

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

The marked differences in urbanization trends among major areas discussed in chapter II become more varied when the focus is on the 21 regions that constitute them. In Oceania, for instance, Australia/New Zealand, the most urbanized region of the world, with 90 per cent of its population urban in 2000, coexists with Melanesia, the least urbanized region of the world, with barely 24 per cent urban (table 20). In Europe, Northern Europe and Western Europe are among the most highly urbanized regions with more than 83 per cent of their respective populations urban, but Eastern Europe and Southern Europe have significantly lower levels of urbanization, at 68 per cent and 66 per cent, respectively. In the Americas, South America, with nearly 80 per cent of its population urban, has a slightly higher level of urbanization than Northern America (77 per cent urban), but Central America (which is dominated statistically by Mexico) and the Caribbean are less urbanized (68 per cent and 63 per cent respectively). Nevertheless, in all the regions of Europe and the Americas, urbanization is high, having a proportion urban at or above 63 per cent. In Africa and Asia by contrast, only Western Asia, with 65 per cent of its population urban, has reached a level of urbanization similar to those in Europe or the Americas. Northern Africa and Southern Africa have moderate levels of urbanization, at around 50 per cent each, but they are considerably higher than in the other regions of Africa and Asia. Eastern Africa, with about a quarter of its population urban, and South-central Asia with barely 30 per cent of the population urban are among the least urbanized regions of the world.

With low levels of urbanization and large populations, regions of Asia account for most of the rural population of the world. Nearly a third of all rural inhabitants in the world live in South-central Asia, with another 27 per cent in Eastern Asia and 10 per cent in South-eastern Asia. Thus, in 2000 almost 7 out of every 10 rural dwellers lived in those three regions, a proportion that is expected to fall only slightly during 2000-2030. As noted in

chapter II, most major areas of the world, and therefore most regions within them, are expected to begin experiencing a reduction of the rural population at some point during 2000-2030.

The urban population of the world 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 and together account for 37 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, each with 5 per cent to 10 per cent of the world total. But even 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 the same share, but will include Western Asia and Western Africa instead of Eastern Europe and Western Europe. In fact, during 2000-2030 the urban populations of all regions of Europe are expected to increase little if at all, with the urban population of Eastern Europe being expected to decline. The urban populations of all other regions, with the only exception of Australia/New Zealand, are expected to grow at more than 1 per cent per year and very rapid growth, at more than 3 per cent per year, is expected in Eastern Africa, Middle Africa, Western Africa and Melanesia.

A. URBAN POPULATION GROWTH

In 1950, the most urbanized regions of the world were those of Europe plus Australia/New Zealand, Northern America and South America. 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 only

TABLE 20. INDICATORS OF URBANIZATION FOR 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
Africa												
Eastern Africa.....	3	61	207	5.3	24.5	41.8	5.77	4.05	2.69	2.27	3.08	1.77
Middle Africa	4	34	120	14.2	35.5	52.7	4.41	4.21	2.58	2.89	1.83	1.32
Northern Africa	13	85	166	24.7	48.9	63.3	3.74	2.23	2.37	1.37	1.37	0.86
Southern Africa	6	27	37	38.2	53.9	70.0	3.00	1.05	2.31	0.18	0.69	0.87
Western Africa	6	88	258	10.1	39.3	57.1	5.33	3.58	2.62	2.34	2.71	1.25
Asia												
Eastern Asia.....	121	617	1 065	18.0	41.6	62.7	3.25	1.82	1.58	0.46	1.67	1.36
South-central Asia	83	441	969	16.6	29.8	44.0	3.34	2.62	2.18	1.32	1.16	1.30
South-eastern Asia.....	26	196	407	14.8	37.5	56.5	4.02	2.44	2.15	1.07	1.87	1.36
Western Asia	13	122	238	26.7	64.7	72.4	4.41	2.23	2.64	1.85	1.77	0.38
Europe												
Eastern Europe	87	208	194	39.3	68.2	75.3	1.75	-0.22	0.65	-0.55	1.10	0.33
Northern Europe	57	79	84	72.7	83.1	87.2	0.66	0.22	0.39	0.06	0.27	0.16
Southern Europe	48	96	102	44.2	66.3	76.1	1.38	0.19	0.57	-0.27	0.81	0.46
Western Europe	96	151	159	67.9	82.6	87.6	0.92	0.18	0.52	-0.02	0.39	0.20
Latin America and the Caribbean												
Caribbean	6	24	35	35.5	63.1	73.5	2.75	1.26	1.60	0.75	1.15	0.51
Central America	15	92	151	39.8	68.2	77.1	3.67	1.65	2.59	1.24	1.08	0.41
South America.....	49	275	422	43.6	79.6	87.9	3.44	1.42	2.24	1.09	1.21	0.33
Northern America.....	110	243	335	63.9	77.4	84.5	1.59	1.07	1.21	0.77	0.38	0.30
Oceania												
Australia/New Zealand	8	21	27	74.6	89.9	94.9	2.01	0.92	1.63	0.74	0.37	0.18
Melanesia	0.1	1.5	4.2	5.9	23.7	36.3	5.04	3.32	2.25	1.89	2.79	1.43
Micronesia.....	0.04	0.2	0.5	25.8	43.6	57.8	3.48	2.76	2.44	1.82	1.05	0.94
Polynesia	0.0	0.2	0.5	21.0	40.2	53.8	3.18	2.10	1.89	1.13	1.29	0.97

18 per cent (tables 20 and 21). In the developing world, large numbers of urban dwellers lived also in South-central Asia, where urbanization levels were low but the total population was large, and in South America, where the level of urbanization was high. But most regions with large numbers of urban dwellers in 1950 were in the developed world: Northern America and the four regions of Europe.

