

II. THE PROSPECTS FOR WORLD URBANIZATION AND RURAL POPULATION GROWTH

The world urban population is estimated to have reached 2.9 billion in 2000, a figure nearly four times as large as that estimated for 1950 (0.8 billion). Indeed, over the second half of the twentieth century, the world urban population increased at an average annual rate of 2.68 per cent, implying that it doubled, on average, every 26 years. In comparison, the total population of the world increased at an average annual rate of 1.75 per cent, doubling every 40 years (table 2). The difference between those two rates of growth, that is, between the growth rate of the urban population and that of the total population, is the rate of growth of the proportion urban. Thus, between 1950 and 2000, the world population urbanized rapidly, with the proportion urban increasing at a rate of 0.92 per cent per year, rising from 30 per cent in 1950 to 47 per cent in 2000. As a result of these unprecedented trends, the population of the world, which during most of human history had lived mainly in rural settlements and grew very slowly, is on the verge of becoming more urban than rural for the first time in history. According to current projections, the fifty per cent mark will be crossed in 2007, and forever after the majority of the world population will be urban.

Although urbanization of the world population is expected to continue, its pace is expected to be slower in the future, with both the size of the urban population and the proportion urban likely to grow less rapidly than in the recent past. Thus, during 2000-2030, the world urban population is projected to increase at a rate of 1.85 per cent per year, nearly a full percentage point lower than the urban growth rate estimated for 1950-2000. The decline in the speed of growth will be smaller for the proportion urban, which is expected to rise at a robust 0.81 per cent per year during 2000-2030, with the result that by 2030 the population of the world will likely be 60 per cent urban and urban dwellers will number 5 billion.

In contrast to the rapid rise of the world's urban population, the growth of the rural population has

been slowing markedly during the latter half of the twentieth century. In 1950, 7 out of every 10 persons on earth lived in rural areas and numbered 1.8 billion. During the subsequent half century, rural population growth averaged 1.2 per cent per year, with the result that the rural population nearly doubled, reaching 3.2 billion by 2000. However, in the next thirty years (2000-2030), there will be almost no rural population growth, so that the number of rural inhabitants will only rise from 3.2 billion to 3.3 billion.

These trends imply that virtually all the expected world population growth in 2000-2030 will be in urban areas. During that period the urban population will likely increase by 2.1 billion persons, from 2.9 billion to 5 billion, about the same number that will be added to the population of the world as a whole, which is projected to rise from 6.1 billion in 2000 to 8.3 billion in 2030. Since natural increase is generally lower in urban than in rural areas and is expected to decline in both, the substantial growth expected in the urban population will be fueled by both rural-urban migration and the geographic expansion of urban settlements through annexations and the transformation of rural villages into cities. This process has been important in the past and will continue to be important, especially for the developing world, where the potential for the emergence of new urban settlements is still high. Indeed, in assessing the future of urbanization it is crucial to consider the contrasting experiences of the more and the less developed regions. The following section discusses in some detail the past and future patterns of urban and rural growth in those regions.

A. CONTRASTING TRENDS BETWEEN THE LESS DEVELOPED AND THE MORE DEVELOPED REGIONS

Striking differences are apparent between the more developed and the less developed regions with respect to patterns of urbanization. While most of the population of the less developed re-

gions currently lives in rural areas, the bulk of the population of the more developed regions resides in urban areas. Moreover, the urban population of the less developed regions has been growing considerably faster than that of the more developed regions, and as a result, its share of the world urban population has been rising (figure 1). In 1950 the urban population of more developed regions was considerably higher than that of the less developed regions (446 million versus 304 million), so that the more developed regions accounted for 60 per cent of the world urban population at a time when they had just 32 per cent of the world's inhabitants. But already in the 1950s the patterns of growth of the urban populations of the more developed and the less developed regions were showing signs of divergence, with the former growing more slowly. As a consequence, by 1975 the urban population of the less developed regions had surpassed that of the more developed regions (810 million versus 734 million) and the differ-

ence increased rapidly thereafter. In 2000, over twice as many urban dwellers are estimated to live in the less developed regions as in the more developed regions (2 billion versus 0.9 billion—see table 2). The less developed regions today account for 69 per cent of the world urban population and 80 per cent of the total population (table 8). As the developing world becomes increasingly urbanized, the difference between these two figures will decline. By 2030, with 4 billion urban dwellers, the less developed regions will have 80 per cent of the world urban population and 85 per cent of the total. Correspondingly, with 1 billion urban dwellers, the more developed regions will account for only 20 per cent of the urban population and 15 per cent of the total world population.

Sustained high fertility and declining mortality caused the fast population growth experienced by the less developed regions until about 1970; despite substantial reductions of fertility in most regions

Figure 1. Estimated and projected urban population in the world, the more developed and the less developed regions, 1950-2030

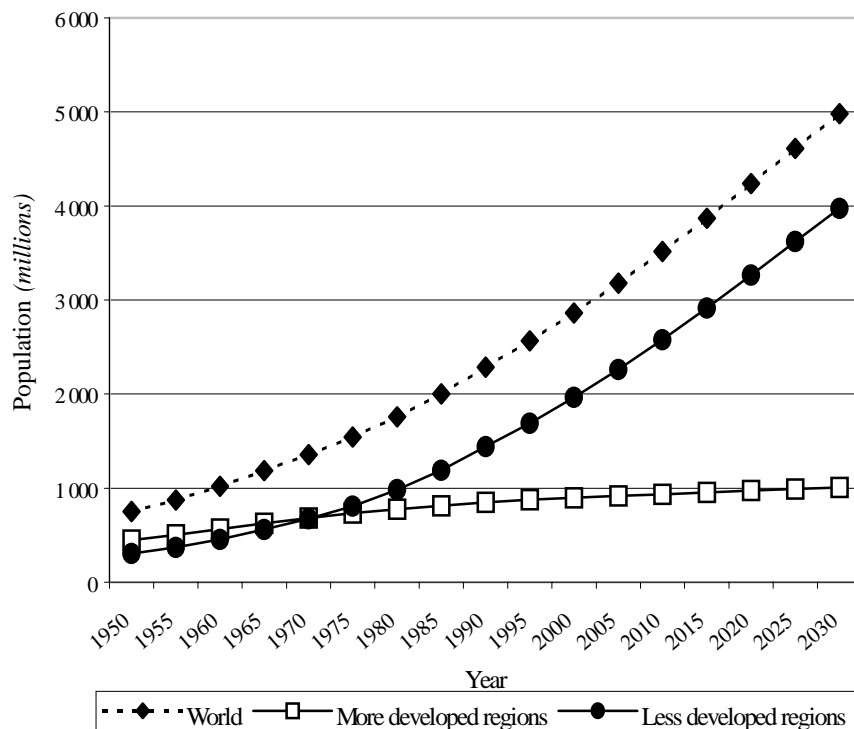


TABLE 8. DISTRIBUTION OF THE TOTAL, URBAN AND RURAL POPULATION OF THE WORLD IN THE MORE DEVELOPED AND THE LESS DEVELOPED REGIONS, 1950-2030

Development group	Percentage of the world population			
	1950	1975	2000	2030
Total population				
More developed regions	32.3	25.8	19.7	14.7
Less developed regions.....	67.7	74.2	80.3	85.3
Urban population				
More developed regions	59.5	47.6	31.4	20.2
Less developed regions.....	40.5	52.4	68.6	79.8
Rural population				
More developed regions	20.8	12.5	9.2	6.4
Less developed regions.....	79.2	87.5	90.8	93.6

since that time, population growth in the less developed regions has remained high. The urban populations of developing countries, despite generally having lower fertility than that of the overall population, have experienced particularly high growth partly because of high rural-urban migration and the expansion of urban localities through the transformation of rural settlements into urban ones. As a result, urban areas of the less developed regions have been absorbing a rising share of the annual increment to the world urban population. As table 9 shows, the annual increment of the urban population rose steadily from 24 million persons in 1950-1955 to 43 million in 1975-1980 and 59 million in 1995-2000. The next 25 years are expected to see a steady rise of the annual increment of the urban population until it reaches a peak of 75 million in 2020-2025 and then drops slightly to 74 million in 2025-2030. The overall increase of the annual increment of the urban population has been accompanied by a dramatic change in its distribution between the more and the less developed regions. Whereas in 1950-1955 the urban areas of the less developed regions absorbed 55 per cent of the annual increment of the world urban population, by 1995-2000 they were absorbing 93 per cent and by 2025-2030 they are expected to absorb 96 per cent (figure 2 and table 9). As the absolute increase of the urban population of less developed regions has been rising, that of the more developed regions has been slowing down. In 1995-2000, the urban areas of more developed regions grew by only 4.4 million

persons annually whereas 55 million were added every year to the urban areas of less developed regions. By 2025-2030 it is expected that 71 million persons will be added annually to the urban population of the less developed regions whereas the urban areas of more developed regions will gain under 3 million new residents every year.

Not only are the urban areas of less developed regions absorbing most of the population growth in urban areas worldwide, they are also increasingly absorbing most of the growth of the total world population. Thus, whereas in 1950-1955 the increase in the population of the urban areas of the less developed regions accounted for 28 per cent of the total increment to the world population, by 1995-2000 that increase accounted for 69 per cent and by 2020-2025 it will account for all of world population growth. Figure 3 shows that, in contrast to the annual increment to the world population, which began falling after 1985-1990 when it reached a peak of 86 million, the annual increment to the urban population of the less developed regions is expected to continue to increase steadily until at least 2025-2030.

Urban areas are also absorbing most of the growth occurring within regions. In the more developed regions, only the urban areas gained population during 1950-1995, while the rural areas lost population (table 9). In contrast, both the urban and the rural populations of less developed regions have been growing steadily, though urban areas are absorbing a rising share of the annual population increment. In 1950-1955 their annual population gain was 36 per cent of the total gain in developing countries, a figure that doubled to 73 per cent in 1995-2000. By 2025-2030 the annual increase in the urban population of less developed regions is expected to surpass that of the total population of those regions by 6 per cent. By that time, the urban areas of more developed regions will barely be growing, and their growth will be countered by a decline by almost the same amount in their rural population.

