belonging to the more developed world (table 22). Among them, Australia/New Zealand and Eastern Europe exhibited the highest urban growth rates, at nearly 1.9 per cent per year. In contrast, the urban populations of Western Europe and Northern Europe grew at average rates lower than one per cent per year during 1950-2000. During 2000-2030, average growth rates in all the more developed regions will be below one per cent and those of all regions of Europe are expected to be lower than 0.25 per cent per year. Only the urban populations of Australia/New Zealand and Northern America are expected to grow at an average of 0.9 per cent per year. As a result, whereas the urban populations of these two regions are expected to increase by about a third in each case (from 19 million to 25 million in the case of Australia/New Zealand and from 239 million to 314 million in the case of Northern America), those of the regions of Europe will barely change, increasing by 5 to 6 per cent in most cases. The lowest rate of growth is expected in Eastern Europe where the urban population is projected to increase by just 3 per cent over the next thirty years. The slow

growth of the urban population in the regions of Europe is the result of both low rates of urbanization and the expected decline of the total population, which implies that, even if the proportion urban is increasing moderately, it is being applied to a declining overall number of inhabitants. According to the growth rates of the total population presented in table 20, Eastern Europe and Southern Europe are the regions expected to experience the most marked population reductions during 2000-2030.

The different patterns of urban growth at the regional level lead to changes in the distribution of the world urban population among the regions. As table 23 shows, the major change in such distribution took place between 1950 and 2000, when the share of Eastern Asia rose from 16 per cent to 20 per cent, that of South-central Asia passed from 11 per cent to 16 per cent and that of South America rose from 6.5 per cent to nearly 10 per cent. As a result, whereas in 1950 those three less developed regions accounted for 34 per cent of the world urban population, by 2000 they accounted for 46 per cent. The next thirty years are expected to see only a small change in this share, which will rise to nearly 49 per cent. Concomitantly, the joint shares of Northern America, Western Europe, Eastern Europe, Northern Europe and Southern Europe, which in 1950 accounted for 53 per cent of the world urban population, declined to 28 per cent in 2000 and will likely drop to 18 per cent by 2030. In addition, nearly all the other less developed regions, except those in Oceania, saw their shares of the world urban population increase between 1950 and 2000 but during 2000-2030 only the shares of the regions of Asia and those of Africa (with the exception of Southern Africa) will increase.

## B. RURAL POPULATION GROWTH

Echoing the differences among regions in terms of urban population growth, the differences in the growth rates of their rural populations are also sharp. In general, the regions of Africa and the less developed regions of Oceania have tended to experience the highest rural growth rates whereas the lowest are observed in the regions of Europe (table 24). But there is considerable diversity

TABLE 23. THE WORLD URBAN POPULATION DISTRIBUTED BY REGION, 1950, 2000 AND 2030

Rank	Region	1950		Rank	Region	2000		Rank	Region	2030	
		Percentage	Cumulative percentage			Percentage	Cumulative percentage			Percentage	Cumulative percentage
1	Eastern Asia	16.1	16.1	1	Eastern Asia	20.1	20.1	1	South-central Asia	21.0	21.0
2	Northern America	14.6	30.7	2	South-central Asia	16.0	36.1	2	Eastern Asia	19.1	40.1
3	Western Europe	12.8	43.5	3	South America	9.7	45.8	3	South America	8.6	48.6
4	Eastern Europe	11.5	55.0	4	Northern America	8.4	54.2	4	South-eastern Asia	8.1	56.8
5	South-central Asia	11.1	66.0	5	Eastern Europe	7.7	61.9	5	Northern America	6.4	63.2
6	Northern Europe	7.6	73.6	6	South-eastern Asia	6.8	68.7	6	Western Asia	5.1	68.2
7	South America	6.5	80.1	7	Western Europe	5.3	74.0	7	Western Africa	4.9	73.2
8	Southern Europe	6.4	86.5	8	Western Asia	4.6	78.6	8	Eastern Europe	4.6	77.8
9	South-eastern Asia	3.6	90.1	9	Southern Europe	3.4	82.0	9	Eastern Africa	4.2	82.0
10	Central America	2.0	92.1	10	Central America	3.2	85.2	10	Northern Africa	3.6	85.6
11	Western Asia	1.8	93.8	11	Western Africa	3.1	88.3	11	Western Europe	3.3	88.8
12	Northern Africa	1.8	95.6	12	Northern Africa	3.1	91.4	12	Central America	3.1	91.9
13	Australia/New Zealand	1.0	96.6	13	Northern Europe	2.8	94.2	13	Middle Africa	2.2	94.1
14	Western Africa	0.8	97.4	14	Eastern Africa	2.3	96.4	14	Southern Europe	2.1	96.2
15	Caribbean	0.8	98.2	15	Middle Africa	1.2	97.6	15	Northern Europe	1.7	97.9
16	Southern Africa	0.8	99.0	16	Caribbean	0.8	98.5	16	Southern Africa	0.7	98.6
17	Middle Africa	0.5	99.5	17	Southern Africa	0.8	99.2	17	Caribbean	0.7	99.4
18	Eastern Africa	0.5	100.0	18	Australia/New Zealand	0.7	99.9	18	Australia/New Zealand	0.5	99.9
19	Melanesia	0.0	100.0	19	Melanesia	0.1	100.0	19	Melanesia	0.1	100.0
20	Polynesia	0.0	100.0	20	Polynesia	0.0	100.0	20	Micronesia	0.0	100.0
21	Micronesia	0.0	100.0	21	Micronesia	0.0	100.0	21	Polynesia	0.0	100.0