By 2000, only three of the more developed regions remain among the eight with the largest urban populations, each with over 100 million urban residents. These three are Northern America, Eastern Europe and Western Europe (table 21). Thus, South-central Asia has moved to second place, followed by South America. Eastern Asia remains the region with the largest number of urban dwellers and all other regions of Asia are among those having the largest numbers of urban inhabitants. At the other end of the spectrum, the

regions of Oceania have the smallest urban populations, mainly because their overall populations are also small. Among regions with medium-sized urban populations, Central America, with 92 million urban dwellers, has maintained rank number 10, while all the regions of Africa have seen their ranks drop as a result of the rapid growth of the urban populations.

At the end of the projection period the ranks of the three regions with the largest urban populations remain the same as in 2000, but those of Northern America and especially of Eastern Europe increase. Spectacular movements up the list are expected for South-eastern Asia, Western Africa and Eastern Africa. Among the more developed regions, only Northern America is expected to remain among the eight with the largest urban populations, and Western Europe will drop to eleventh place, following Northern Africa. Southern Europe will drop from ninth to fourteenth place.

TABLE 21. 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	121.25	1	Eastern Asia	616.8	1	Eastern Asia	1064.8
2	Northern America	109.66	2	South-central Asia	440.9	2	South-central Asia	968.9
3	Western Europe	95.62	3	South America	275.3	3	South America	421.6
4	Eastern Europe	86.64	4	Northern America	243.0	4	South-eastern Asia	407.2
5	South-central Asia	82.88	5	Eastern Europe	207.6	5	Northern America	335.0
6	Northern Europe	56.80	6	South-eastern Asia	196.0	6	Western Africa	258.1
7	South America	49.22	7	Western Europe	151.3	7	Western Asia	237.8
8	Southern Europe	48.17	8	Western Asia	121.8	8	Eastern Africa	206.7
9	South-eastern Asia	26.30	9	Southern Europe	96.1	9	Eastern Europe	194.2
10	Central America	14.69	10	Central America	92.2	10	Northern Africa	166.2
11	Western Asia	13.41	11	Western Africa	88.1	11	Western Europe	159.5
12	Northern Africa	13.15	12	Northern Africa	85.2	12	Central America	151.1
13	Australia/New Zealand	7.56	13	Northern Europe	79.0	13	Middle Africa	119.6
14	Western Africa	6.12	14	Eastern Africa	61.4	14	Southern Europe	101.7
15	Caribbean	6.04	15	Middle Africa	33.9	15	Northern Europe	84.5
16	Southern Africa	5.96	16	Southern Africa	26.7	16	Southern Africa	36.6
17	Middle Africa	3.74	17	Caribbean	23.9	17	Caribbean	35.0
18	Eastern Africa	3.44	18	Australia/New Zealand	20.6	18	Australia/New Zealand	27.1
19	Melanesia	0.12	19	Melanesia	1.5	19	Melanesia	4.2
20	Polynesia	0.05	20	Polynesia	0.2	20	Micronesia	0.5
21	Micronesia	0.04	21	Micronesia	0.2	21	Polynesia	0.5

Changes in the ranks of regions according to urban population size result from differences in growth rates in the past and expected differences over the projection period. Between 1950 and 2000, the urban populations of less developed regions have grown faster than those of more developed regions, with the highest rates of urban population growth recorded in the regions of Africa (with the exception of Southern Africa), Melanesia, Western Asia and South-eastern Asia (table 22). Urban growth rates in these seven regions during 1950-2000 ranged from 3.7 per cent per year in Northern Africa to 5.8 per cent per year in Eastern Africa. Eastern Africa, Western Africa and Melanesia all experienced 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 61 million in 2000, and that of Western Africa increased nearly fifteen-fold, rising from 6 million in 1950 to 88 million in 2000. Yet, despite its rapid urban

population growth, Eastern Africa remains among the least urbanized regions of the world, with just 25 per cent of its population living in urban areas in 2000, and Western Africa has reached a proportion urban of only 39 per cent. As table 22 indicates, the same two regions are expected to continue having the highest rates of urban population growth so that, by 2030, their overall urban population will likely amount to 465 million, larger than the urban population expected for Eastern and Western Europe combined (table 20). Middle Africa also experienced fast urban population growth during 1950-2000, at an annual rate of 4.4 per cent. Its urban population is expected to experience the most rapid increase of any region during 2000-2030 (at 4.2 per cent per year), to reach 120 million in 2030, or more than that expected for Southern Europe.

As table 22 shows, the two regions of Asia that had the highest annual rates of urban population

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	5.77	1	Middle Africa	4.21
2	Western Africa	5.33	2	Eastern Africa	4.05
3	Melanesia	5.04	3	Western Africa	3.58
4	Western Asia	4.41	4	Melanesia	3.32
5	Middle Africa	4.41	5	Micronesia	2.76
6	South-eastern Asia	4.02	6	South-central Asia	2.62
7	Northern Africa	3.74	7	South-eastern Asia	2.44
8	Central America	3.67	8	Western Asia	2.23
9	Micronesia	3.48	9	Northern Africa	2.23
10	South America	3.44	10	Polynesia	2.10
11	South-central Asia	3.34	11	Eastern Asia	1.82
12	Eastern Asia	3.25	12	Central America	1.65
13	Polynesia	3.18	13	South America	1.42
14	Southern Africa	3.00	14	Caribbean	1.26
15	Caribbean	2.75	15	Northern America	1.07
16	Australia/New Zealand	2.01	16	Southern Africa	1.05
17	Eastern Europe	1.75	17	Australia/New Zealand	0.92
18	Northern America	1.59	18	Northern Europe	0.22
19	Southern Europe	1.38	19	Southern Europe	0.19
20	Western Europe	0.92	20	Western Europe	0.18
21	Northern Europe	0.66	21	Eastern Europe	-0.22

growth during 1950-2000 were Western Asia and South-eastern Asia, at 4.4 and 4 per cent, respectively. Between 1950 and 2000, the urban population of South-eastern Asia rose almost eight-fold, from 26 million to 196 million, while that of Western Asia rose nine-fold, from 13 million to 122 million. Even though the rates of urban population growth are expected to decline substantially in both regions, the sizes of the urban populations already attained by 2000 ensures 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 407 million urban dwellers in 2030, while Western Asia, whose rate of urban population growth is expected to drop by half (to 2.2 per cent per year), will likely attain 238 million urban dwellers. These two regions combined will have more urban dwellers than the whole of Europe.