The contrasting trends in urban growth between the more and the less developed regions are also apparent when population growth rates are considered. As figure 4 shows, the growth rate of the urban population of the less developed regions has

TABLE 9. ANNUAL INCREMENT OF THE TOTAL, URBAN AND RURAL POPULATION OF THE WORLD,
MORE DEVELOPED REGIONS AND LESS DEVELOPED REGIONS, 1950-2030
(Millions)

Period	World			More developed regions			Less developed regions			Urban increment of less developed regions as percentage of	
	Total population	Urban population	Rural population	Total population	Urban population	Rural population	Total population	Urban population	Rural population	World urban increment	World total increment
1950-1955.....	47.0	24.3	22.7	10.1	11.0	-0.9	37.0	13.4	23.6	54.9	28.4
1955-1960.....	53.1	28.9	24.2	10.4	12.3	-1.9	42.7	16.7	26.0	57.6	31.4
1960-1965.....	62.7	33.4	29.3	10.2	12.5	-2.2	52.5	21.0	31.5	62.7	33.4
1965-1970.....	71.4	34.4	37.0	8.2	11.4	-3.3	63.2	23.0	40.3	66.7	32.2
1970-1975.....	74.9	37.2	37.7	8.0	10.3	-2.3	66.9	26.9	40.0	72.3	35.9
1975-1980.....	72.8	42.7	30.1	6.9	8.0	-1.1	65.9	34.7	31.2	81.3	47.7
1980-1985.....	79.0	48.9	30.0	6.4	7.2	-0.8	72.5	41.7	30.8	85.3	52.8
1985-1990.....	86.1	57.0	29.1	6.7	7.3	-0.6	79.4	49.7	29.7	87.2	57.7
1990-1995.....	81.4	55.9	25.5	5.1	5.8	-0.7	76.3	50.1	26.1	89.6	61.6
1995-2000.....	79.0	59.3	19.7	3.5	4.4	-1.0	75.5	54.8	20.7	92.5	69.4
2000-2005.....	76.9	63.0	13.8	1.9	3.7	-1.8	74.9	59.3	15.6	94.1	77.2
2005-2010.....	76.9	67.4	9.6	1.5	3.8	-2.3	75.5	63.6	11.9	94.4	82.6
2010-2015.....	76.3	71.2	5.2	1.1	3.8	-2.8	75.2	67.3	7.9	94.6	88.2
2015-2020.....	74.4	73.5	0.9	0.8	3.8	-3.0	73.6	69.7	3.9	94.8	93.7
2020-2025.....	71.5	74.7	-3.2	0.2	3.5	-3.3	71.3	71.2	0.1	95.3	99.6
2025-2030.....	66.7	74.0	-7.4	-0.5	2.8	-3.2	67.1	71.3	-4.1	96.3	106.9

Figure 2. Annual urban increment in the more developed and the less developed regions and percentage of total urban increment represented by the urban increment of the less developed regions

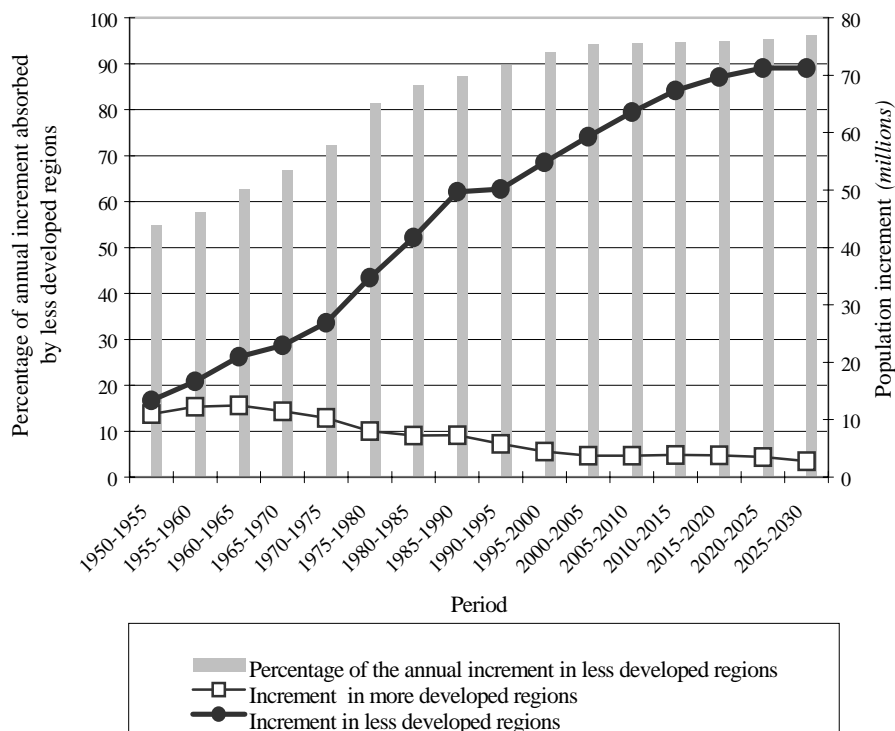


Figure 3. Annual increment of the world population, annual urban increment in the less developed regions and percentage of total increment represented by urban increment of the less developed regions

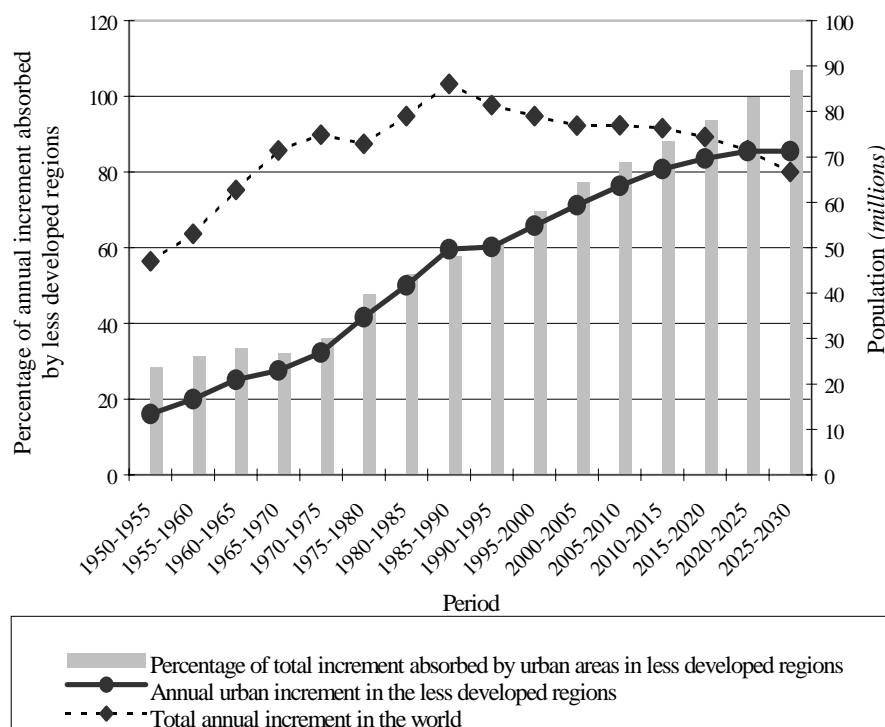
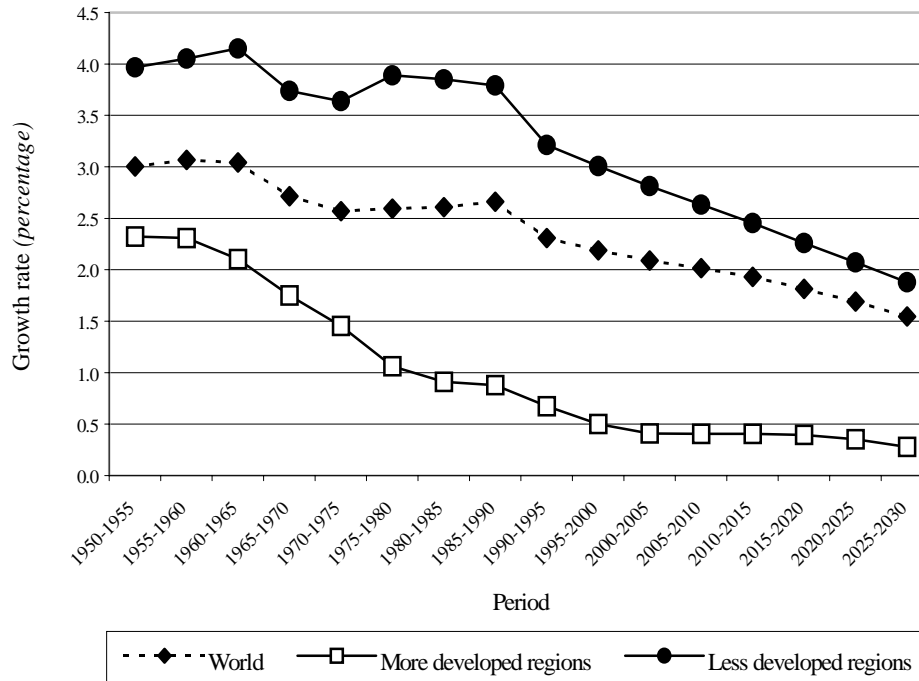


Figure 4. Growth rates of the urban population of the world, the more developed and the less developed regions, 1950-2030



been considerably higher than that of the urban population of more developed regions during 1950-1995, and the difference is expected to remain high. Furthermore, whereas the urban growth rate of the more developed regions has been declining fairly steadily since 1950, that of the less developed regions fluctuated during 1950-1995 showing no marked tendency to decrease before 1985-1990 (table 10). The first major drop of the urban growth rate in the less developed regions occurred between 1985-1990 and 1990-1995 when it declined from 3.8 to 3.2 per cent per year. For 1995-2000, the urban growth rate in the less developed regions is estimated at 3 per cent per year, six times that for the more developed regions (0.5 per cent per year), a divergence which is expected to be accentuated in the future. One way of assessing the implications of the differences in urban growth rates between the more developed and the less developed regions is to note that, if the urban population of the less developed regions were to continue growing at the average annual rate expected during 2000-2030, it would double in 29 years. In contrast, for the more developed regions, it would double in 185 years (table 2).

