



Population Ageing 2006

Number of persons aged 60 years or over
The number of persons aged 60 years or over is estimated to be 688 million in 2006 and is projected to grow to almost 2 billion by 2050, at which time the population of older persons will be larger than the population of children (0-14 years) for the first time in human history. The majority of the world's older persons reside in Asia (54 per cent), while Europe has the next largest share (22 per cent).

Population aged 60 years or over as percentage of total population

One out of every 9 persons is now aged 60 years or over; by 2050, the United Nations projects that 1 person out of every 5, and by 2150 out of every 3, will be aged 60 years or over. The percentage of older persons is currently much higher in the more developed regions than in the less developed regions, but the pace of ageing in developing countries is more rapid, and their transition from a young to an old age structure will occur over a shorter period.

The oldest old

The older population is itself ageing. Currently, the oldest old (aged 80 years or over) make up 13 per cent of the population aged 60 or over. The oldest old are the fastest-growing segment of the older population, and by 2050 20 per cent of the older population will be aged 80 years or over. The number of centenarians (aged 100 years or over) is projected to increase 13-fold, from approximately 287,000 in 2006 to 3.7 million by 2050.

Life expectancy at age 60

The world has experienced dramatic improvements in longevity. Life expectancy at birth has increased about 20 years since 1950, to its current level of 66 years. Of those surviving to age 60, men can expect to live another 17 years, while women an additional 21 years. However, there are still large differences in mortality levels between countries. In the least developed countries, men reaching age 60 can expect only 15 more years, and women, 17 years,

while in the more developed regions, life expectancy at age 60 is 19 years for men and 23 years for women.

Sex ratio

The majority of older persons are women. Because female life expectancy is greater than male life expectancy, among older persons there are 82 men per 100 women. Among the oldest old, there are only 55 men for every 100 women. The ratio of men to women at older ages is lower in the more developed regions (72 men per 100 women) than in the less developed regions (88 men per 100 women) because there are larger differences in life expectancy between the sexes in the more developed regions.

Percentage of older persons currently married

Older men are more likely than older women to be married. While 80 per cent of older men are currently mar-

ried, the corresponding figure for older women is 48 per cent. Most older persons without a spouse are widowed. Women are more likely to outlive their spouses because they live longer and are, on average, younger than their husbands.

Percentage of older persons living alone

Although many older persons who live alone are socially active and materially secure, those who live alone are more likely to need outside assistance in the case of illness or disability and are at greater risk of social isolation and poverty. An estimated 14 per cent of the world's older persons live alone. The proportion is lower for men (8 per cent) than for women (19 per cent) because women are more likely to be widowed. The proportion is lower in the less developed regions (7 per cent) than in the more developed regions (24 per cent).

developed countries, most commonly between 55 and 60 years for both men and women. The differential between developed and developing countries reflects differences in life expectancy, which is lower in developing countries.

Percentage of the older population in the labour force

Countries with high per capita incomes tend to have lower labour-force participation rates among older persons. In more developed regions, 22 per cent of men aged 60 years or over are economically active, compared with 50 per cent in less developed regions. In more developed regions, 11 per cent of older women are economically active, compared with 19 per cent in less developed regions. Older persons in less developed regions contribute to a greater extent to the labour force, largely owing to the limited coverage of social security schemes and the relatively low incomes they guarantee when they exist.

Country or area	Population aged 60 years or over										Statutory retirement age 2005-2010 (Men/Women)	Life expectancy at age 60, 2005-2010 (Men/Women)			
	Number (thousands)		Percentage of total population		80 years or over		Percentage currently married		Percentage living alone						
	2006 (1)	2050 (2)	2006 (3)	2050 (4)	2006 (5)	2050 (6)	Men/Women (7)	Men/Women (8)	Men/Women (9)	Men/Women (10)	Men/Women (11)	Men/Women (12)	Men/Women (13)	Men/Women (14)	Men/Women (15)
World	697 625	1 068 155	11	22	15	20	60/65	8/10	40/6	82	55	5	4	-	17/21
More developed regions	247 750	400 029	20	32	19	29	79/84	13/22	29/11	72	46	4	2	-	19/22
Less developed regions	340 170	1 558 124	8	20	10	18	81/47	5/9	58/10	88	66	11	4	-	17/19
Least developed countries	39 593	171 191	5	10	7	10	85/39	4/8	71/37	85	73	17	10	-	15/17
Middle Africa	48 709	182 884	5	10	8	10	85/39	6/11	84/62	83	67	16	10	-	15/17
Eastern Africa	13 630	55 015	5	8	8	9	84/28	6/13	88/52	83	59	18	12	-	15/17
Burundi	323	1 449	4	6	9	8	90/40	8/10	80/43	65	53	20	17	60/60	15/16
Comoros	36	221	4	12	7	10	85/41	4/4	84/43	83	63	21	8	-	15/17
Djibouti	39	166	5	11	6	8	..	..	..	84	64	19	10	-	15/16
Eritrea	181	945	4	8	6	8	..	..	..	68	43	23	12	-	12/15
Ethiopia	3 720	14 617	5	9	7	9	87/32	2/9	73/36	88	71	18	12	60/60	15/16
Kenya	1 440	8 223	4	10	9	8	86/60	9/25	79/50	87	82	19	12	50/55	16/18
Madagascar	1 553	4 189	5	10	8	9	86/32	8/14	80/47	88	74	17	10	50/55	16/17
Malawi	615	1 734	5	6	7	9	88/43	4/14	85/56	88	72	16	17	-	15/17
Mauritius	123	385	10	26	13	22	80/33	2/4	75	52	10	3	60/60	16/20	
Réunion	80	256	10	23	14	25	74/37	10/8	83/28	75	63	16	13	55/55	15/16
Rwanda	368	1 726	4	10	7	7	85/44	4/8	76/44	78	53	22	11	55/55	..
Seychelles	..	..	..	..	..	..	64/43	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Somalia	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Togo	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
North Africa	13 240	646	7	19	8	13	80/36	4/12	89/56	88	70	20	12	-	17/18
Algeria	2 140	12 029	7	24	10	19	88/40	2/5	82/52	84	59	15	4	60/65	14/15
Egypt	5 451	23 637	7	19	8	13	76/23	4/13	85/57	85	71	15	9	60/60	15/16
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	398	2 262	7	24	8	15	90/42	5/8	85/58	117	70	16	4	65/60	16/18
United Republic of Tanzania	2 008	7 158	5	11	6	9	82/41	7/8	84/60	78	63	10	6	60/60	15/17
Zambia	553	1 463	5	6	8	9	87/46	4/12	83/55	82	69	17	16	55/55	15/16
Zimbabwe	719	1 454	5	9	10	11	85/39	8/9	87/66	84	74	15	11	60/60	16/18
Middle Africa	5 125	18 708	5	6	7	8	81/03	8/12	84/71	80	64	18	10	-	15/16
Angola	644	2 671	4	6	6	8	81/44	9/16	75/48	81	63	21	16	-	14/15
Cameroon	939	2 983	6	11	8	9	79/28	8/9	76/33	85	71	15	9	60/60	15/16
Central African Republic	248	525	6	8	9	10	74/37	9/16	84/68	74	59	13	13	-	15/16
Chad	465	1 613	5	5	7	8	85/16	5/18	67/35	82	66	16	18	55/55	15/16
Congo	185	730	4	5	8	8	80/38	..	71/60	79	62	17	18	55/55	15/17
Dem. Republic of the Congo	2 518	9 825	4	6	7	8	82/94	..	74/38	78	60	19	17	60/60	15/16
Equatorial Guinea	31	57	6	5	8	12	77/29	..	64/28	82	67	13	19	60/60	15/16
Gabon	87	256	6	11	13	13	76/42	12/10	65/41	87	74	13	9	55/55	17/18
Sao Tome and Principe	9	46	6	16	10	12	52/29	..	53/27	83	77	17	6	62/57	17/18
Northern Africa	13 240	646	7	19	8	13	80/36	4/12	89/56	88	70	20	12	-</td	



Economic &

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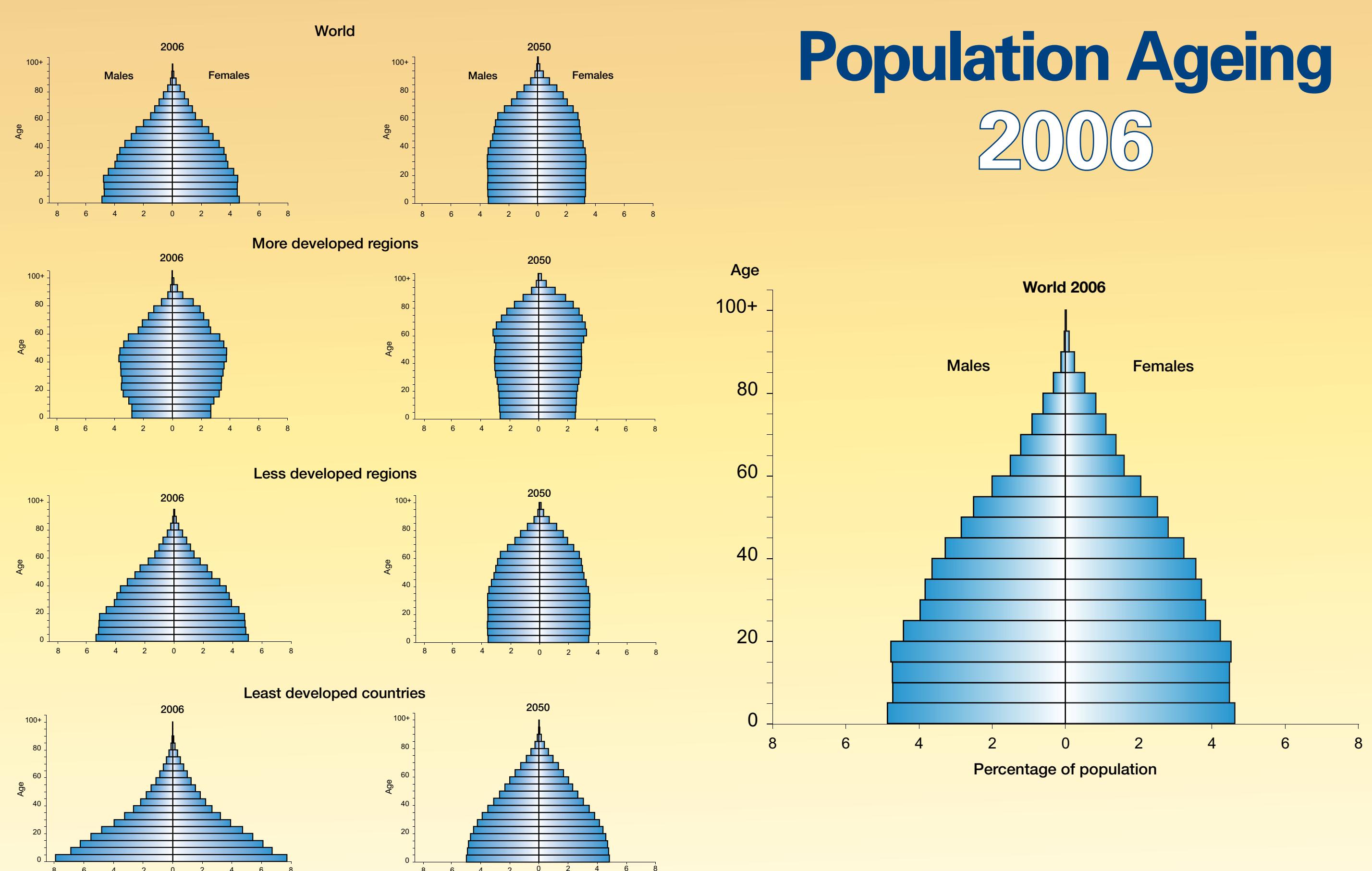
Social Affairs

Population ageing was once a concern mainly of developed countries, but now the process is gaining momentum in developing countries, too. Today it is clear that this demographic transformation has profound consequences for all individuals, families, communities and nations. The Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing and the Political Declaration adopted at the Second World Assembly on Ageing in April 2002¹ marked a turning point in how the world addresses the key challenge of building a society for all ages.

The Madrid Plan of Action offers a bold agenda for confronting the challenges of ageing in the twenty-first century. The Plan focuses on three priority areas: older persons and development; advancing health and well-being into old age; and ensuring enabling and supportive environments. It represents the first time Governments have adopted a comprehensive approach linking questions of ageing to other frameworks for social and economic development and human rights, most notably those agreed to at the United Nations conferences and summits of the 1990s.

The key actions for the further implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development² also highlighted the continuing need to examine the economic and social implications of demographic change, and how these relate to development planning concerns and the needs of individuals. In 2007, "The changing age structures of populations and their implications for development" will be the special theme of the United Nations Commission on Population and Development.

The United Nations Commission on Social Development has decided to conduct every five years a review and appraisal of progress made in implementing the Madrid Plan. In this regard, the General Assembly has also stressed the need for population data that are disaggregated by age and sex. The present wallchart presents updated comparable information about population ageing around the world. It shows absolute and relative numbers of older persons aged 60 years or over; the proportions of older men and women who are currently married, living alone and in the labour force; the sex ratio of populations aged 60 years or over and 80 years or over; the potential support ratio; the statutory retirement age for men and women; and life expectancy at age 60 for men and women.



¹ See Report of the Second World Assembly on Ageing (United Nations publication A/CONF.197/9, Sales No. E.02.IV.4).

² See General Assembly resolution S-21/2, annex.

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