Rapid urban growth has also occurred in Northern Africa, the second most urbanized region of Africa today. Growing at 3.7 per cent per year, its urban population increased from 13 million to 85 million between 1950 and 2000, and although its projected growth rate is expected to fall by 40 per cent to 2.2 per cent per year, its urban population is projected to rise to 166 million in 2030.

Southern Africa experienced the slowest rate of urban population growth of Africa during 1950-2000, at 3 per cent per year (table 22). This relatively low urban growth rate was related to the fact that Southern Africa was the most urbanized area of Africa in 1950 and experienced therefore a slower rate of urbanization than the rest of the continent. In addition, overall population growth has been slower in Southern Africa than in the rest of Africa because its fertility started to decline earlier than in other regions of the continent. More recently, increasing mortality stemming from the high prevalence of HIV/AIDS has also contributed to maintain a low overall rate of population growth. In the future, Southern Africa is expected to remain the most urbanized region of Africa, with its proportion urban rising from 54 per cent in 2000 to 70 per cent in 2030. Its urban population, which stood at 27 million in 2000, is expected to rise at an annual rate of 1 per cent, to reach 37 million in 2030.

Central America and South America had relatively moderate urban population growth rates of 3.7 per cent and 3.4 per cent per year during 1950-2000. As a result, their urban populations—already moderate in size in 1950—increased considerably, to 92 million in Central America and 275 million in South America by 2000. Although the urban growth rates expected for both regions during 2000-2030 will be markedly lower than those of regions discussed above (1.7 per cent for Central America and 1.4 for South America), the large population base already attained means that the absolute increases will be sizable. Thus, Central America's urban population is expected to reach 151 million and that of South America 422 million by 2030. Note that urban growth in the Caribbean was lower than in the two regions of Latin America during 1950-2000 (at 2.8 per cent per year), and will likely continue to be lower in the future (at 1.3 per cent in 2000-2030). Nevertheless, its urban population increased four-fold from 1950 to 2000 (from 6 million to 24 million) and is expected to rise by about half over the next thirty years to reach 35 million urban inhabitants.

Fast urban growth has occurred in Melanesia, along with moderate growth in Micronesia and Polynesia. All three regions are likely to continue experiencing fairly rapid urban growth in the future, with the urban population of each expected to grow about two and a half times between 2000 and 2030. Given their small urban populations, the numbers involved are small. However, since most of the countries or areas in these regions are small islands, the rapid urban growth expected may strain available resources.

Eastern Asia, and South-central Asia had moderately high urban growth rates during 1950-2000, and have the two largest urban populations in the world, at 617 and 441 million, respectively. Given the large total populations of these regions and their potential for future urban growth because of their low-to-moderate levels of urbanization, they will both continue to have the largest urban populations in the world. However, they are expected to differ considerably with regard to their expected future rates of urban population growth. South-central Asia, whose urban population is estimated to have grown at 3.3 per cent per year

during 1950-2000, is expected to have an average annual urban growth rate of 2.6 per cent during 2000-2030, whereas Eastern Asia, whose rate of urban growth in the past half century was 3.2 per cent, is expected to see its urban growth rate decline to 1.8 per cent per year. As a result of the considerable difference of their respective urban population growth rates, by 2030 South-central Asia will have an urban population almost close in size to that of Eastern Asia (969 million versus 1,065 million).

The regions with the lowest rates of urban population growth during 1950-2000 are those in the more developed world (table 22). Among them, Australia/New Zealand had the highest urban growth rate, at 2 per cent per year. At the other extreme, the urban populations of Western Europe and Northern Europe grew at rates lower than one per cent per year. The rates of growth of the remaining areas of Europe and Northern America were intermediate, ranging from 1.4 per cent per year to 1.8 per cent per year. During 2000-2030, average urban growth rates in all the more developed regions will be below 1.1 per cent per year, with those of all regions of Europe staying below 0.25 per cent per year. In contrast, the urban populations of Australia/New Zealand and Northern America are expected to grow at rates close to one per cent per year. As a result of these divergent trends, the urban populations of Northern America and Australia/New Zealand are expected to increase by about a third (from 21 million to 27 million in Australia/New Zealand, and from 243 million to 335 million in Northern America), whereas the urban populations of the regions of Europe will barely change or, as in the case of Eastern Europe, may experience a slight decline by 2030. The slow growth of the urban population of the regions of Europe results partly from the expected reduction of their overall populations.

The different patterns of urban growth at the regional level lead to changes in the distribution of the world's urban population among the regions. As table 23 shows, the major change in the distribution took place between 1950 and 2000, when the share of Eastern Asia rose from 16 per cent to 22 per cent, that of South-central Asia from 11 to 15 per cent, and that of South America from 7 per cent to nearly 10 per cent. The next

thirty years are expected to see only small changes in the shares of the different regions, with the share of the two largest together rising from 37 per cent in 2000 to 41 per cent in 2030. The combined shares of Eastern, Western and Middle Africa will all rise significantly, from 6.4 per cent in 2000 to 11.7 per cent in 2030. Concomitantly, the joint shares of Northern America and all four regions of Europe, which in 1950 accounted for 53 per cent of the world's urban population, declined to 27 per cent in 2000 and will likely drop to only 17.5 per cent by 2030. Among the less developed regions, all those in Latin America and the Caribbean as well as Southern Africa are expected to see their shares decrease during 2000-2030.

B. RURAL POPULATION GROWTH

Echoing the differences among regions in urban population growth, differences in the growth rates of rural populations across regions are also large. In addition, the regions of Africa and the less developed regions of Oceania had the highest rural growth rates, while those of Europe and Australia/New Zealand were negative in the past half century (table 24). But there is considerable diversity within major areas, especially within Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Oceania.