An intriguing feature of past trends in the urban growth rate of less developed regions is its fluctuating pattern before 1995. As figure 5 shows, that pattern is determined by trends in urban growth in China, which in 2000 accounted for 21 per cent of the urban population in less developed regions. Thus, the urban growth rate of the less developed regions excluding China shows no fluctuations: it rises initially from 3.9 per cent per year in 1950-1955 to 4.2 per cent per year in 1960-1965 and then declines steadily to reach 2.9 per cent in 1995-2000. In contrast, the annual rate of urban growth in China has fluctuated markedly, from 4.3 per cent in 1950-1955 to 2.2 per cent in 1970-1975, rising again to reach 5 per cent in 1985-1990 and then dropping to 3.5 per cent in 1995-2000 (table 11). As figure 6 shows, the trends in urban population growth in China do not reflect similar changes in overall population growth. Instead, the decline in urban population growth stems largely from the virtual stagnation of the proportion urban during 1965-1975, which coincided with the Cultural Revolution, a programme of radical political and socio-economic reform and civil strife that was accompanied by the forceful relocation of large numbers of urban dwellers to rural areas. The reduction of the

TABLE 10. URBAN, RURAL AND TOTAL POPULATION IN THE WORLD, MORE DEVELOPED REGIONS AND LESS DEVELOPED REGIONS, AND THEIR ANNUAL RATES OF GROWTH, 1950-2030

Year	Population (millions)			Period	Growth rate (percentage)		
	World	More developed regions	Less developed regions		World	More developed regions	Less developed regions
<i>A. Total</i>							
1950.....	2 519	814	1 706				
1955.....	2 755	864	1 891	1950-1955	1.79	1.20	2.06
1960.....	3 020	916	2 104	1955-1960	1.84	1.17	2.14
1965.....	3 334	967	2 366	1960-1965	1.98	1.09	2.35
1970.....	3 691	1 008	2 683	1965-1970	2.04	0.83	2.51
1975.....	4 066	1 048	3 017	1970-1975	1.93	0.78	2.35
1980.....	4 430	1 083	3 347	1975-1980	1.72	0.65	2.07
1985.....	4 825	1 115	3 710	1980-1985	1.71	0.59	2.06
1990.....	5 255	1 148	4 106	1985-1990	1.71	0.59	2.03
1995.....	5 662	1 174	4 488	1990-1995	1.49	0.44	1.78
2000.....	6 057	1 191	4 865	1995-2000	1.35	0.30	1.61
2005.....	6 441	1 201	5 240	2000-2005	1.23	0.16	1.48
2010.....	6 826	1 208	5 617	2005-2010	1.16	0.12	1.39
2015.....	7 207	1 214	5 994	2010-2015	1.09	0.09	1.30
2020.....	7 579	1 218	6 362	2015-2020	1.01	0.06	1.19
2025.....	7 937	1 219	6 718	2020-2025	0.92	0.02	1.09
2030.....	8 270	1 217	7 054	2025-2030	0.82	-0.04	0.98
<i>B. Urban</i>							
1950.....	751	447	304				
1955.....	873	501	371	1950-1955	3.00	2.32	3.97
1960.....	1 017	563	454	1955-1960	3.07	2.31	4.05
1965.....	1 184	625	559	1960-1965	3.04	2.10	4.15
1970.....	1 357	682	674	1965-1970	2.71	1.75	3.74
1975.....	1 543	734	809	1970-1975	2.57	1.46	3.64
1980.....	1 756	774	982	1975-1980	2.60	1.06	3.89
1985.....	2 001	810	1 191	1980-1985	2.61	0.91	3.85
1990.....	2 286	847	1 439	1985-1990	2.66	0.88	3.79
1995.....	2 565	876	1 690	1990-1995	2.31	0.67	3.21
2000.....	2 862	898	1 964	1995-2000	2.19	0.50	3.01
2005.....	3 177	916	2 261	2000-2005	2.09	0.41	2.81
2010.....	3 514	935	2 579	2005-2010	2.02	0.41	2.63
2015.....	3 869	954	2 915	2010-2015	1.93	0.41	2.45
2020.....	4 237	973	3 263	2015-2020	1.81	0.40	2.26
2025.....	4 610	991	3 620	2020-2025	1.69	0.35	2.07
2030.....	4 981	1 005	3 976	2025-2030	1.54	0.28	1.88

TABLE 10 (continued)

Year	Population (millions)			Period	Growth rate (percentage)		
	World	More developed regions	Less developed regions		World	More developed regions	Less developed regions
<i>C. Rural</i>							
1950.....	1 769	367	1 402				
1955.....	1 882	363	1 520	1950-1955	1.24	-0.25	1.62
1960.....	2 003	353	1 650	1955-1960	1.24	-0.52	1.64
1965.....	2 149	342	1 807	1960-1965	1.41	-0.65	1.82
1970.....	2 334	326	2 009	1965-1970	1.65	-0.97	2.11
1975.....	2 523	314	2 209	1970-1975	1.55	-0.72	1.90
1980.....	2 674	309	2 365	1975-1980	1.16	-0.36	1.37
1985.....	2 824	305	2 519	1980-1985	1.09	-0.26	1.26
1990.....	2 969	302	2 667	1985-1990	1.01	-0.19	1.15
1995.....	3 096	298	2 798	1990-1995	0.84	-0.23	0.96
2000.....	3 195	294	2 901	1995-2000	0.63	-0.32	0.72
2005.....	3 264	285	2 979	2000-2005	0.43	-0.62	0.53
2010.....	3 312	273	3 039	2005-2010	0.29	-0.83	0.40
2015.....	3 338	259	3 078	2010-2015	0.16	-1.03	0.26
2020.....	3 342	244	3 098	2015-2020	0.03	-1.21	0.13
2025.....	3 326	228	3 098	2020-2025	-0.10	-1.38	0.00
2030.....	3 289	212	3 078	2025-2030	-0.22	-1.47	-0.13

Figure 5. Comparison of the urban growth rate of China and of the less developed regions excluding China

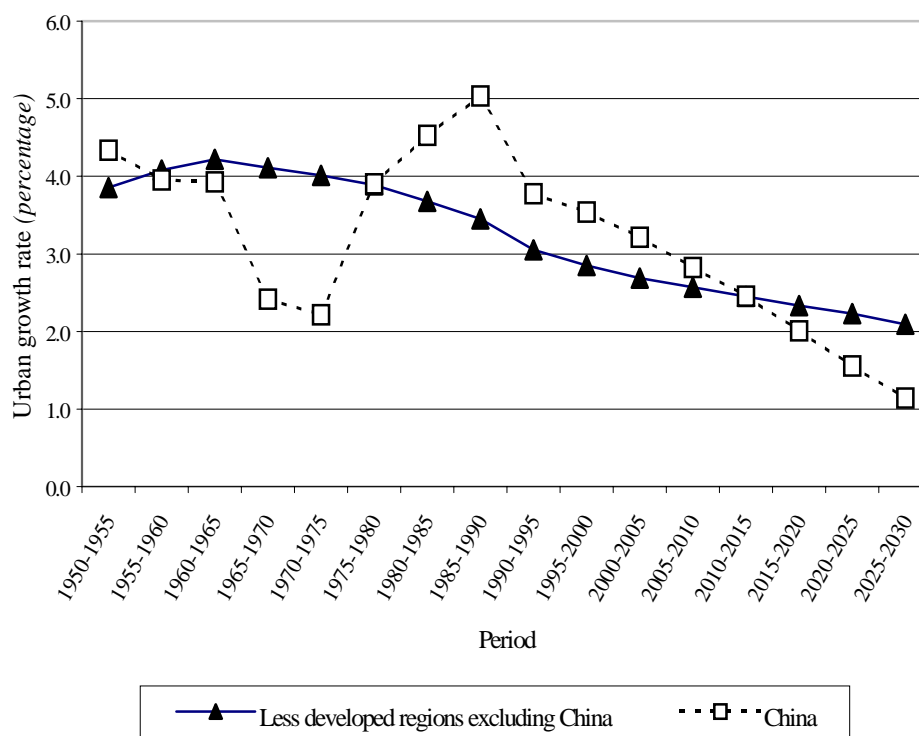


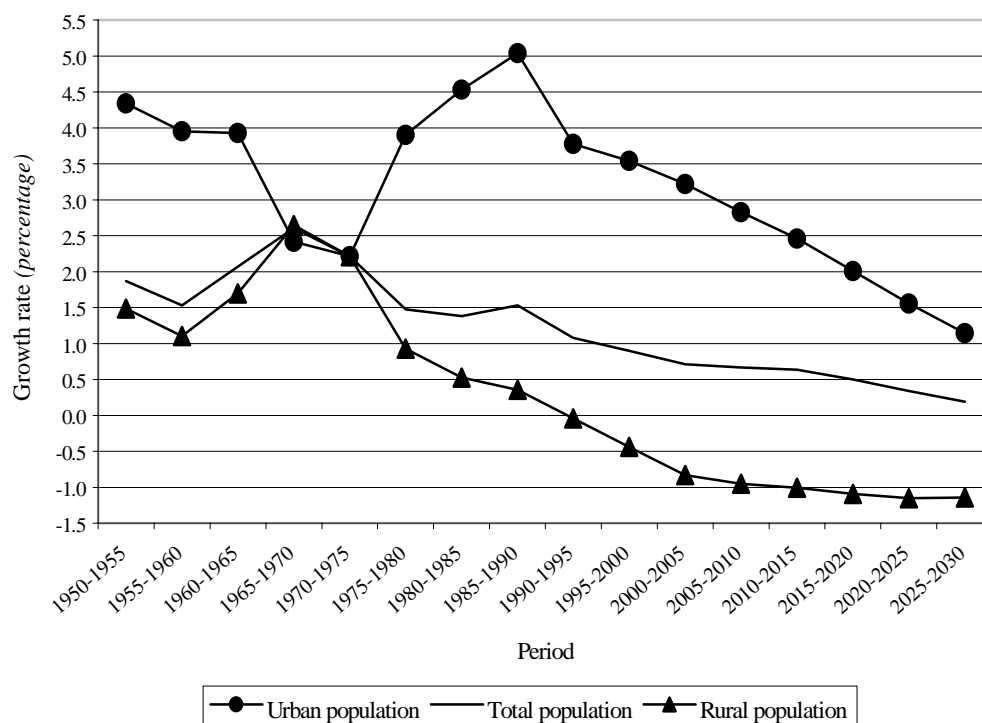
TABLE 11. PERCENTAGE URBAN AND GROWTH RATE OF THE URBAN, RURAL AND TOTAL POPULATION, CHINA, 1950-2030