TABLE 24. RURAL POPULATION AND RURAL GROWTH RATE BY REGION, 1950-2030

Region	Rural population (in millions)			Rural rate of growth (percentage)	
	1950	2000	2030	1950-2000	2000-2030
Eastern Africa.....	61.4	182.4	259.9	2.18	1.18
Middle Africa.....	22.6	61.8	96.1	2.01	1.47
Northern Africa.....	40.2	85.3	88.6	1.51	0.13
Southern Africa.....	9.6	24.3	22.1	1.86	-0.31
Western Africa.....	54.7	133.5	173.6	1.78	0.88
Eastern Asia .....	550.3	913.5	776.3	1.01	-0.54
South-central Asia .....	415.7	1 035.3	1 116.7	1.83	0.25
South-eastern Asia .....	155.1	325.9	313.4	1.48	-0.13
Western Asia.....	36.8	56.1	65.5	0.84	0.52
Eastern Europe.....	133.0	88.4	55.9	-0.82	-1.52
Northern Europe .....	21.3	15.3	11.1	-0.66	-1.08
Southern Europe .....	60.8	48.4	31.2	-0.46	-1.47
Western Europe.....	45.3	32.0	22.2	-0.70	-1.22
Caribbean.....	11.0	14.1	13.0	0.50	-0.28
Central America.....	22.3	44.3	47.5	1.38	0.23
South America .....	64.6	69.9	61.0	0.16	-0.45
Northern America.....	62.0	70.6	58.1	0.26	-0.65
Australia/New Zealand.....	2.6	3.4	3.2	0.58	-0.20
Melanesia .....	2.0	4.9	6.4	1.83	0.89
Micronesia .....	0.1	0.3	0.4	1.94	1.06
Polynesia.....	0.2	0.4	0.4	1.39	0.57

within major areas. Furthermore, as in the case of the urban population, the size of the rural population does not display a high correlation with its rate of growth. As table 25 indicates, the two regions with the largest number of rural inhabitants are Eastern Asia and South-central Asia, whose ascendancy has been maintained since 1950 and is expected to continue until 2030. But, although Eastern Asia started with the largest rural population (550 million in 1950), its moderate rate of rural growth during 1950-2000 (1 per cent per year) made it shift to second place by 2000 when it is estimated that its 914 million rural inhabitants have been surpassed by the 1,035 million of South-central Asia. The rapid rural population growth experienced by South-central Asia, at 1.8 per cent per year, led to such an outcome and because the rural population of South-central Asia is expected to continue growing during 2000-2030, it will remain larger than the rural population of Eastern Asia, which is expected to decline.

According to table 25, since 1950 South-eastern Asia has occupied third place in terms of the size of its rural population, which rose from 155 million in 1950 to 326 million in 2000, growing at a rate of 1.5 per cent per year, and although that rate of growth is expected to be negative over the 2000-2030 period, South-eastern Asia is expected to remain as the region with the third largest rural population in the world up to 2030. Consequently, between 1950 and 2030, three of the regions of Asia have accounted and will continue to account for the majority of the rural population of the world: 63 per cent in 1950, 71 per cent in 2000 and 69 per cent in 2030.