During 1950-2000 and until 2030, Eastern Asia and South-central Asia have had and will continue having the highest numbers of rural inhabitants among all world regions (table 25). But, whereas Eastern Asia started with the largest rural population in 1950 (551 million), its modest rate of rural population growth during 1950-2000 (0.9 per cent per year), which was about half that experienced by the rural population of South-central Asia (1.8 per cent per year), has led to a reversal of ranks among the two regions, so that by 2000 South-central Asia ranked first with a rural population of 1,040 million and Eastern Asia second with 864 million. During 2000-2030, the rural population of South-central Asia is expected to continue growing at about 0.6 per cent per year, but that of Eastern Asia is expected to decline at a rate of about -1 per cent per year. As a result, the rural population of South-central Asia will be virtually double that of Eastern Asia by 2030, a

TABLE 23. 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	21.6	21.6	1	Eastern Asia	21.4	21.4
2	Northern America	14.6	30.8	2	South-central Asia	15.4	37.0	2	South-central Asia	19.5	40.8
3	Western Europe	12.7	43.5	3	South America	9.6	46.6	3	South America	8.5	49.3
4	Eastern Europe	11.5	55.0	4	Northern America	8.5	55.1	4	South-eastern Asia	8.2	57.5
5	South-central Asia	11.0	66.1	5	Eastern Europe	7.3	62.3	5	Northern America	6.7	64.2
6	Northern Europe	7.6	73.6	6	South-eastern Asia	6.8	69.2	6	Western Africa	5.2	69.4
7	South America	6.6	80.2	7	Western Europe	5.3	74.5	7	Western Asia	4.8	74.2
8	Southern Europe	6.4	86.6	8	Western Asia	4.3	78.7	8	Eastern Africa	4.1	78.3
9	South-eastern Asia	3.5	90.1	9	Southern Europe	3.4	82.1	9	Eastern Europe	3.9	82.2
10	Central America	2.0	92.1	10	Central America	3.2	85.3	10	Northern Africa	3.3	85.5
11	Western Asia	1.8	93.8	11	Western Africa	3.1	88.4	11	Western Europe	3.2	88.7
12	Northern Africa	1.8	95.6	12	Northern Africa	3.0	91.3	12	Central America	3.0	91.8
13	Australia/New Zealand	1.0	96.6	13	Northern Europe	2.8	94.1	13	Middle Africa	2.4	94.2
14	Western Africa	0.8	97.4	14	Eastern Africa	2.1	96.3	14	Southern Europe	2.0	96.2
15	Caribbean	0.8	98.2	15	Middle Africa	1.2	97.4	15	Northern Europe	1.7	97.9
16	Southern Africa	0.8	99.0	16	Southern Africa	0.9	98.4	16	Southern Africa	0.7	98.7
17	Middle Africa	0.5	99.5	17	Caribbean	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 (millions)			Rural rate of growth (percentage)	
	1950	2000	2030	1950-2000	2000-2030
Eastern Africa.....	61.8	188.9	288.0	2.23	1.41
Middle Africa.....	22.6	61.5	107.3	2.01	1.85
Northern Africa.....	40.2	89.0	96.6	1.59	0.27
Southern Africa.....	9.6	22.8	15.7	1.73	-1.25
Western Africa.....	54.3	136.1	194.1	1.84	1.18
Eastern Asia.....	551.2	864.2	633.3	0.90	-1.04
South-central Asia.....	415.5	1 040.0	1 233.9	1.84	0.57
South-eastern Asia.....	151.8	326.1	313.3	1.53	-0.13
Western Asia.....	36.8	66.5	90.5	1.18	1.03
Eastern Europe.....	133.6	96.6	63.8	-0.65	-1.38
Northern Europe.....	21.3	16.1	12.4	-0.56	-0.87
Southern Europe.....	60.8	48.8	31.9	-0.44	-1.42
Western Europe.....	45.3	31.8	22.5	-0.71	-1.15
Caribbean.....	11.0	14.0	12.6	0.49	-0.35
Central America.....	22.3	43.0	44.9	1.32	0.15
South America.....	63.8	70.5	58.0	0.20	-0.65
Northern America.....	62.0	71.1	61.3	0.28	-0.49
Australia/New Zealand.....	2.6	2.3	1.5	-0.21	-1.55
Melanesia.....	2.0	5.0	7.3	1.83	1.29
Micronesia.....	0.1	0.3	0.4	1.89	0.85
Polynesia.....	0.2	0.4	0.4	1.33	0.27

dramatic change from their relative shares in 1950 or even in 2000.

South-eastern Asia, with 152 million rural inhabitants in 1950 to 326 million in 2000, has ranked third in terms of rural population size since 1950. Although its rural population is expected to decline slowly during 2000-2030 to reach 313 million in 2030, the region will maintain its third place until that time. Consequently, between 1950 and 2030, Eastern Asia, South-central Asia and South-eastern Asia have accounted and will continue to account for most of the rural population of the world: 63 per cent in 1950, 70 per cent in 2000 and 66 per cent in 2030.

As table 25 shows, there is also considerable stability in terms of the regions with the lowest

numbers of rural inhabitants: they are all in Oceania. Perhaps the most interesting development within that group is that, whereas the rural population of Australia/New Zealand was the largest in the group in 1950, by 2000 it was surpassed by that of Melanesia. Indeed, the low rural population growth rates of 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 population growth rates that are among the highest in the world (table 26). Nevertheless, the small population base of those regions implies that their share of the world rural population will remain very low (around 0.3 per cent).