Period	Percentage urban at the beginning of the period	Growth rate (percentage)		
		Urban population	Rural population	Total population
1950-1955	12.5	4.34	1.49	1.87
1955-1960	14.2	3.95	1.10	1.53
1960-1965	16.0	3.93	1.70	2.07
1965-1970	17.6	2.42	2.65	2.61
1970-1975	17.4	2.21	2.21	2.21
1975-1980	17.4	3.90	0.93	1.48
1980-1985	19.6	4.53	0.53	1.38
1985-1990	23.0	5.04	0.35	1.53
1990-1995	27.4	3.78	-0.04	1.08
1995-2000	31.4	3.54	-0.44	0.89
2000-2005	35.8	3.22	-0.83	0.71
2005-2010	40.6	2.83	-0.95	0.67
2010-2015	45.2	2.46	-1.01	0.63
2015-2020	49.5	2.01	-1.09	0.50
2020-2025	53.4	1.56	-1.15	0.34
2025-2030	56.7	1.14	-1.14	0.19

proportion urban reflects both the real effects of that programme as well as the use of an official definition of urban that might not have provided an adequate measure of the actual changes taking place in the urban system. However, the lack of census information for the entire period 1960-1980 limits the possibility of assessing the accuracy of the official estimates available. The census of 1982 provides the first comprehensive source of data on the urban population of China, its cities and towns since the 1950s. Starting in 1983 the official criteria to determine the geographical demarcation of cities and towns have changed several times (Zhang and Zhao, 1998), leading to increases in the number of localities considered as urban. Reclassification has therefore played an important role in determining measured urbanization trends in China since 1980. This fact should be borne in mind in interpreting trends in urban growth in China as well as their effects on overall urban growth in the less developed regions.

The more and less developed regions also differ markedly in rural population trends. Thus, whereas

Figure 6. Growth rates of the total, urban and rural population of China, 1950-2030



the rural population of more developed regions has been declining steadily during at least the latter half of the twentieth century, that of less developed regions has been growing (table 10). In fact, the growth rate of the rural population of less developed regions peaked at 2.1 per cent per year in 1965-1970 and has been declining ever since. By 1995-2000, the rural growth rate of less developed regions stood at just 0.7 per cent per year and is expected to drop to zero by 2020-2025 before becoming negative (figure 7).

The diverging patterns of growth of the rural populations of the more developed and the less developed regions have resulted in a significant redistribution of the rural population. In 1950, the 367 million rural dwellers in the more developed regions constituted 21 per cent of the rural population of the world, whereas by 2000, the number of rural dwellers in the more developed regions (294 million) accounted for only 9 per cent of the total rural population. This share is expected to drop to 6 per cent, as the rural population in developed countries declines to 212 million persons (table 10). That is, between 1950 and 2030, the rural popula-

tion of the more developed regions is expected to decline by 42 per cent.

In comparison, the rural population of less developed regions has continued to grow, from 1.4 billion in 1950 to 2.9 billion in 2000, more than doubling over those 50 years. But the next 30 years are expected to witness a major reduction in this rural population growth: to less than 200 million and all in the next 20 years. The rural population of less developed regions will therefore reach 3.1 billion by 2020 and is expected to start to decline slowly thereafter (table 10).

As a consequence of the contrasting patterns of growth of the urban and rural populations of the more and the less developed regions, the two regions have experienced and are expected to experience different trends in the growth of the proportion urban. As already noted, the more developed regions were already highly urbanized by 1950, when over half (55 per cent) of their population lived in urban areas. At that time, the less developed regions had just 18 per cent of their inhabitants living in cities and towns (table 12). However, because the

Figure 7. Average annual growth rate of the rural population in the world, the more developed and the less developed regions, 1950-2030

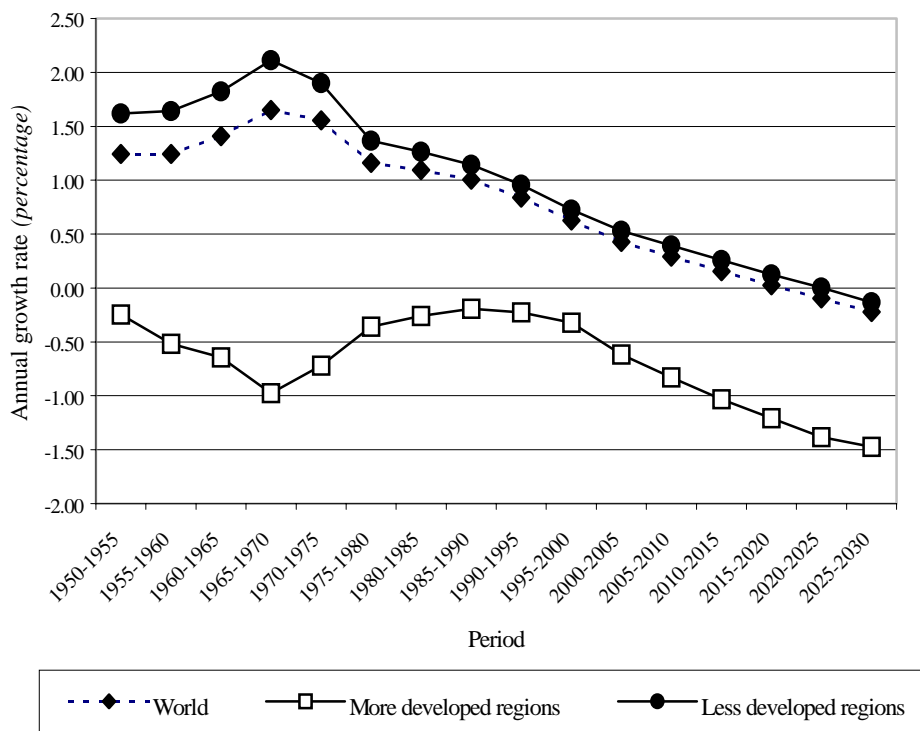


TABLE 12. PROPORTION URBAN AND RATE OF URBANIZATION FOR THE WORLD,
THE MORE DEVELOPED REGIONS AND THE LESS DEVELOPED REGIONS, 1950-2030

Year	Proportion urban (percentage)			Period	Urbanization rate (percentage)		
	World	More developed regions	Less developed regions		World	More developed regions	Less developed regions
1950.....	29.8	54.9	17.8				
1955.....	31.7	58.0	19.6	1950-1955	1.22	1.12	1.91
1960.....	33.7	61.4	21.6	1955-1960	1.23	1.14	1.91
1965.....	35.5	64.6	23.6	1960-1965	1.07	1.02	1.80
1970.....	36.8	67.7	25.1	1965-1970	0.68	0.92	1.23
1975.....	37.9	70.0	26.8	1970-1975	0.64	0.68	1.29
1980.....	39.6	71.5	29.3	1975-1980	0.88	0.42	1.82
1985.....	41.5	72.7	32.1	1980-1985	0.90	0.33	1.79
1990.....	43.5	73.7	35.0	1985-1990	0.95	0.29	1.76
1995.....	45.3	74.6	37.7	1990-1995	0.82	0.23	1.44
2000.....	47.2	75.4	40.4	1995-2000	0.84	0.21	1.39
2005.....	49.3	76.3	43.1	2000-2005	0.86	0.25	1.33
2010.....	51.5	77.4	45.9	2005-2010	0.86	0.29	1.24
2015.....	53.7	78.6	48.6	2010-2015	0.84	0.32	1.16
2020.....	55.9	79.9	51.3	2015-2020	0.81	0.33	1.07
2025.....	58.1	81.3	53.9	2020-2025	0.77	0.34	0.98
2030.....	60.2	82.6	56.4	2025-2030	0.72	0.32	0.90

growth of the urban population of less developed regions was rapid in relation to that of the total population, between 1950 and 2000 the proportion urban had more than doubled, reaching 40 per cent. In the more developed regions, the proportion urban rose by less, reaching three-fourths of the total by 2000. The projected proportion urban in 2030 is 83 per cent for the more developed regions and 56 per cent for the less developed regions. Thus by that date there will still be ample room for the expansion of the proportion urban in the less developed regions whereas that of the more developed regions will be nearing an upper limit. Such a contrast is made clearer by considering the rate of urbanization (i.e., the growth rate of the proportion urban). As table 12 shows, since 1980 the more developed regions have had a low rate of urbanization, ranging between 0.2 and 0.4 per cent per year, rates which are expected to continue in the future. In contrast, the rate of urbanization of the less developed regions, which was mostly 1.8 per cent to

1.9 per cent per year from 1950 to 1990, is expected to remain above 1 per cent per year until 2025 and will still be 0.9 per cent in 2025-2030. At that rate, the proportion urban in the less developed regions would reach 70 per cent by 2054.