Table 25 also shows that there is considerable stability in terms of the regions with the lowest numbers of rural inhabitants: those constituting Oceania have consistently been in that group. The most interesting development within the group is that, whereas the rural population of Australia/New Zealand was the largest in the group in

TABLE 25. DISTRIBUTION OF THE RURAL POPULATION OF THE WORLD BY REGION, 1950, 2000 AND 2030

<i>Rank</i>	<i>Region</i>	<i>Population in 1950 (millions)</i>	<i>Percentage in 1950</i>	<i>Cumulative percentage in 1950</i>	<i>Rank</i>	<i>Region</i>	<i>Population in 2000 (millions)</i>	<i>Percentage in 2000</i>	<i>Cumulative percentage in 2000</i>	<i>Rank</i>	<i>Region</i>	<i>Population in 2030 (millions)</i>	<i>Percentage in 2030</i>	<i>Cumulative percentage in 2030</i>
1	Eastern Asia	550.3	31.1	31.1	1	South-central Asia	1 035.3	32.3	32.3	1	South-central Asia	1 116.7	34.7	34.7
2	South-central Asia	415.7	23.5	54.5	2	Eastern Asia	913.5	28.5	60.7	2	Eastern Asia	776.3	24.1	58.7
3	South-eastern Asia	155.1	8.8	63.3	3	South-eastern Asia	325.9	10.2	70.9	3	South-eastern Asia	313.4	9.7	68.5
4	Eastern Europe	133.0	7.5	70.8	4	Eastern Africa	182.4	5.7	76.5	4	Eastern Africa	259.9	8.1	76.5
5	South America	64.6	3.6	74.4	5	Western Africa	133.5	4.2	80.7	5	Western Africa	173.6	5.4	81.9
6	Northern America	62.0	3.5	77.9	6	Eastern Europe	88.4	2.8	83.5	6	Middle Africa	96.1	3.0	84.9
7	Eastern Africa	61.4	3.5	81.4	7	Northern Africa	85.3	2.7	86.1	7	Northern Africa	88.6	2.7	87.6
8	Southern Europe	60.8	3.4	84.8	8	Northern America	70.6	2.2	88.3	8	Western Asia	65.5	2.0	89.7
9	Western Africa	54.7	3.1	87.9	9	South America	69.9	2.2	90.5	9	South America	61.0	1.9	91.6
10	Western Europe	45.3	2.6	90.5	10	Middle Africa	61.8	1.9	92.4	10	Northern America	58.1	1.8	93.4
11	Northern Africa	40.2	2.3	92.7	11	Western Asia	56.1	1.7	94.2	11	Eastern Europe	55.9	1.7	95.1
12	Western Asia	36.8	2.1	94.8	12	Southern Europe	48.4	1.5	95.7	12	Central America	47.5	1.5	96.6
13	Middle Africa	22.6	1.3	96.1	13	Central America	44.3	1.4	97.0	13	Southern Europe	31.2	1.0	97.6
14	Central America	22.3	1.3	97.4	14	Western Europe	32.0	1.0	98.0	14	Western Europe	22.2	0.7	98.2
15	Northern Europe	21.3	1.2	98.6	15	Southern Africa	24.3	0.8	98.8	15	Southern Africa	22.1	0.7	98.9
16	Caribbean	11.0	0.6	99.2	16	Northern Europe	15.3	0.5	99.3	16	Caribbean	13.0	0.4	99.3
17	Southern Africa	9.6	0.5	99.7	17	Caribbean	14.1	0.4	99.7	17	Northern Europe	11.1	0.3	99.7
18	Australia/New Zealand	2.6	0.1	99.9	18	Melanesia	4.9	0.2	99.9	18	Melanesia	6.4	0.2	99.9
19	Melanesia	2.0	0.1	100.0	19	Australia/New Zealand	3.4	0.1	100.0	19	Australia/New Zealand	3.2	0.1	100.0
20	Polynesia	0.2	0.0	100.0	20	Polynesia	0.4	0.0	100.0	20	Polynesia	0.4	0.0	100.0
21	Micronesia	0.1	0.0	100.0	21	Micronesia	0.3	0.0	100.0	21	Micronesia	0.4	0.0	100.0

1950, by 2000 it had been surpassed by that of Melanesia and will remain in second place until 2030 despite the negative growth rate it is expected to experience during 2000-2030. Indeed, the low rural growth rates that have characterized Australia/New Zealand contrast markedly with those of the less developed regions of Oceania, all of which have experienced and are expected to experience rural growth rates that are among the highest in the world (table 26). Nevertheless, the small population base of these regions implies that their share of the world rural population is and will remain very low (of the order of 0.2 per cent).