In contrast with the rankings in terms of rural population size of the three largest regions of Asia

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	551.2	31.2	31.2	1	South-central Asia	1 040.0	32.6	32.6	1	South-central Asia	1 233.9	37.5	37.5
2	South-central Asia	415.5	23.5	54.7	2	Eastern Asia	864.2	27.0	59.6	2	Eastern Asia	633.3	19.3	56.8
3	South-eastern Asia	151.8	8.6	63.2	3	South-eastern Asia	326.1	10.2	69.8	3	South-eastern Asia	313.3	9.5	66.3
4	Eastern Europe	133.6	7.6	70.8	4	Eastern Africa	188.9	5.9	75.7	4	Eastern Africa	288.0	8.8	75.0
5	South America	63.8	3.6	74.4	5	Western Africa	136.1	4.3	80.0	5	Western Africa	194.1	5.9	80.9
6	Northern America	62.0	3.5	77.9	6	Eastern Europe	96.6	3.0	83.0	6	Middle Africa	107.3	3.3	84.2
7	Eastern Africa	61.8	3.5	81.4	7	Northern Africa	89.0	2.8	85.8	7	Northern Africa	96.6	2.9	87.1
8	Southern Europe	60.8	3.4	84.8	8	Northern America	71.1	2.2	88.0	8	Western Asia	90.5	2.8	89.9
9	Western Africa	54.3	3.1	87.9	9	South America	70.5	2.2	90.2	9	Eastern Europe	63.8	1.9	91.8
10	Western Europe	45.3	2.6	90.5	10	Western Asia	66.5	2.1	92.3	10	Northern America	61.3	1.9	93.7
11	Northern Africa	40.2	2.3	92.7	11	Middle Africa	61.5	1.9	94.2	11	South America	58.0	1.8	95.5
12	Western Asia	36.8	2.1	94.8	12	Southern Europe	48.8	1.5	95.8	12	Central America	44.9	1.4	96.8
13	Middle Africa	22.6	1.3	96.1	13	Central America	43.0	1.3	97.1	13	Southern Europe	31.9	1.0	97.8
14	Central America	22.3	1.3	97.4	14	Western Europe	31.8	1.0	98.1	14	Western Europe	22.5	0.7	98.5
15	Northern Europe	21.3	1.2	98.6	15	Southern Africa	22.8	0.7	98.8	15	Southern Africa	15.7	0.5	99.0
16	Caribbean	11.0	0.6	99.2	16	Northern Europe	16.1	0.5	99.3	16	Caribbean	12.6	0.4	99.3
17	Southern Africa	9.6	0.5	99.7	17	Caribbean	14.0	0.4	99.8	17	Northern Europe	12.4	0.4	99.7
18	Australia/New Zealand	2.6	0.1	99.9	18	Melanesia	4.9	0.2	99.9	18	Melanesia	7.3	0.2	99.9
19	Melanesia	2.0	0.1	100.0	19	Australia/New Zealand	2.3	0.1	100.0	19	Australia/New Zealand	1.5	0.0	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

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

<i>Rank</i>	<i>Region</i>	<i>Rural growth rate (percentage) 1950-2000</i>	<i>Rank</i>	<i>Region</i>	<i>Rural growth rate (percentage) 2000-2030</i>
1	Eastern Africa	2.23	1	Middle Africa	1.85
2	Middle Africa	2.01	2	Eastern Africa	1.41
3	Micronesia	1.89	3	Melanesia	1.29
4	Western Africa	1.84	4	Western Africa	1.18
5	South-central Asia	1.84	5	Western Asia	1.03
6	Melanesia	1.83	6	Micronesia	0.85
7	Southern Africa	1.73	7	South-central Asia	0.57
8	Northern Africa	1.59	8	Northern Africa	0.27
9	South-eastern Asia	1.53	9	Polynesia	0.27
10	Polynesia	1.33	10	Central America	0.15
11	Central America	1.32	11	South-eastern Asia	-0.13
12	Western Asia	1.18	12	Caribbean	-0.35
13	Eastern Asia	0.90	13	Northern America	-0.49
14	Caribbean	0.49	14	South America	-0.65
15	Northern America	0.28	15	Northern Europe	-0.87
16	South America	0.20	16	Eastern Asia	-1.04
17	Australia/New Zealand	-0.21	17	Western Europe	-1.15
18	Southern Europe	-0.44	18	Southern Africa	-1.25
19	Northern Europe	-0.56	19	Eastern Europe	-1.38
20	Eastern Europe	-0.65	20	Southern Europe	-1.42
21	Western Europe	-0.71	21	Australia/New Zealand	-1.55

and those of Oceania, the relative ranks of all other regions have changed considerably (table 25). Thus in 1950, the rural populations of Eastern Europe, South America and Northern America ranked fourth, fifth and sixth, but by 2000 they all had dropped considerably because of the slow or even negative growth of their rural populations. In Eastern Europe, the rural population declined by a third, from 134 million in 1950 to 97 million in 2000, reflecting the second lowest rate of rural population growth in the world during 1950-2000, at -0.65 per cent per year (table 26). In comparison, the rural populations of Northern America and South America grew at low but positive rates (0.3 and 0.2 per cent per year, respectively). During 2000-2030 all three regions are expected to experience a reduction in their rural populations, with Eastern Europe's declining at -1.4 per cent per year. As a consequence, the rural population of Eastern Europe, which was fourth in the world

in 1950 and sixth in 2000 is expected to fall to ninth by 2030 (table 25). All other regions of Europe, whose rural populations have been declining and will continue to do so, will account for decreasing proportions of the world's rural population. Future reductions of the rural population in those regions are related both to continuing urbanization and to the expected reduction of the overall population in each region (table 20). In general, therefore, the ranks of the different regions of Europe are expected to increase between 2000 and 2030. The sole exception is Western Europe, whose projected rate of rural population decline is slightly lower than those of Eastern and Southern Europe.

In 1950, the rural populations of the regions of Africa alternated with those of the regions of Europe in terms of size. 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 regions of Africa. But over the next fifty years, the rural populations of the regions of Africa would experience some of the highest rural growth rates in the world while those of the European regions would be negative and among the lowest in the world (table 26). Consequently, by 2000 the rural populations of the African regions moved up the list while those of the European regions moved down (table 25). By 2000, the rural populations of Eastern Africa and Western Africa had become the fourth and fifth largest in the world, with 189 million and 136 million persons, respectively. Both regions are also projected to experience relatively high rates of rural growth during 2000-2030 (table 26). Northern Africa and especially Middle Africa have also moved up in the table as their rural populations increased rapidly. The rural growth rate of Middle Africa has been especially high and will continue to be high (2 per cent per year in 1950-2000 and 1.9 per cent per year in 2000-2030), leading to more than 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 (up from thirteenth in 1950 and eleventh in 2000). As a result of rapid rates of rural population growth, by 2030 these four regions of Africa will follow the three largest regions of Asia in having the highest numbers of rural dwellers. By that time, Eastern Africa, Western Africa, Middle Africa and Northern Africa will account for 21 per cent of the rural population of the world, double the share they had in 1950 (10 per cent).