The differences in the levels of urbanization between the more developed and the less developed regions are also apparent when one considers the distribution of countries and areas in each group according to the proportion urban (table 13). In 1950, three-quarters of the 173 countries or areas in the less developed regions had at most 38 per cent of their population living in urban area, whereas half of the 55 countries or areas in the more developed regions already had over 50 per cent of their population living in urban areas. By 2000, half of the countries or areas of the less developed regions had at least 49 per cent of the population living in urban areas, with half of the developed countries having over 73 per cent. By 2030, three-quarters of

TABLE 13. DISTRIBUTION OF COUNTRIES OR AREAS IN MORE DEVELOPED AND LESS DEVELOPED REGIONS BY THE PROPORTION OF THE POPULATION LIVING IN URBAN AREAS, 1950, 1975, 2000 AND 2030

	1950	1975	2000	2030
<i>Less developed regions</i>				
Lower extreme.....	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Lower quartile	9.5	19.6	32.1	49.1
Median.....	23.5	35.6	49.4	64.4
Upper quartile.....	37.9	54.0	69.5	79.3
Upper extreme	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
<i>More developed regions</i>				
Lower extreme.....	13.7	20.0	21.4	34.6
Lower quartile	27.8	51.5	59.7	70.7
Median.....	50.1	66.4	72.9	80.5
Upper quartile.....	69.9	81.5	88.5	91.8
Upper extreme	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

NOTE: The upper and lower extremes indicated the highest and lowest values observed; the lower quartile, the median and the upper quartile divide the distribution into four parts, each with the same number of observations. Consequently, half of the observed values fall between the two quartiles and the median is an indicator of the center of the distribution.

all countries in the less developed regions will be at least 49 per cent urban and even the least urbanized country in the more developed regions will attain a level of urbanization above 34 per cent. Furthermore, the population in three-quarters of the countries in the more developed regions will be at least 70 per cent. The marked upward shift in the distributions of countries by level of urbanization underscores the momentous change that has taken place in the twentieth century, a change that is expected to continue and result in a highly urbanized world during the twenty-first century. Nevertheless, there is and will continue to be considerable variation among countries and among major areas and regions in terms of the level of urbanization. The next section explores those differences by major area.

B. PATTERNS OF URBAN AND RURAL GROWTH IN THE MAJOR AREAS

The different patterns of urbanization observed at the level of more developed and less developed regions are the result of varying experiences among the areas that constitute those regions.

Europe and Northern America, in the developed world, exhibit high levels of urbanization (i.e. high proportions of the population living in urban areas) and slowing rates of urban population growth. In the developing world, Africa and Asia remain largely rural in 2000, whereas Latin America and the Caribbean has a proportion urban similar to that of the developed countries, having urbanized rapidly since 1950. Oceania, which straddles the developed and the developing world, is also highly urbanized (table 14). Despite its low level of urbanization, Asia, because of its large population, has the largest number of persons living in urban areas (1.4 billion), followed by Europe, with 534 million urban dwellers, Latin America and the Caribbean with 391 million, and Africa with 295 million. Because of the high urban population growth rates expected in Africa and Asia, by 2030 those two major areas will have the largest numbers of urban dwellers in the world: 2.7 billion in Asia and 787 million in Africa, although they will still be the least urbanized major areas of the world.

In 1950 Asia was the second least urbanized major area, with 17.4 per cent of its population living in cities and towns. By 2000 that proportion had risen to 37.5 per cent. Despite the robust rate of urbanization that Asia is expected to experience during 2000-2030 (1.23 per cent per year, the highest of any major area), its proportion urban will still be only 54 by 2030 (table 14).

Africa, which in 1950 had the lowest proportion urban, experienced the fastest rate of urbanization of any major area during 1950-2000 and saw its percentage urban rise from 14.7 in 1950 to 37.2 in 2000. Although Africa's average rate of urbanization over the next 30 years is expected to be lower than during the second half of the twentieth century (1.17 per cent per year instead of 1.86 per cent per year), it will still be high and will result in a level of urbanization of 52.9 per cent by 2030. That is, if the projected trends hold, by 2030 the level of urbanization in both Africa and Asia will have passed the 50 per cent mark and their populations will have become more urban than rural.

Compared to Africa and Asia, the level urbanization of Latin America and the Caribbean was already high by 1950 when the region had

TABLE 14. PROPORTION OF THE POPULATION LIVING IN URBAN AREAS AND URBANIZATION RATE BY MAJOR AREA, 1950, 2000 AND 2030

Major area	Percentage urban			Urbanization rate (percentage)	
	1950	2000	2030	1950-2000	2000-2030
World.....	29.8	47.2	60.2	0.92	0.81
Africa.....	14.7	37.2	52.9	1.86	1.17
Asia.....	17.4	37.5	54.1	1.53	1.23
Europe.....	52.4	73.4	80.5	0.68	0.31
Latin America and the Caribbean.....	41.9	75.4	84.0	1.18	0.36
Northern America.....	63.9	77.4	84.5	0.38	0.30
Oceania.....	61.6	74.1	77.3	0.37	0.14

41.9 per cent of its population living in urban areas. Although this level of urbanization was lower than that of Europe or Northern America in 1950, over the next 50 years Latin America and the Caribbean experienced a rapid increase in the proportion urban, averaging 1.18 per cent per year. Consequently, by 2000, the proportion urban in Latin America and the Caribbean had reached levels similar to those characterizing Europe and Northern America (table 14). With three-quarters of their populations living in urban areas, those three major areas are expected to experience a marked decline of the rate of urbanization, and the proportion urban is expected to rise only moderately to reach values between 80 per cent and 85 per cent by 2030.

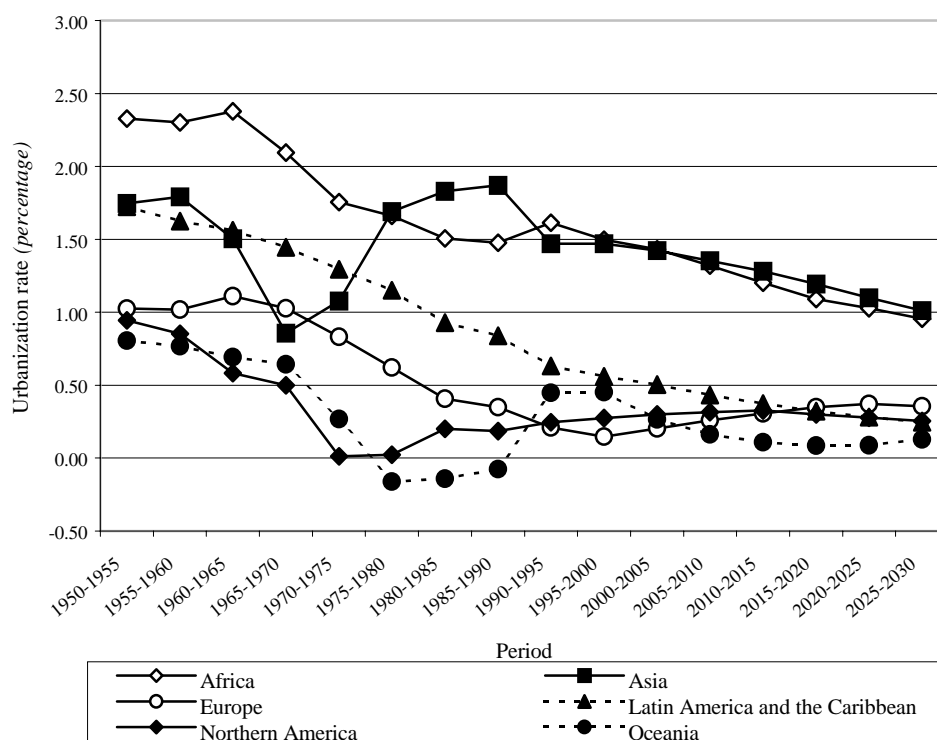
Oceania, the major area with the smallest population, was the second most urbanized area in 1950, when already 61.6 per cent of its population lived in cities. Since then it has experienced the lowest rate of urbanization in the world, at 0.37 per cent per year, becoming 74.1 per cent urban by 2000, a proportion that is expected to rise only slightly by 2030 to reach 77.3 per cent (table 14).

A more detailed picture of trends in urbanization in the major areas can be obtained by considering changes in the rates of urbanization over time (figure 8). The rate of urbanization, defined as the growth rate of the proportion urban, is equal to the difference between the growth rate of the urban population and that of the total population. Consequently, its trajectory over time is likely to reflect changes taking place in the urban growth

rate. As figure 8 shows, there is considerable variation across major areas in rates of urbanization. Only Latin America and the Caribbean displays a smoothly declining trend, dropping steadily from 1.73 per cent per year in 1950-1955 to 0.25 per cent per year in 2025-2030 (table 15). In Africa, whose rates of urbanization have generally been the highest in the world since at least the middle of the twentieth century, the rate of urbanization declined markedly from 1960-1965 to 1985-1990, dropping from 2.4 per cent to 1.5 per cent per year. It increased slightly thereafter but is projected to follow a smooth downward trend in the future and to dip below one per cent per year by 2025-2030. In contrast with Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean, the rate of urbanization in Asia shows no clear trend before 1990, fluctuating sharply over the period. These fluctuations reflect those experienced by China, which is home to 30 per cent of the urban population in Asia (figure 9). As discussed earlier in relation to the urban growth rate of the less developed regions, such fluctuations are related both to historical events that arrested urbanization in China during the late 1960s and early 1970s, and to the official definitions of urban used up to the 1980s, which in all likelihood did not reflect adequately the ongoing expansion of urban areas.

The urbanization rates experienced by Europe, Northern America and Oceania have been considerably lower than those of the developing world, and fell markedly in all three between 1960-1965 and 1975-1980. In Oceania, that decline led to negative rates of urbanization in 1975-1990. In

Figure 8. Urbanization rates for major areas, 1950-2030



Northern America the urbanization rate dropped to nearly zero in the 1970s and recovered to somewhere in between 0.2 per cent and 0.3 per cent per year in the 1980s and 1990s. Europe experienced higher urbanization rates than the other two major areas from 1950 to 1990, but by 1995-2000 its rate of urbanization was just 0.15 per cent per year. Over the projection period both Europe and Northern America are expected to see their urbanization rates fluctuate around 0.3 per cent per year. Such projected values imply continued increases in the level of urbanization of both regions. In contrast, future urbanization rates of Oceania are expected to be very low, at about 0.1 per cent per annum, and will result in very small increases of the proportion urban in that major area.