In contrast with the three largest regions of Asia and those of Oceania, the position of all other regions in terms of the size of their rural populations has changed considerably (table 25). In 1950, the rural populations of Eastern Europe, South America and Northern America ranked fourth, fifth and sixth, but by 2000 they all had seen their ranks increase because of the slow growth or even the negative growth that their rural populations experienced. In Eastern Europe, the rural population declined by a third, passing from 133 million in 1950 to 88 million in 2000, a reduction that produced the lowest rate of rural population

growth in the world during 1950-2000, at  $-0.8$  per cent per year (table 26). In comparison, the rural populations of Northern America and South America grew at moderate rates, though both rates were close to zero (0.2 and 0.3 per cent per year, respectively). During 2000-2030 all three regions are expected to experience a reduction of the rural population, with Eastern Europe evincing again the lowest rate of rural population growth in the world at  $-1.5$  per cent per year. As a consequence, the rural population of Eastern Europe, which ranked fourth in the world in 1950 and sixth in 2000 is expected to rank eleventh by 2030, with both the rural populations of South America and Northern America having surpassed it by then (table 25).

In 1950, the rural populations of the regions of Africa alternated with those of the regions of Europe in terms of the ranks they occupied above the sixth place. Eastern Africa had the largest rural population in the continent, followed by Western Africa and Northern Africa. Southern Europe and Western Europe had rural populations similar in size to those of these regions of Africa. But over the next fifty years, the rural populations of the regions of Africa would experience some of

TABLE 26. REGIONS ORDERED BY THE AVERAGE ANNUAL RURAL GROWTH RATE IN 1950-2000 AND 2000-2030

Rank	Region	Rural growth rate (percentage)		Rank	Region	Rural growth rate (percentage)	
		1950-2000				2000-2030	
1	Eastern Africa	2.18		1	Middle Africa	1.47	
2	Middle Africa	2.01		2	Eastern Africa	1.18	
3	Micronesia	1.94		3	Micronesia	1.06	
4	Southern Africa	1.86		4	Melanesia	0.89	
5	Melanesia	1.83		5	Western Africa	0.88	
6	South-central Asia	1.83		6	Polynesia	0.57	
7	Western Africa	1.78		7	Western Asia	0.52	
8	Northern Africa	1.51		8	South-central Asia	0.25	
9	South-eastern Asia	1.48		9	Central America	0.23	
10	Polynesia	1.39		10	Northern Africa	0.13	
11	Central America	1.38		11	South-eastern Asia	-0.13	
12	Eastern Asia	1.01		12	Australia/New Zealand	-0.20	
13	Western Asia	0.84		13	Caribbean	-0.28	
14	Australia/New Zealand	0.58		14	Southern Africa	-0.31	
15	Caribbean	0.50		15	South America	-0.45	
16	Northern America	0.26		16	Eastern Asia	-0.54	
17	South America	0.16		17	Northern America	-0.65	
18	Southern Europe	-0.46		18	Northern Europe	-1.08	
19	Northern Europe	-0.66		19	Western Europe	-1.22	
20	Western Europe	-0.70		20	Southern Europe	-1.47	
21	Eastern Europe	-0.82		21	Eastern Europe	-1.52	

the highest rural growth rates in the world whereas the rural growth rates of the European regions would be negative and among the lowest in the world (table 26). Consequently, by 2000 the African regions ranked higher than those of Europe (table 25). By 2000, the rural populations of Eastern Africa and Western Africa had become the fourth and fifth largest in the world, with 182 million and 134 million persons respectively. Furthermore, because both regions are projected to experience relatively high rates of rural growth during 2000-2030 (table 26), they are expected to maintain their present ranks until 2030. Northern Africa and especially Middle Africa have also moved up the ranks as their rural populations have increased at a rapid pace. The growth rates experienced by the rural population of Middle Africa have been and are expected to be particularly high (slightly above 2 per cent per year in 1950-2000 and 1.5 per cent per year in 2000-2030), leading to a four-fold increase of the rural population from 1950 to 2030 and making of Middle Africa the region with the sixth largest rural population in 2030, one rung above Northern Africa. As a result, by 2030, these four regions of Africa will follow the three largest regions of Asia as the regions of residence of the highest number of rural dwellers. By that time, Eastern Africa, Western Africa, Middle Africa and Northern Africa will account for 19 per cent of the world rural population, nearly double the share they had in 1950 (10 per cent).

In contrast with the regions of Africa, the regions of Europe, with their declining rural populations, will account for a decreasing proportion of the world rural population. Eastern Europe and Southern Europe, which in 1950 accounted for 11 per cent of the world rural population are expected to see their share decline to less than 3 per cent by 2030. The equivalent figures for Western Europe and Northern Europe considered jointly are 4 per cent and 1 per cent. In terms of the rate of decrease of the rural population, Eastern Europe has had the highest and Southern Europe the lowest during 1950-2000, but during 2000-2030 both regions will have high and fairly similar rates of decrease, leading to very marked reductions of the rural population. Although both regions will continue to have the largest rural populations in Europe, their rapid decrease will be fueled as

much by the continued rise of the proportion urban as by the expected reductions of the total population of each region (table 20). Although a declining total population is also expected in the case of Western Europe, the rate of decline projected for the total population of that region is lower than in the case of Eastern Europe and Southern Europe, so that its effects on rural population decline are less marked.

It is important to underscore that whereas during 1950-2000 only the regions of Europe experienced a reduction of the rural population, during 2000-2030 nearly half of all regions of the world are expected to experience such reductions (table 26). Among the less developed regions, Eastern Asia and South-eastern Asia, the Caribbean and South America, as well as Southern Africa are expected to have negative rates of rural population growth. The cases of the regions of Asia and of South America have already been discussed above. In the Caribbean and Southern Africa, negative rural growth is related to the relatively low rate of increase expected for the total population of those regions and to the still sizable increase projected for the proportion urban. As mentioned in discussing urban growth in Southern Africa, the reduction of overall population growth in the region is partly the result of the growing HIV/AIDS epidemic.

In sum, with the rising urbanization of the world, the growth of the rural population has been dampened in every region and, especially in the most highly urbanized regions, rural population growth has been low or negative over the past fifty years. The future is expected to witness an accentuation of those trends with the proviso that certain regions with low to moderate levels of urbanization and whose overall population growth remains robust (mainly Eastern Africa, Middle Africa and Western Africa) will still experience a moderate to high rate of rural population growth. In 14 of the 21 regions of the world, the rate of growth of the rural population is projected to be 0.25 per cent per year or lower during 2000-2030 and in 10 of them the rate will be negative. A decreasing rural population will characterize all the regions of Europe, two of the regions of Asia (Eastern Asia and South-eastern Asia), Northern America, the Caribbean, South America and

Southern Africa. In 2030, nearly 7 out of every 10 rural dwellers will live in the three largest regions of Asia and another 2 will live in the four largest regions of Africa.

### C. THE PROPORTION URBAN

Changes in the proportion of the population living in urban areas are the result of differential rates of growth between the urban and the rural populations of a region. In fact, the rate of increase of the proportion urban (also known as the urbanization rate) is equivalent to the difference between the rate of growth of the urban population and that of the total population. The latter, by encompassing the growth of both the urban and the rural components of the population, reflects the effects of the differential between the two.

In 1950 there were already considerable differences among the regions with respect to the level of urbanization attained. As table 27 indicates, some of the more developed regions had already attained very high levels of urbanization, with more than 70 per cent of their populations living in urban areas by 1950 (e.g., Australia/New Zealand and Northern Europe). Western Europe with 68 per cent urban and Northern America with 64 per cent were also highly urban at the time. In comparison, the other regions of Europe (Southern Europe with 44 per cent urban or Eastern Europe with 39 per cent urban) or the regions of Latin America (Central America with 40 per cent urban and South America with 43 per cent urban) were considerably less urbanized, not to mention most of the regions of Africa, Asia or developing Oceania, whose levels of urbanization were generally well below 25 per cent.

Between 1950 and 2000, all regions experienced an increase in the proportion urban, but its rate of growth varied considerably among regions. Generally, the rate of urbanization declines as the level of urbanization rises. The relation between the two is illustrated in figure 12 where the proportion urban in 1950 is plotted against the average annual rate of urbanization estimated for the period 1950-2000. The curve superimposed on the observed points represents a logarithmic function fitted to the data. As the value of  $R^2$  presented on

the graph indicates, the fitted curve explains 88 per cent of the variance in the observed values, implying that the fit is good. However, the experience of several regions deviates noticeably from the fitted curve. The best fit is obtained at high levels of urbanization, where regions with more than 60 per cent of the population living in urban areas experience very low rates of urbanization (below 0.4 per cent per year). In the next group of regions, where the proportion urban varies from 35 per cent to 45 per cent, Southern Africa, with a proportion urban of 38 per cent in 1950 experienced a very low rate of urbanization in relation to the fitted values. Constraints on the free movement of people that prevailed in the Republic of South Africa during the period of apartheid are likely to be at the root of this diverging experience. Most of the other regions in the group, namely, the Caribbean, Central America, South America and Eastern Europe, experienced urbanization rates averaging more than 1 per cent per year which, according to the fitted curve, are slightly above what would be expected given their level of urbanization. Only Southern Europe, with a rate of urbanization of 0.8 per cent per year matched the fitted values.

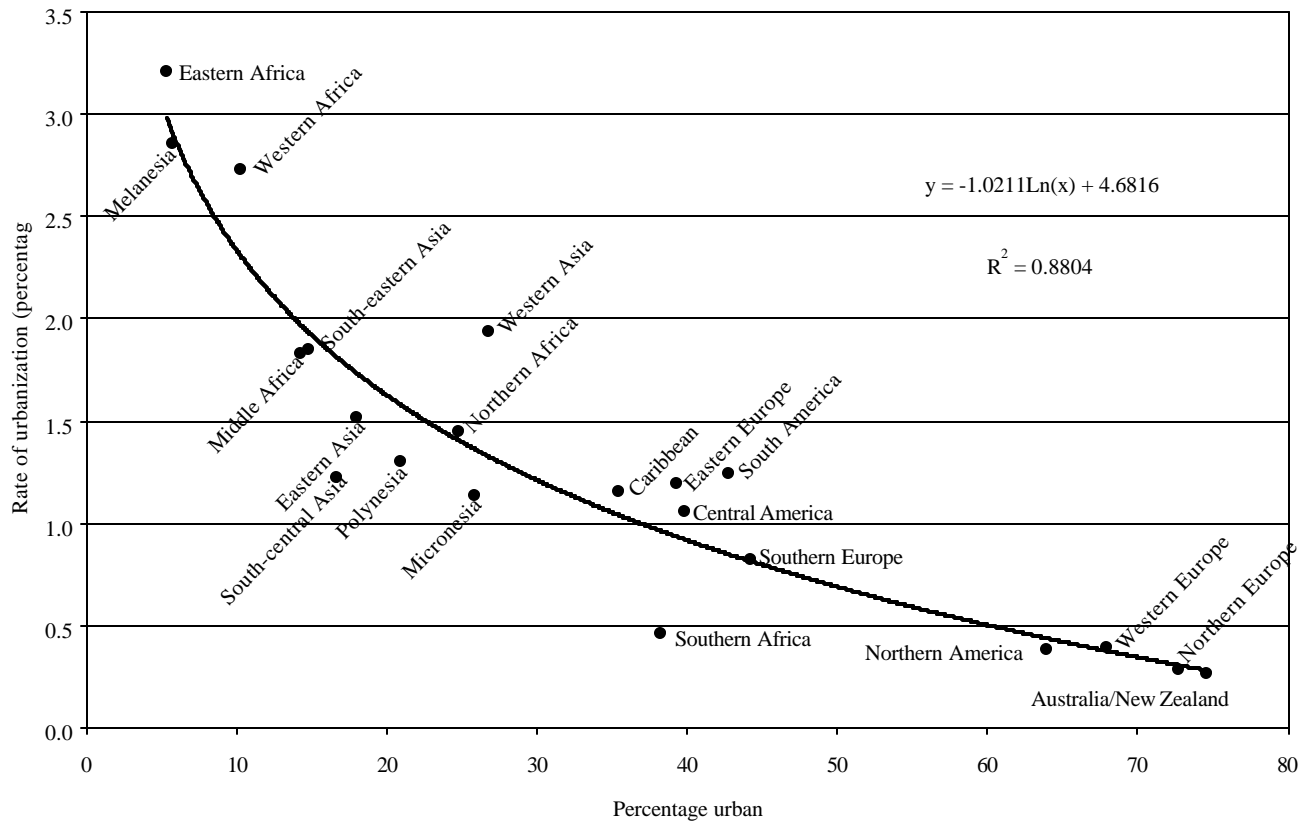
In the next group, distinguished by a proportion urban varying between 14 per cent and 27 per cent, two regions deviate markedly from the fitted values: South-central Asia whose rate of urbanization at 1.2 per cent per year seems too low in relation to the low percentage of the population that lived in urban areas in 1950 (16.6 per cent), and Western Asia whose rate of urbanization of 1.9 per cent per year appears as too high in relation to the moderate proportion urban already attained by 1950 (27 per cent). Among the other regions in the group, Eastern Asia, Micronesia and Polynesia, all experienced rates of urbanization that are on the low side in relation to the proportions urban that they had initially, whereas in Middle Africa, Northern Africa and South-eastern Asia the urbanization rates observed are closer to those expected on the basis of the proportions urban that those regions had in 1950. All regions in this group experienced urbanization rates varying between 1.1 per cent and 2 per cent per year.