It is important to underscore that whereas during 1950-2000 only the regions of Europe experienced a reduction in the absolute size of the rural population, during 2000-2030 over half of all regions of the world (11 of the 21) are expected to experience such reductions (table 26). Among the less developed regions, Eastern 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 two regions in Asia and South America have been discussed above. In the Caribbean and Southern Africa negative rural population growth is related to the low rate of in-

crease expected for the total population as well as a sizable increase projected for the proportion urban.

It is also worth noting the wide diversity of rates of rural population growth in the different regions constituting the major areas of the world, a diversity which is expected to intensify in the future (table 26). This diversity makes the general trends discussed at the level of major areas in chapter II seem somewhat simplistic. In Africa, for instance, the annual rates of rural population growth at the regional level range from 1.6 per cent to 2.2 per cent in 1950-2000, and are projected to range from 0.3 per cent in Southern Africa to 1.9 per cent in Middle Africa during 2000-2030. In Asia the range in 1950-2000 was 0.9 per cent to 1.8 per cent, while in 2000-2030 it is expected to be from -1 per cent in Eastern Asia to 1 per cent in Western Asia. In Oceania the range of the rural growth rates in 1950-2000, from -0.2 per cent to 1.9 per cent, is expected to widen to become -1.6 per cent in Australia/New Zealand to 1.3 per cent in Melanesia during 2000-2030; while in Europe the change in the width of the equivalent range is expected to be considerably smaller, from -0.4 per cent to -0.7 per cent in the first period to -0.9 per cent to -1.4 per cent in the second. In the Americas, rural growth rates varied from 0.2 per cent to 1.3 per cent in 1950-2000 and are anticipated to cover a range of -0.6 per cent to 0.15 per cent during 2000-2030.

In sum, with rising urbanization throughout the world, rural population growth has been dampened in every region, and 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 where overall population growth remains robust (mainly Eastern Africa, Middle Africa and Western Africa) will still experience moderate to high rates 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 0.27 per cent per year or lower during 2000-2030 and in 11 it will be negative, including all the regions of Europe, two of the regions of Asia (Eastern Asia and South-eastern Asia), three of the four in the

Americas (excepting only Central 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 larger 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 equal 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 difference between the two.

In 1950 there were already considerable differences among the regions with respect to the level of urbanization. As table 27 indicates, some of the more developed regions had already attained 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 already highly urban. In comparison, the other regions of Europe (Southern Europe with 44 per cent urban or Eastern Europe with 39 per cent urban) and Latin America (Central America with 40 per cent urban and South America with 44 per cent urban) were considerably less urbanized, not to mention most of the regions of Africa, Asia and developing Oceania, where levels of urbanization were generally well below 25 per cent. The one exception is Southern Africa which had 38 per cent of its population urban in 1950.