The reduction of the urbanization rates experienced by Europe, Northern America and Oceania between 1965 and 1980 has been referred to as “counter-urbanization,” a process that entailed a shift in population distribution down the urban hierarchy. Although counter-urbanization does not necessarily mean that urban dwellers resettle in

rural areas, in highly urbanized countries it was associated with faster growth of non-metropolitan populations compared with that in metropolitan areas (Korcelli, 1984; Champion, 1991 and 1998) and in some countries an increase of the rate of growth of the rural population was also observed. Thus, as figure 10 shows, the growth rate of the rural population of Europe, despite remaining negative over almost the whole 1950-2030 period, showed some recuperation between 1970 and 2000. A more significant increase occurred in both Northern America and Oceania, where the growth rate of the rural population rose markedly between 1965-1970 and 1970-1975 (figure 10 and table 16). In Oceania, the rural growth rate continued to increase for another 15 years before falling rapidly towards 0.13 per cent by 1995-2000. In Northern America the growth spurt of the rural population recorded in the early 1970s lasted for a decade before a decline set in, so that by 1995-2000 its rate of rural population growth stood also at 0.13 per cent per year (table 16).

In terms of the major areas of the less developed world, two types of trends are discernible in terms

TABLE 15. URBANIZATION RATE BY MAJOR AREA AND QUINQUENNIUM, 1950-2030

Period	Urbanization rate (percentage)					
	Africa	Asia	Europe	Latin America and the Caribbean	Northern America	Oceania
1950-1955.....	2.33	1.75	1.03	1.73	0.94	0.81
1955-1960.....	2.30	1.79	1.02	1.62	0.85	0.77
1960-1965.....	2.38	1.50	1.11	1.56	0.58	0.69
1965-1970.....	2.09	0.86	1.03	1.45	0.50	0.64
1970-1975.....	1.76	1.08	0.83	1.29	0.01	0.27
1975-1980.....	1.66	1.69	0.62	1.15	0.02	-0.16
1980-1985.....	1.51	1.83	0.41	0.93	0.20	-0.14
1985-1990.....	1.48	1.87	0.35	0.84	0.19	-0.08
1990-1995.....	1.61	1.47	0.21	0.63	0.25	0.45
1995-2000.....	1.50	1.47	0.15	0.56	0.27	0.45
2000-2005.....	1.43	1.42	0.20	0.50	0.30	0.27
2005-2010.....	1.32	1.35	0.26	0.43	0.32	0.16
2010-2015.....	1.20	1.28	0.31	0.37	0.33	0.11
2015-2020.....	1.09	1.19	0.35	0.32	0.30	0.09
2020-2025.....	1.03	1.10	0.37	0.28	0.28	0.09
2025-2030.....	0.96	1.01	0.36	0.25	0.25	0.13

Figure 9. Trends in the urbanization rate of Asia and China, 1950-2030

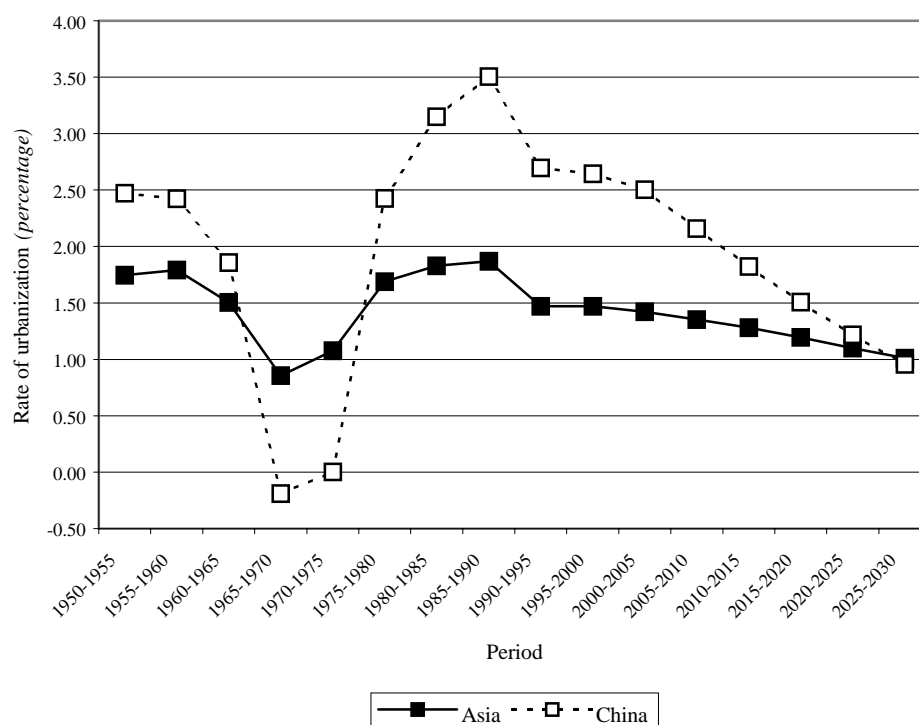
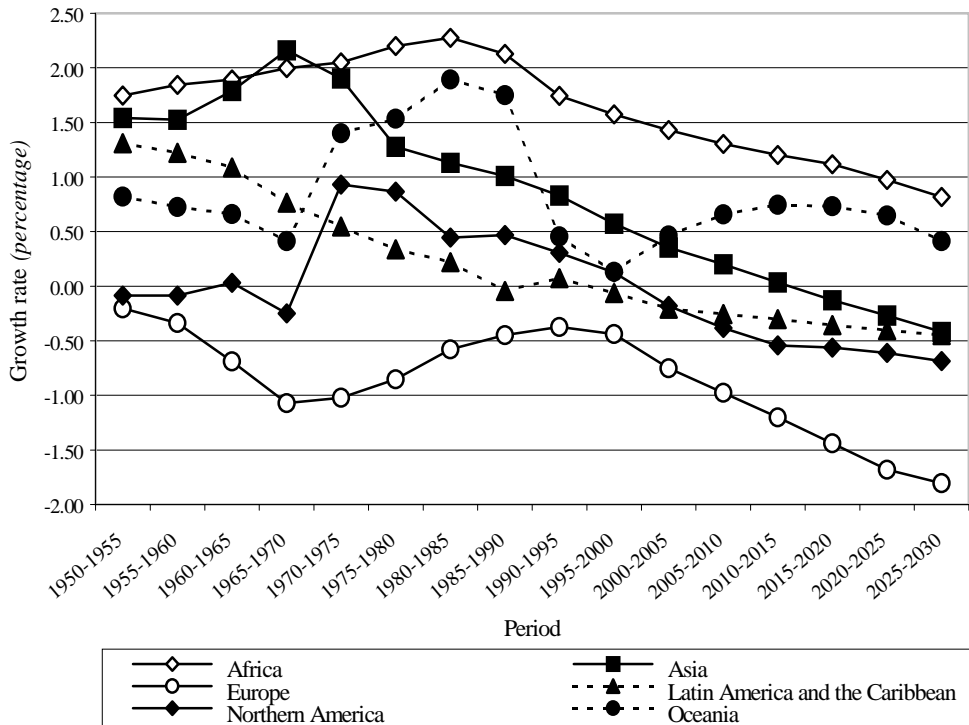


Figure 10. Growth rate of the rural population of major areas, 1950-2030



of rural growth rates. The major area constituted by Latin America and the Caribbean has seen its rural growth rate decline steadily so that by 1995-2000 it was negative. Africa and Asia, in contrast, both experienced initial increases in the rates of growth of their rural populations, during 1950-1985 and 1955-1970, respectively. In the case of Africa, declining mortality combined with sustained high fertility produced the increase in the rural population growth rate, which reached a peak of 2.3 per cent per year in 1980-1985 and is estimated to have declined to 1.6 per cent per year by 1995-2000. In Asia, the highest growth rate of the rural population occurred in 1965-1970, when rural growth reached 2.2 per cent per year, largely as a result of the high rural growth rate in China. Since then, the growth rate of the rural population of Asia has been declining steadily so that by 1995-2000 it had reached 0.6 per cent per year.

For all major areas, the projections of the rural population entail a steady reduction of the rural growth rate (figure 10), but it is noteworthy that by the end of the projection period the major areas will vary considerably in terms of rates of growth

of their rural populations. Thus, by 2025-2030, Europe's rural population is expected to be declining at a rate of 1.8 per cent per year; that of Northern America by 0.7 per cent per year; and those of Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean will both be falling at rates of around 0.4 per cent per year. The main region where the rural population is expected to be increasing is Africa, where it will be growing at an annual rate of 0.8 per cent per year. Oceania is also expected to continue experiencing positive rural growth, varying from 0.4 per cent to 0.7 per cent per year during 2000-2030 (table 16).

As a result of such trends, the number of rural inhabitants in Africa is expected to more than triple between 1950 and 2030, rising from 188 million in 1950 to 498 million in 2000 and reaching 702 million by 2030 (table 17). In Oceania the rural population will also continue to grow, passing from 5 million in 1950 to 8 million in 2000 and to 10 million by 2030. In Asia, the major area with the largest number of rural inhabitants, the rural population is estimated to have grown from 1.2 billion in 1950 to 2.3 billion in 2000, and al-

TABLE 16. AVERAGE ANNUAL RATE OF GROWTH OF THE URBAN, THE RURAL AND THE TOTAL POPULATION IN THE WORLD AND MAJOR AREA, 1950-1955 TO 2025-2030
(Percentage)