Lastly, the three regions with the lowest percentage urban in 1950 experienced the highest

TABLE 27. REGIONS OF THE WORLD ORDERED BY THE PROPORTION URBAN IN 1950, 2000 AND 2030

<i>Rank</i>	<i>Region</i>	<i>Percentage urban 1950</i>	<i>Rank</i>	<i>Region</i>	<i>Percentage urban 2000</i>	<i>Rank</i>	<i>Region</i>	<i>Percentage urban 2030</i>
1	Australia/New Zealand	74.6	1	Australia/New Zealand	84.9	1	Australia/New Zealand	88.7
2	Northern Europe	72.7	2	Northern Europe	83.8	2	Northern Europe	88.4
3	Western Europe	67.9	3	Western Europe	82.6	3	Western Europe	87.8
4	Northern America	63.9	4	South America	79.8	4	South America	87.3
5	Southern Europe	44.2	5	Northern America	77.2	5	Northern America	84.4
6	South America	42.8	6	Eastern Europe	71.2	6	Eastern Europe	80.1
7	Central America	39.8	7	Western Asia	70.2	7	Western Asia	79.1
8	Eastern Europe	39.3	8	Central America	67.2	8	Southern Europe	76.3
9	Southern Africa	38.2	9	Southern Europe	66.4	9	Central America	75.9
10	Caribbean	35.4	10	Caribbean	63.0	10	Caribbean	73.3
11	Western Asia	26.7	11	Northern Africa	50.8	11	Northern Africa	66.2
12	Micronesia	25.8	12	Southern Africa	48.1	12	Southern Africa	62.0
13	Northern Africa	24.7	13	Micronesia	45.1	13	Micronesia	61.1
14	Polynesia	20.9	14	Polynesia	40.3	14	Western Africa	58.2
15	Eastern Asia	18.0	15	Western Africa	39.8	15	South-eastern Asia	55.9
16	South-central Asia	16.6	16	Eastern Asia	38.5	16	Eastern Asia	54.6
17	South-eastern Asia	14.8	17	South-eastern Asia	37.2	17	Polynesia	53.5
18	Middle Africa	14.2	18	Middle Africa	35.4	18	Middle Africa	53.2
19	Western Africa	10.2	19	South-central Asia	30.6	19	South-central Asia	47.9
20	Melanesia	5.7	20	Eastern Africa	26.1	20	Eastern Africa	44.1
21	Eastern Africa	5.3	21	Melanesia	23.7	21	Melanesia	39.0

Figure 12. Relation between the percentage urban in 1950 and the rate of urbanization during 1950-2000



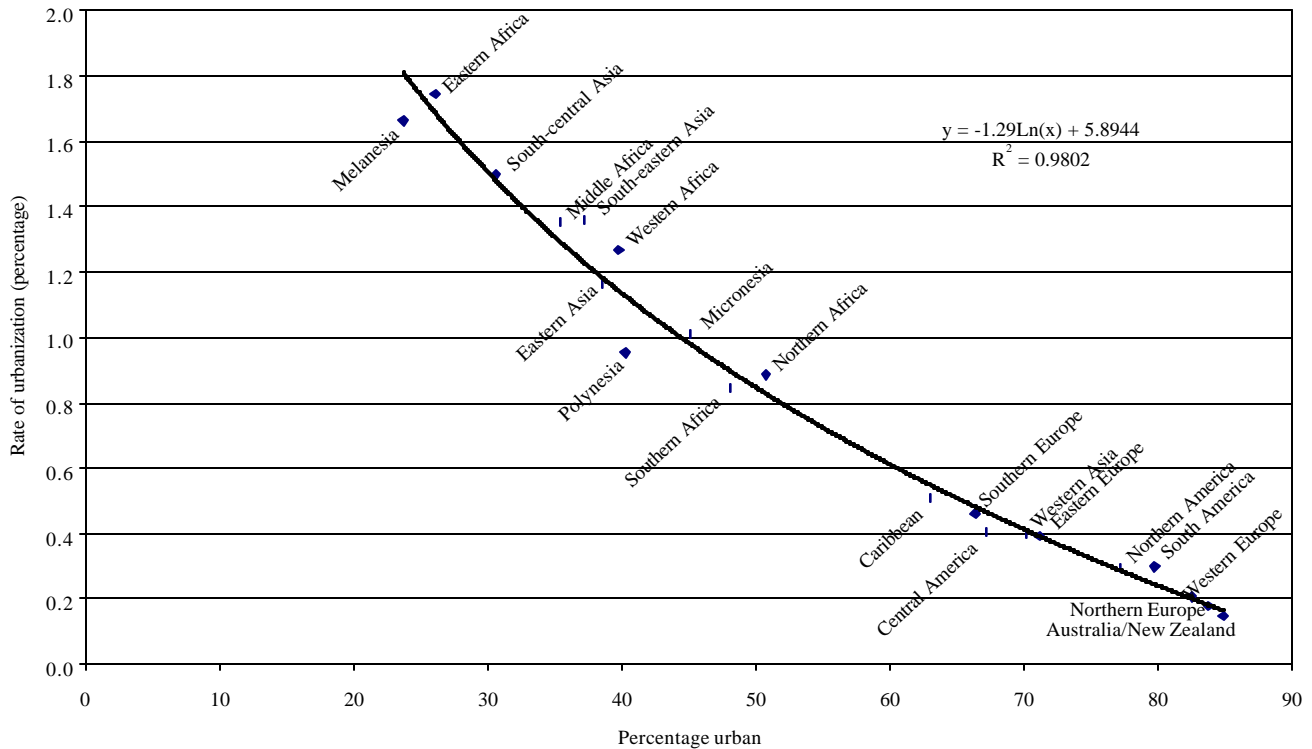
rates of urbanization during 1950-2000. Except for the case of Melanesia, the fitted curve does not approximate well the observations at this end of the range. In particular, the high urbanization rate experienced by Eastern Africa (3.2 per cent per year) is not reached by the fitted curve (the fitted value is less than 3 per cent). There is also the suggestion that Western Africa, where 10 per cent of the population lived in urban areas by 1950, experienced a relatively high urbanization rate during 1950-2000 in relation to that initial level. Only Melanesia, with a starting proportion urban of 6 per cent and a rate of urbanization of 2.9 per cent per year was close to the fitted values.

The same analysis can be carried out for the period 2000-2030 using as initial proportion urban that estimated for 2000. Figure 13 shows the observed points and the fitted curve. Because projections result from the use of logistic models at the country level, they are less variable at the regional level than the values corresponding to the 1950-

2000 period, which are largely based on observed data. Consequently, the goodness of fit of the logarithmic curve used is better (it explains 98 per cent of the variance). Furthermore, the deviations of the projected experience of the different regions and the fitted values are small.

For regions with proportions urban above 75 per cent, the urbanization rate is projected to be very low (at or below 0.3 per cent per year). This group is headed by Australia/New Zealand, which remains the most highly urbanized region of the world, followed by Northern Europe, Western Europe, South America and Northern America. The more developed regions in this group were already highly urbanized by 1950 (with proportions urban above 63 per cent) but that was not the case for South America whose proportion urban was a low 42.8 per cent. It is noteworthy therefore that, according to present estimates, by 2000 the proportion urban for South America has surpassed that for Northern America. Furthermore, projected

**Figure 13. Relation between the percentage urban in 2000 and the rate of urbanization in 2000-2030**



values show that Northern America will remain as the least urbanized area in the group, with 84.4 per cent urban in 2030. South America is projected to have 87.3 per cent of its population living in urban areas by that time and Western Europe and Northern Europe will have higher values still, with Australia/New Zealand heading the group with a level of urbanization nearing 89 per cent (table 27).

Among the five regions that in 2000 are estimated to have proportions urban ranging from 63 to 72 per cent, the rate of urbanization is projected to vary between 0.39 and 0.51 per cent per year leading to projected values ranging from 73.3 per cent urban in the Caribbean to 80.1 per cent urban in Eastern Europe by 2030. Western Asia with 79.1 per cent urban in 2030, Southern Europe with 76.3 per cent and Central America with 75.9 per cent are the other regions in the group. Clearly, just as South America, Western Asia, the Caribbean and Central America have also achieved and are expected to maintain levels of urbanization

comparable to those characterizing the more developed regions.

The remaining less developed regions display a wide range of levels of urbanization in 2000, going from 23.7 per cent in Melanesia to 50.8 per cent in Northern Africa. The group includes all the regions of Africa, all those of Asia except Western Asia, and all the developing regions of Oceania. As figure 13 suggests, most of these regions are expected to experience rates of urbanization that are at or slightly above the level suggested by their initial proportion urban. Their levels of urbanization are expected to increase at a moderately rapid pace since most of these regions are projected to have urbanization rates above 1 per cent per year. As a consequence, by 2030 only three regions will still have less than half of their population living in urban areas, namely, Melanesia, Eastern Africa and South-central Asia. The most urbanized regions in this group will be in Africa (Northern Africa, Southern Africa and Western Africa) and in Oceania (Mi-

cronesia), each of which will have between 58 and 67 per cent of its population in urban areas. Two of the regions with large rural populations, Eastern Asia and South-eastern Asia, are expected to attain levels of urbanization of the order of 54 to 56 per cent. Consequently, by 2030, the most populous regions of the developing world will have barely gone past the midway point toward a

highly urbanized society, implying that the potential for further urban growth will remain high. But, should the different less developed regions follow the paths projected in this report, the first part of the twenty-first century will witness a momentous transformation in most of their societies as the urban areas become dominant in terms of the number of people that live in them.