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

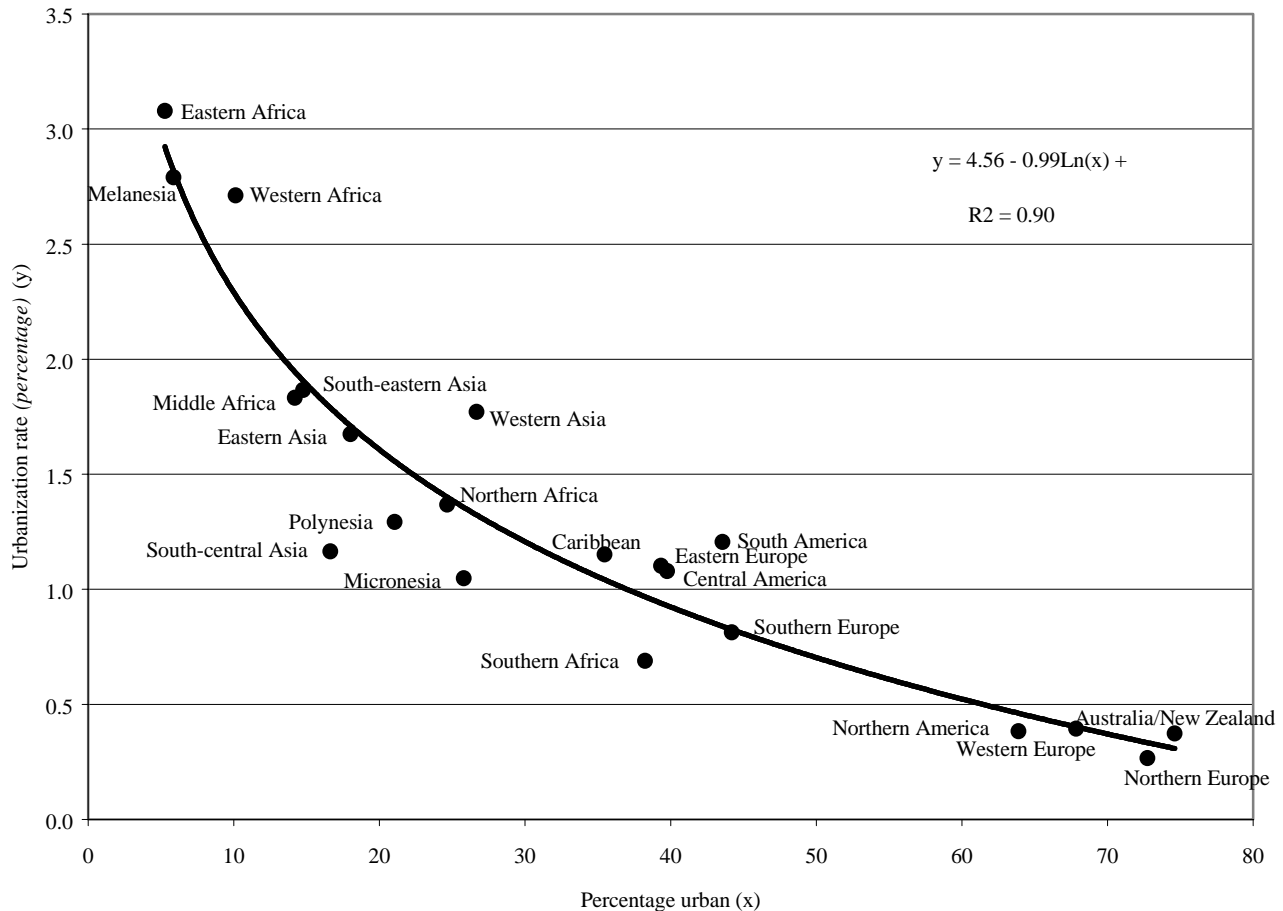
Rank	Region	Percentage urban		Percentage urban		Percentage urban		
		1950	Rank Region	2000	Rank Region	2030	Rank Region	
1	Australia/New Zealand	74.6	1	Australia/New Zealand	89.9	1	Australia/New Zealand	94.9
2	Northern Europe	72.7	2	Northern Europe	83.1	2	South America	87.9
3	Western Europe	67.9	3	Western Europe	82.6	3	Western Europe	87.6
4	Northern America	63.9	4	South America	79.6	4	Northern Europe	87.2
5	Southern Europe	44.2	5	Northern America	77.4	5	Northern America	84.5
6	South America	43.6	6	Eastern Europe	68.2	6	Central America	77.1
7	Central America	39.8	7	Central America	68.2	7	Southern Europe	76.1
8	Eastern Europe	39.3	8	Southern Europe	66.3	8	Eastern Europe	75.3
9	Southern Africa	38.2	9	Western Asia	64.7	9	Caribbean	73.5
10	Caribbean	35.5	10	Caribbean	63.1	10	Western Asia	72.4
11	Western Asia	26.7	11	Southern Africa	53.9	11	Southern Africa	70.0
12	Micronesia	25.8	12	Northern Africa	48.9	12	Northern Africa	63.3
13	Northern Africa	24.7	13	Micronesia	43.6	13	Eastern Asia	62.7
14	Polynesia	21.0	14	Eastern Asia	41.6	14	Micronesia	57.8
15	Eastern Asia	18.0	15	Polynesia	40.2	15	Western Africa	57.1
16	South-central Asia	16.6	16	Western Africa	39.3	16	South-eastern Asia	56.5
17	South-eastern Asia	14.8	17	South-eastern Asia	37.5	17	Polynesia	53.8
18	Middle Africa	14.2	18	Middle Africa	35.5	18	Middle Africa	52.7
19	Western Africa	10.1	19	South-central Asia	29.8	19	South-central Asia	44.0
20	Melanesia	5.9	20	Eastern Africa	24.5	20	Eastern Africa	41.8
21	Eastern Africa	5.3	21	Melanesia	23.7	21	Melanesia	36.3

Between 1950 and 2000, all regions experienced an increase in the proportion urban, but the increase 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 the R^2 indicates, the fitted curve explains 90 per cent of the variance in the observed values, indicating an excellent statistical fit. However, the experience of several regions deviates noticeably from the fitted curve. The best fit is obtained at high levels of urbanization, to the right, where regions with more than 60 per cent of the population living in urban areas experienced very low rates of urbanization during the half century (below 0.4 per cent per year).

zation during the half century (below 0.4 per cent per year).

In the next group of regions to the left, where the percentage urban varied from 35 per cent to 45 per cent, Southern Africa, with a proportion urban of 38 per cent in 1950, had a low rate of urbanization in relation to the fitted or expected value. Constraints on the free movement of people that prevailed in the Republic of South Africa during the period of apartheid are likely to explain much of this diverging experience. Most other regions in this group experienced urbanization rates averaging more than 1 per cent per year, slightly above those expected according to the fitted curve. In the next group to the left, with a proportion urban of 14 per cent to 27 per cent, four regions deviate markedly from the fitted curve: South-central Asia, Melanesia and Polynesia.

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



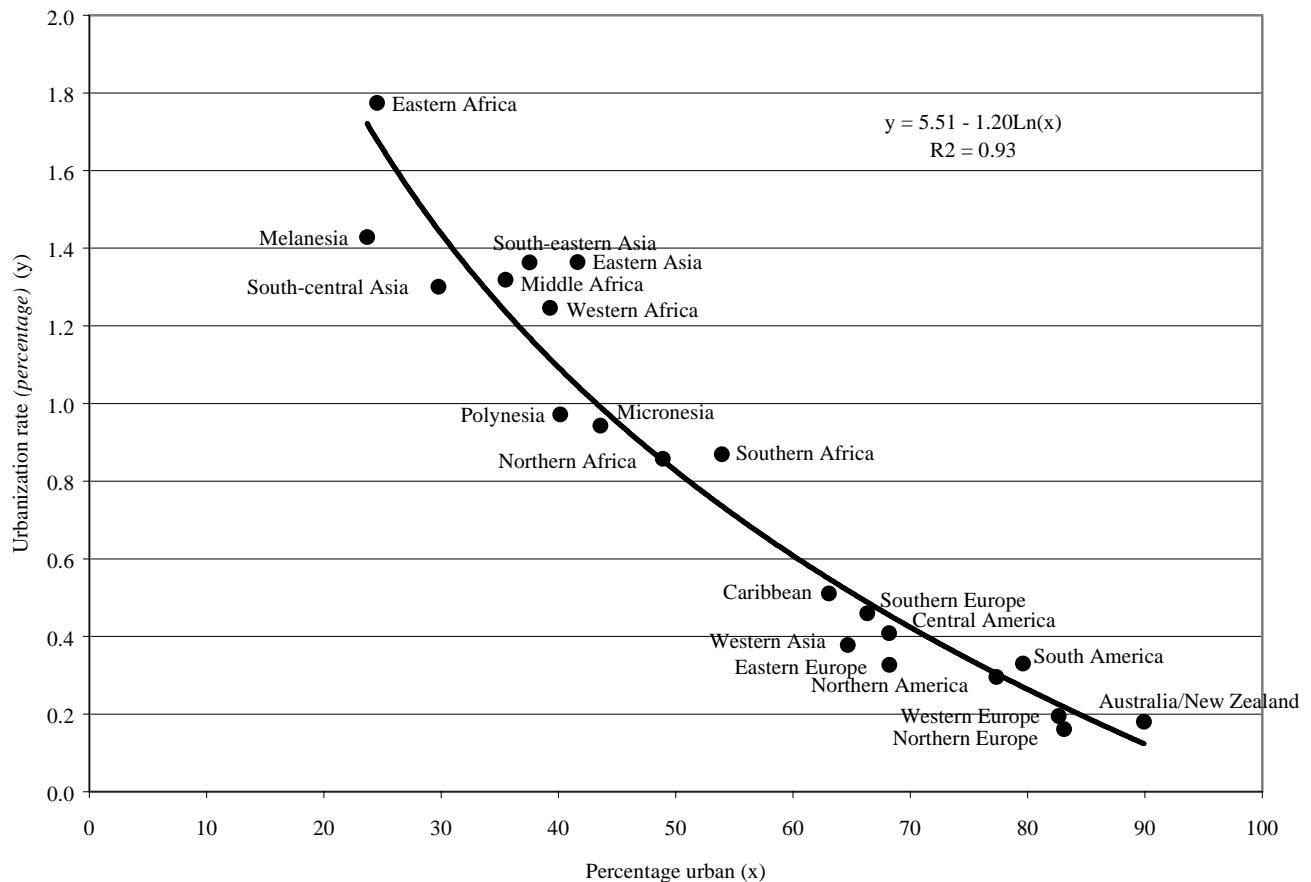
asia whose rates of urbanization seem low in relation to the low percentages of the population that lived in urban areas in 1950, and Western Asia, whose rate of urbanization of 1.9 per cent per year appears too high in relation to the moderate proportion urban already attained by 1950 (27 per cent). Lastly, the three regions with the lowest percentage urban in 1950 experienced the highest rates of urbanization during 1950-2000, as expected. But the rate of urbanization experienced by Eastern Africa (3.2 per cent per year) is not quite reached by the fitted curve (the fitted value is less than 3 per cent), and Western Africa experienced an even higher rate of urbanization than would have been expected according to the fitted curve given its low initial level of urbanization at 10 per cent.

observed points and the fitted curve. Because projections result from the use of logistic models at the country level (see chapter VII.B), they vary less at the regional level than do the values for 1950-2000, which are largely based on observed data. Consequently, the goodness of fit of the logarithmic curve is slightly better (it explains 93 per cent of the variance). The curve is also considerably steeper, mainly because the least urbanized regions in 1950 had shifted to higher levels of urbanization during 1950-2000 (that is, they had moved from left to right in the graph), while the regions with high levels of urbanization in 1950 (bottom right in the graph) had little room for further movement to the higher levels of urbanization (that is, further to the right).

The same analysis can be carried out for the period 2000-2030 using as initial proportions urban the levels estimated for 2000. Figure 13 shows the

For the five regions with proportions urban above 75 per cent in 2000, the urbanization rate is projected to be very low (at or below 0.33 per cent

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



per year). This group comprises four of the more developed regions which were already highly urbanized by 1950 (with proportions urban above 63 per cent), as well as South America, which was not (it was 44 per cent urban in 1950). However, it is noteworthy that by 2000 the proportion urban for South America had already surpassed that for Northern America and that by 2030 South America is expected to be the second most highly urbanized region of the world (table 27).

Five regions from three continents are estimated to have proportions urban ranging from 63 per cent to 68 per cent in 2000, with expected annual rates of urbanization for 2000-2030 varying from 0.33 per cent to 0.51 per cent, all slightly lower than suggested by the fitted curve in figure 13. The eight less developed regions with levels of urbanization ranging from 30 per cent to 54 per cent in 2000 cluster into two groups in figure 13. The group to the right includes Northern Africa, Southern Africa, Micronesia and Polynesia, expected to urbanize at very similar rates of about 0.9 per cent per year. Interestingly, South Africa is expected to urbanize at a somewhat higher rate than the fitted value, probably as a result of the disappearance of controls on internal migration brought about by the dismantling of apartheid. Polynesia, in contrast, is expected to urbanize somewhat more slowly than the fitted curve would imply, perhaps because its current level of urbanization is higher than expected given its level of development in 2000. The other four regions, Eastern and South-eastern Asia, Middle

Africa and Western Africa all cluster to the right of the fitted curve, indicating that their projected rates of urbanization are higher than expected according to the fitted curve. Particularly large deviations are noticeable in the cases of Eastern and South-eastern Asia, both of which are projected to see their proportions urban rise by 1.36 per cent per year. The remaining regions—Eastern Africa, Melanesia and South-central Asia—still display levels of urbanization below 30 per cent and, with the exception of Eastern Africa, are projected to experience urbanization rates below those expected according to the fitted curve. As in figure 12, Eastern Africa is just off the fitted curve, displaying the highest projected rate of urbanization of any region during 2000-2030 (1.8 per cent per year).

According to current expectations, the two regions with the second and third largest rural populations in the world, Eastern and South-eastern Asia, are expected to attain levels of urbanization of 63 per cent and 57 per cent, respectively, by 2030. That is, by that date, some of the most populous regions of the world will still have ample room for further increases of the urban population, even if their overall rates of population growth remain low. In addition, the fast growing populations of the regions of Africa will still have levels of urbanization ranging from moderate to low (63 per cent to 42 per cent), implying that the continued and possibly rapid growth of their urban populations is very likely during most of the twenty-first century.