Major area	1950- 1955	1955- 1960	1960- 1965	1965- 1970	1970- 1975	1975- 1980	1980- 1985	1985- 1990	1990- 1995	1995- 2000	2000- 2005	2005- 2010	2010- 2015	2015- 2020	2020- 2025	2025- 2030
<i>Urban growth rate (percentage)</i>																
World.....	3.00	3.07	3.04	2.71	2.57	2.60	2.61	2.66	2.31	2.19	2.09	2.02	1.93	1.81	1.69	1.54
Africa.....	4.50	4.63	4.85	4.68	4.37	4.45	4.38	4.26	4.16	3.91	3.76	3.55	3.35	3.16	2.99	2.79
Asia.....	3.67	3.76	3.71	3.27	3.32	3.55	3.68	3.72	3.05	2.87	2.68	2.52	2.34	2.14	1.93	1.72
Europe.....	2.01	2.01	2.07	1.70	1.42	1.11	0.79	0.78	0.39	0.11	0.03	0.04	0.06	0.07	0.04	-0.03
Latin America and the Caribbean	4.38	4.32	4.31	4.02	3.74	3.47	3.00	2.72	2.35	2.12	1.93	1.73	1.54	1.36	1.20	1.05
Northern America	2.65	2.62	2.04	1.60	0.98	0.96	1.23	1.21	1.32	1.31	1.18	1.13	1.12	1.08	1.01	0.90
Oceania	2.99	2.94	2.81	2.56	2.35	0.96	1.41	1.49	2.03	1.82	1.51	1.32	1.20	1.10	1.02	0.97
<i>Rural growth rate (percentage)</i>																
World.....	1.24	1.24	1.41	1.65	1.55	1.16	1.09	1.01	0.84	0.63	0.43	0.29	0.16	0.03	-0.10	-0.22
Africa.....	1.75	1.84	1.89	2.00	2.05	2.20	2.27	2.13	1.74	1.57	1.43	1.30	1.20	1.12	0.97	0.82
Asia.....	1.54	1.52	1.79	2.16	1.90	1.28	1.13	1.01	0.83	0.57	0.35	0.20	0.04	-0.13	-0.27	-0.42
Europe.....	-0.20	-0.34	-0.69	-1.07	-1.02	-0.85	-0.58	-0.45	-0.37	-0.44	-0.75	-0.98	-1.20	-1.44	-1.68	-1.80
Latin America and the Caribbean	1.31	1.22	1.09	0.77	0.55	0.34	0.22	-0.04	0.07	-0.06	-0.21	-0.25	-0.30	-0.36	-0.40	-0.45
Northern America	-0.09	-0.08	0.03	-0.25	0.93	0.87	0.44	0.47	0.31	0.13	-0.18	-0.38	-0.54	-0.56	-0.61	-0.69
Oceania	0.82	0.73	0.66	0.41	1.40	1.53	1.89	1.75	0.46	0.13	0.47	0.66	0.75	0.73	0.65	0.41
<i>Total growth rate (percentage)</i>																
World.....	1.79	1.84	1.98	2.04	1.93	1.72	1.71	1.71	1.49	1.35	1.23	1.16	1.09	1.01	0.92	0.82
Africa.....	2.17	2.33	2.47	2.59	2.61	2.79	2.87	2.78	2.54	2.41	2.33	2.23	2.15	2.07	1.97	1.84
Asia.....	1.93	1.97	2.20	2.42	2.25	1.86	1.85	1.85	1.57	1.40	1.26	1.16	1.06	0.94	0.83	0.71
Europe.....	0.99	0.99	0.96	0.68	0.59	0.49	0.38	0.43	0.18	-0.04	-0.18	-0.21	-0.25	-0.28	-0.33	-0.39
Latin America and the Caribbean	2.65	2.70	2.75	2.57	2.45	2.32	2.07	1.88	1.72	1.56	1.42	1.29	1.17	1.04	0.92	0.80
Northern America	1.70	1.77	1.46	1.10	0.97	0.93	1.03	1.02	1.08	1.04	0.88	0.82	0.80	0.78	0.73	0.65
Oceania	2.18	2.17	2.12	1.92	2.08	1.12	1.55	1.57	1.59	1.37	1.24	1.16	1.09	1.01	0.94	0.84

TABLE 17. URBAN, RURAL AND TOTAL POPULATION AND PERCENTAGE OF POPULATION LIVING IN URBAN AREAS IN THE WORLD BY MAJOR AREA, 1950-2030

<i>Major area</i>	<i>1950</i>	<i>1955</i>	<i>1960</i>	<i>1965</i>	<i>1970</i>	<i>1975</i>	<i>1980</i>	<i>1985</i>	<i>1990</i>	<i>1995</i>	<i>2000</i>	<i>2005</i>	<i>2010</i>	<i>2015</i>	<i>2020</i>	<i>2025</i>	<i>2030</i>
<i>Urban population (millions)</i>																	
World.....	751	873	1 017	1 184	1 357	1 543	1 756	2 001	2 286	2 565	2 862	3 177	3 514	3 869	4 237	4 610	4 981
Africa.....	32	41	51	65	82	102	128	159	197	243	295	356	426	503	589	685	787
Asia.....	244	293	354	426	501	592	707	850	1 023	1 191	1 376	1 573	1 784	2 005	2 231	2 458	2 679
Europe.....	287	318	351	389	424	455	481	501	521	531	534	535	536	538	540	541	540
Latin America and the Caribbean.....	70	87	108	134	164	198	235	273	313	352	391	431	470	507	543	577	608
Northern America.....	110	125	143	158	171	180	189	201	213	228	243	258	273	288	305	320	335
Oceania.....	8	9	10	12	14	15	16	17	19	21	23	24	26	28	29	31	32
<i>Rural population (millions)</i>																	
World.....	1 769	1 882	2 003	2 149	2 334	2 523	2 674	2 824	2 969	3 096	3 195	3 264	3 312	3 338	3 342	3 326	3 289
Africa.....	188	206	226	248	274	304	339	380	422	461	498	535	571	607	642	674	702
Asia.....	1 155	1 248	1 347	1 473	1 641	1 805	1 924	2 035	2 141	2 232	2 297	2 338	2 361	2 366	2 350	2 319	2 271
Europe.....	261	258	254	245	233	221	212	206	201	198	193	186	177	167	155	143	131
Latin America and the Caribbean.....	97	104	110	116	121	124	126	128	127	128	127	126	125	123	121	118	116
Northern America.....	62	62	61	62	61	64	66	68	70	71	71	70	69	67	65	63	61
Oceania.....	5	5	5	5	6	6	6	7	8	8	8	8	8	9	9	9	10
<i>Total population (millions)</i>																	
World.....	2 519	2 755	2 003	2 149	2 334	2 523	2 674	2 824	2 969	3 096	3 195	3 264	3 312	3 338	3 342	3 326	3 289
Africa.....	221	246	277	313	356	406	467	539	619	703	794	892	997	1 110	1 231	1 358	1 489
Asia.....	1 399	1 541	1 700	1 898	2 142	2 397	2 631	2 885	3 164	3 423	3 672	3 911	4 145	4 371	4 582	4 777	4 950
Europe.....	548	576	605	635	657	676	693	707	722	729	727	721	713	705	695	684	670
Latin America and the Caribbean.....	167	191	218	250	285	322	361	401	440	480	519	557	594	630	664	695	723
Northern America.....	172	187	204	220	232	243	255	268	283	298	314	328	342	356	370	384	396
Oceania.....	13	14	16	17	19	21	23	24	26	29	31	32	34	36	38	40	42
<i>Percentage urban</i>																	
World.....	29.8	31.7	33.7	35.5	36.8	37.9	39.6	41.5	43.5	45.3	47.2	49.3	51.5	53.7	55.9	58.1	60.2
Africa.....	14.7	16.5	18.5	20.8	23.1	25.2	27.4	29.6	31.8	34.5	37.2	40.0	42.7	45.3	47.9	50.4	52.9
Asia.....	17.4	19.0	20.8	22.4	23.4	24.7	26.9	29.4	32.3	34.8	37.5	40.2	43.0	45.9	48.7	51.4	54.1
Europe.....	52.4	55.1	58.0	61.3	64.6	67.3	69.4	70.9	72.1	72.9	73.4	74.2	75.1	76.3	77.6	79.1	80.5
Latin America and the Caribbean.....	41.9	45.7	49.5	53.6	57.6	61.4	65.1	68.1	71.1	73.3	75.4	77.4	79.0	80.5	81.8	83.0	84.0
Northern America.....	63.9	67.0	69.9	72.0	73.8	73.8	73.9	74.7	75.4	76.3	77.4	78.5	79.8	81.1	82.3	83.5	84.5
Oceania.....	61.6	64.1	66.6	68.9	71.2	72.2	71.6	71.1	70.8	72.4	74.1	75.1	75.7	76.1	76.4	76.8	77.3

though it is expected to reach nearly 2.4 billion in 2015, it will likely decline to slightly less than 2.3 billion by 2030. Latin America and the Caribbean is expected to see its rural population drop from 127 million in 2000 to 116 million in 2030, or about 9 per cent. In Northern America, the rural population is likely to decline by 14 per cent during 2000-2030, from 71 million to 61 million. The decline of the rural population in Europe is expected to be more marked, amounting to 32 per cent (from 193 million to 131 million).

Changes in the size of the rural population of the major areas will result in a significant redistri-

bution of the rural population of the world by major area. As table 18 shows, Europe's share of the rural population, which has already dropped from 14.8 per cent in 1950 to 6 per cent in 2000, is expected to fall to 4 per cent in 2030. The share of Northern America will also be cut significantly, from 3.5 per cent in 1950 to 2.2 per cent in 2000 and 1.9 per cent in 2030. Latin America and the Caribbean will also see its share drop by two percentage points, from 5.5 per cent in 1950 to 4 per cent in 2000 and 3.5 per cent in 2030. Meanwhile, the shares of Africa and Asia will both increase markedly. By 2030, Africa is expected to be the home of 21.3 per cent of the world's rural

TABLE 18. KEY INDICATORS OF THE EVOLUTION OF THE URBAN AND RURAL POPULATION OF MAJOR AREAS, 1950, 2000 AND 2030

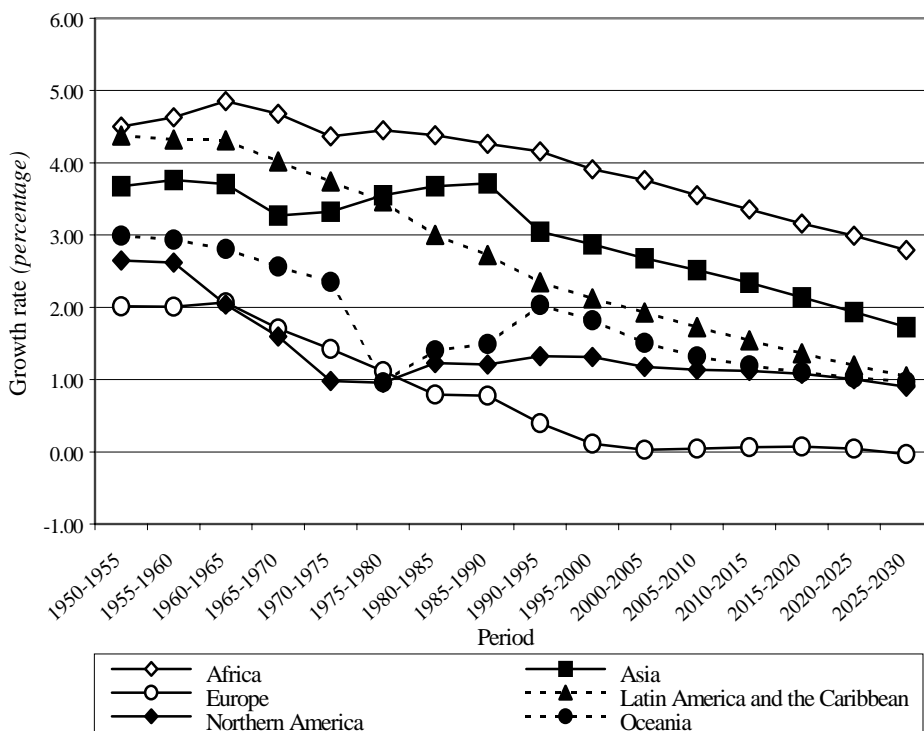
Major area	Population (millions)			Percentage distribution			Growth rate (percentage)	
	1950	2000	2030	1950	2000	2030	1950-2000	2000-2030
<i>A. Urban population</i>								
World.....	751	2 862	4 981	100.0	100.0	100.0	2.68	1.85
Africa.....	32	295	787	4.3	10.3	15.8	4.42	3.27
Asia	244	1 376	2 679	32.5	48.1	53.8	3.46	2.22
Europe	287	534	540	38.3	18.7	10.8	1.24	0.04
Latin America and the Caribbean	70	391	608	9.3	13.7	12.2	3.44	1.47
Northern America.....	110	243	335	14.6	8.5	6.7	1.59	1.07
Oceania.....	8	23	32	1.0	0.8	0.6	2.14	1.19
<i>B. Rural population</i>								
World.....	1 769	3 195	3 289	100.0	100.0	100.0	1.18	0.10
Africa.....	188	498	702	10.7	15.6	21.3	1.94	1.14
Asia	1 155	2 297	2 271	65.3	71.9	69.0	1.37	-0.04
Europe	261	193	131	14.8	6.0	4.0	-0.60	-1.31
Latin America and the Caribbean	97	127	116	5.5	4.0	3.5	0.55	-0.33
Northern America.....	62	71	61	3.5	2.2	1.9	0.28	-0.49
Oceania.....	5	8	10	0.3	0.2	0.3	0.98	0.61
<i>C. Total population</i>								
World.....	2 519	6 057	8 270	100.0	100.0	100.0	1.75	1.04
Africa.....	221	794	1 489	8.8	13.1	18.0	2.56	2.10
Asia	1 399	3 672	4 950	55.5	60.6	59.8	1.93	0.99
Europe	548	727	670	21.8	12.0	8.1	0.57	-0.27
Latin America and the Caribbean	167	519	723	6.6	8.6	8.7	2.27	1.11
Northern America.....	172	314	396	6.8	5.2	4.8	1.21	0.77
Oceania.....	13	31	42	0.5	0.5	0.5	1.77	1.05

population, double its share in 1950 (10.7 per cent); and Asia will remain the home for the vast majority of the world's rural dwellers. By 2030, 69 per cent of the rural population will live in Asia, somewhat less than the proportion of the rural population living in Asia today (72 per cent) but higher than its share in 1950 (65 per cent).

The redistribution of the world urban population over time parallels in many ways that of the rural population. As table 16 indicates, the relative urban growth rates across major areas tend to be similar to the rural growth rates. Africa, for instance, has experienced and is expected to continue to experience the highest urban and rural growth rates. Asia has experienced the second highest rates of urban and rural population growth. It is followed by Oceania in terms of rural population growth and by Latin America and the Caribbean in terms of urban growth. At the other extreme, Europe has had and is expected to have the lowest rates of both urban and rural population growth. As figure 11 shows, variations in the urban growth rate over time echo, as expected, those

of the rate of urbanization, since they are a function of that measure and the overall rate of population growth. Africa's rate of urban population growth has thus been very high, averaging 4.4 per cent per year during 1950-2000 and it is expected to remain above 3 per cent per year over most of the projection period. The urban growth rate of Latin America and the Caribbean was close to that of Africa in 1950-1955, but has declined rapidly, reaching 2.1 per cent in 1995-2000 and being expected to drop to 1 per cent by 2025-2030 (table 16). In Asia, the urban growth rate shows the fluctuations associated with the urbanization trends experienced by China and remained high, averaging 3.5 per cent per year during 1950-2000 (table 18). By 1995-2000, the urban growth rate in Asia stood at 2.9 per cent per year, and is expected to decline to 1.7 per cent by 2025-2030. In Europe, Northern America and Oceania, urban growth rates declined markedly between approximately 1960 and 1980, during the period of counter-urbanization, but recovered in both Northern America and Oceania in 1980-2000, though in Europe they kept declining. As a result, by 1995-

Figure 11. Growth rate of the urban population of the major areas, 1950-2030



2000, the urban population of Europe was growing at just 0.1 per cent per year, whereas those of Northern America and Oceania were rising at 1.3 per cent and 1.8 per cent per year, respectively. Further reductions of the urban growth rate are projected for these three major areas so that by 2025-2030 the urban population of Europe will be starting to decline slowly, while those of Northern America and Oceania will be growing at annual rates of 0.9 per cent and 1 per cent respectively.

The rapid urban growth experienced by the major areas of the developing world has resulted in large numbers of urban dwellers. Africa's urban population increased nine-fold between 1950 and 2000, rising from 32 million to 295 million in half a century (table 18). The urban populations of Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean increased by more than five-fold each, from 244 million to 1.4 billion in Asia, and from 70 million to 391 million in Latin America and the Caribbean. The number of urban dwellers in Northern America more than doubled (from 110 million to 243 million), while that in Oceania tripled (from 8 million to 23 million). Even the urban population of Europe, whose growth rates were low, increased by 90 per cent, from 287 to 534 million. Given the large differences in urban growth rates across areas, a significant redistribution of the world's urban population resulted: Africa's share more than doubled, from 4.3 per cent in 1950 to 10.3 per cent in 2000; Asia gained 15 percentage points, from 32.5 per cent to 48.1 per cent; and the share of Latin America and the Caribbean rose from 9.3 per cent to 13.7 per cent. Meanwhile, the shares of Europe and Northern America fell, from 38.3 per cent to 18.7 per cent in Europe (by half) and from 14.6 per cent to 8.5 per cent in Northern America.

Over the next thirty years, expected differences in urban population growth will accentuate the redistribution of the urban population that begun during 1950-2000. Africa's urban population will increase by another 2.6 times between 2000 and 2030, and Asia's will nearly double. With 787 million urban dwellers in 2030, Africa will have 16 per cent of the total world urban population, while Asia will have 54 per cent, or 2.7 billion persons. Between the two, they will

account for nearly 70 per cent of the urban population of the world. All other major areas are expected to see their shares of the world urban population decline, even though their urban populations are all projected to increase substantially. The urban population of Latin America and the Caribbean will increase by over half, from 391 million in 2000 to 608 million in 2030, but its share will decline from 14 per cent to 12 per cent. The share of Northern America is expected to decline from 8.5 per cent to 6.7 per cent although its urban population will likely increase by 30 per cent. But the largest reduction expected is in Europe's share, which will decrease from 18.7 per cent to 10.8 per cent between 2000 and 2030 as a result of its low urban population growth (table 18).

Given their high urban growth rates and their growing shares of the world urban population, Africa and Asia account for a large proportion of the increment of the urban population. During 1950-2000, 66.1 per cent of the 42.2 million persons that were added annually to the urban population of the world were in Africa and Asia (table 19). And the shares of both are expected to increase over the next thirty years, with Asia alone accounting for 61.5 per cent of the total annual increment to the world urban population while Africa will account for 23.2 per cent. That is, Africa and Asia will together absorb nearly 85 per cent of the average annual increase of the urban population over the next thirty years (or about 60 million persons annually). All other major

TABLE 19. AVERAGE ANNUAL INCREMENT OF THE URBAN POPULATION AND ITS DISTRIBUTION AMONG MAJOR AREAS, 1950-2000 AND 2000-2030

Major area	Annual increment to the urban population (millions)		Percentage distribution of annual increment	
	1950- 2000	2000- 2030	1950- 2000	2000- 2030
World	42.2	70.6	100.0	100.0
Africa.....	5.3	16.4	12.5	23.2
Asia	22.6	43.4	53.6	61.5
Europe	4.9	0.2	11.7	0.3
Latin America and the Caribbean.....	6.4	7.2	15.2	10.2
Northern America.....	2.7	3.1	6.3	4.3
Oceania.....	0.3	0.3	0.7	0.5

areas will see their shares of the average annual increment to the urban population decline. In Latin America and the Caribbean, Oceania and Northern America the magnitude of the reductions expected is around a third in each case. Europe is expected to see its future share of the average annual increment of the urban population reduced to almost nothing.

The rapid growth of the urban populations of Africa, Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean combined with the expected reductions of population growth in rural areas has important implications for the geographical distribution of population growth. Between 1950 and 2000, the average annual increment of the urban population of Asia accounted for 32 per cent of the average annual increment of the total population of the world, which is estimated at 71 million. During 2000-

2030, when the world population is expected to increase annually by about 74 million persons, the urban areas of Asia will account for 59 per cent of that increment. Similarly, the share accounted for by the growth of the urban population of Africa will increase markedly, from 7.5 per cent of the average annual population increment in 1950-2000 to 22 per cent of that expected during 2000-2030. Consequently, between 2000 and 2030, the urban areas of Asia and Africa will together absorb 81 per cent of the increment in the total world population. Since the growth of the urban areas of Latin America and the Caribbean will account for a further 10 per cent, these results imply that almost all of the population growth expected over the next thirty years (91 per cent) will be concentrated in the cities and towns of Africa, Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean.