



United Nations • Department of Economic and Social Affairs • Population Division

World Fertility Patterns 2013

www.unpopulation.org

INTRODUCTION The last decades of the twentieth century witnessed a major transformation in world fertility: the total fertility—the average number of children a woman would bear if fertility rates remained unchanged during her lifetime—fell from 4.4 children per woman in 1970-1975 to 2.5 children per woman in 2005-2010. This chart presents some of the data available to assess the changes in fertility taking place in countries of the world, and shows projections to 2025-2030.

Fertility has fallen since the 1970s in the vast majority of countries or areas in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean and Oceania. High fertility remains concentrated in sub-Saharan Africa, with total fertility significantly above four children per woman in the majority of countries outside of Southern Africa. Fertility levels in Asia vary widely across countries, with below-replacement fertility (below 2.1 children per woman) in some countries, especially in Eastern and South-Eastern Asia, and some countries with fertility levels above four children per woman. Many countries, including most in Europe and Northern America, have had below-replacement fertility for two or three decades.

Among the 201 countries or areas with at least 90,000 inhabitants in 2013, 50 countries in 1990-1995 and 71 countries in 2005-2010 had below-replacement fertility. In 2005-2010, 27 countries had very low fertility, below 1.5 children per woman, and all of these countries are

located in Eastern Asia or Europe. Similarly, in 2005-2010, 32 countries had fertility above 5.0 children per woman. All but two of these high-fertility countries are located in sub-Saharan Africa.

World fertility is expected to continue to decline to 2.4 children per woman in 2025-2030. The decline is concentrated in Africa, Asia, and Latin America and the Caribbean. Fertility in sub-Saharan Africa is projected to decline from 5.4 children per woman in 2005-2010 to 4.1 children per woman in 2025-2030, according to the medium fertility variant projection. Europe is projected to experience a modest increase in fertility from 1.5 children per woman in 2005-2010 to 1.7 in 2025-2030.

DATA SOURCES AND TIME PERIODS Data are presented from the 2012 *Revision of World Population Prospects* for 201 countries or areas with a population of 90,000 or more in 2013. Trends in fertility indicators are from estimates for 1970-1975, 1990-1995 and 2005-2010, and projections (medium fertility variant) for 2010-2015 and 2025-2030.

TOTAL FERTILITY Total fertility for 2005-2010 varied between 0.9 children per woman in Macao, Special Administrative Region of China, and 7.6 children per woman in Niger. The lowest total fertility for

¹ *World Population Prospects: The 2012 Revision* (United Nations publication, Volume I: Comprehensive Tables ST/ESA/SER.A/336).

a region was in Europe, with 1.5 children per woman, and the two sub-regions of Eastern Europe and Southern Europe (1.4 children per woman). The highest total fertility remains in sub-Saharan Africa with 5.4 children per woman, and Middle Africa is the sub-region with the highest total fertility (6.2 children per woman).

Central America showed the fastest decline in total fertility from 1970-1975 to 2005-2010, declining by 1.1 children per decade. Among countries or areas, Libya experienced the fastest decline at 1.5 children per decade. Timor-Leste had the greatest rate of increase at 0.3 children per decade. Chad, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Niger and Somalia also stand out because they did not experience a very high fertility in 1970-1975 to 2005-2010 and have remained with very high fertility in 2005-2010 (6.5 children per woman or greater). In sub-Saharan Africa, while fertility declined by 0.4 children per decade, only 11 countries or areas had total fertility below 4.0 children per woman (concentrated in Southern Africa) in 2005-2010 and 30 countries or areas still had total fertility of 5.0 children per woman or greater.

Fertility is projected to decline in most countries from 2005-2010 to 2025-2030, according to the medium fertility variant projections. Altogether, there are projected to be 106 countries or areas with below-replacement fertility in 2025-2030, compared with 71

in 2005-2010. However, out of those countries or areas with below-replacement fertility in 2005-2010, 49 are projected to experience an increase in fertility by 2025-2030.

MEAN AGE AT CHILDBEARING Fertility decline is associated with changes in the age distribution of childbearing. Usually fertility starts declining when women limit the size of their families by stopping childbearing earlier than previous cohorts. Hence, fertility declines at older ages and the mean age at childbearing decreases. When fertility is already moderately low, women may postpone childbearing, thus reducing fertility at younger ages and increasing the mean age at childbearing. There are a number of countries with low fertility and low mean ages at childbearing, where women have few children but still have them at relatively young ages, for example China (26.2 years). Countries or areas with particularly high mean ages at childbearing were located in Europe, Northern Africa and Oceania.

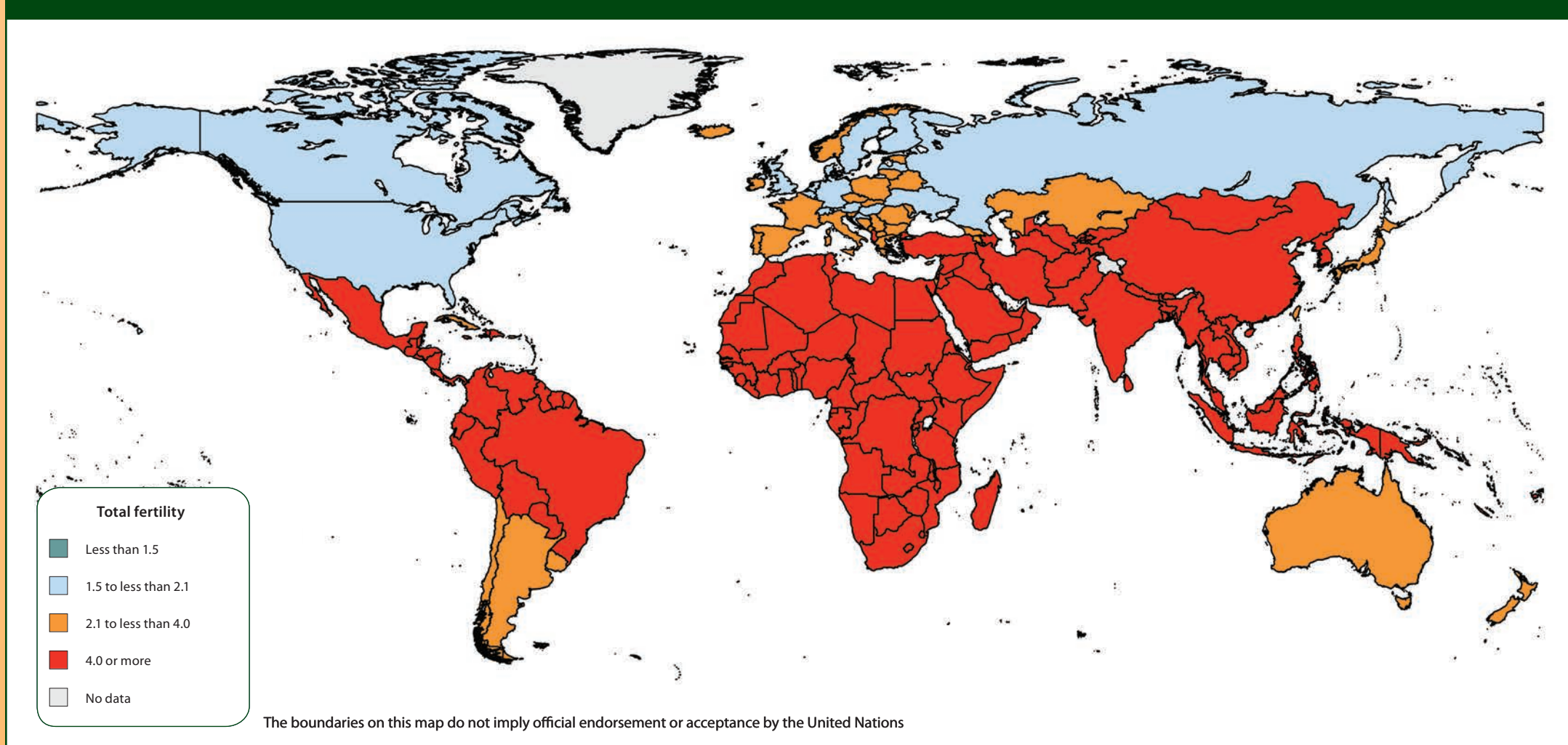
ADOLESCENT BIRTH RATE Fertility levels among women aged 15 to 19 are an important indicator of the status of women, since women who bear children early in life often forego the opportunity for further education or employment outside the home. The adolescent birth rate is also an indicator under Millennium Development Goal 5 to improve maternal health. The world experienced significant declines in adolescent birth rates between 1970-1975 and 2005-2010. Eastern Asia

had the lowest adolescent birth rate of all the regions at 8 births per 1,000 women aged 15 to 19 in 2005-2010, and all countries or areas in Eastern Asia had adolescent birth rates below 20 births per 1,000 women aged 15 to 19 in 2005-2010. The adolescent birth rate is also low in Southern Europe and Western Europe with rates of 9 and 12 births per 1,000 women aged 15 to 19, respectively. In sub-Saharan Africa, 29 of 51 countries or areas had adolescent birth rates of 100 or higher in 2005-2010, and these are concentrated in Middle Africa and Western Africa (144 and 124 births per 1,000 women aged 15 to 19, respectively). Niger had the highest adolescent birth rate of all countries with 210 births per 1,000 women aged 15 to 19 in 2005-2010.

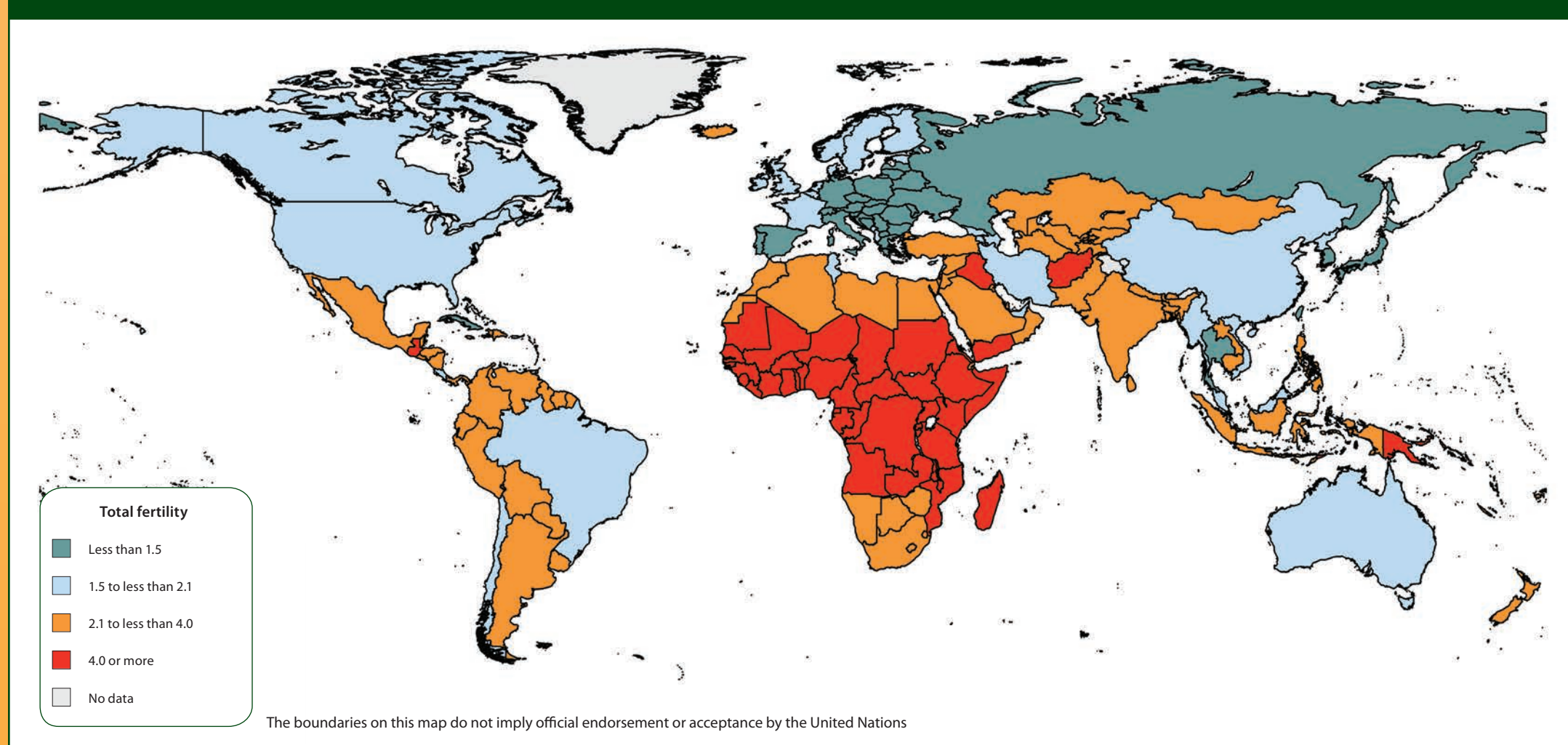
The adolescent birth rate in Latin America and the Caribbean is relatively high, 73 births per 1,000 women aged 15 to 19, given that total fertility in the region has declined sharply from 5.0 children per woman in 1970-1975 to 2.3 in 2005-2010. In relative terms, adolescent births account for a higher proportion of all births in Latin America and the Caribbean (15.9 per cent of all births) than in other regions. The Dominican Republic and Nicaragua have the highest proportion of births to adolescent mothers, more than one in five births are to women aged 15 to 19. In contrast, Africa has a higher adolescent birth rate at 104 births per 1,000 women aged 15 to 19, but the proportion of births to adolescent mothers is lower (10.6 per cent of all births).

Country or area	TRENDS IN TOTAL FERTILITY, AGE PATTERNS OF FERTILITY AND TIMING OF CHILDBEARING												Mean age at childbearing, 2005-2010 (13)
	Total fertility per woman					Age-specific fertility rate (per 1,000 women), 2005-2010							
	1970-1975 (1)	1990-1995 (2)	2005-2010 (3)	2010-2015 (4)	2025-2030 (5)	15-19 (6)	20-24 (7)	25-29 (8)	30-34 (9)	35-39 (10)	40-44 (11)	45-49 (12)	
WORLD	4.4	3.0	2.5	2.5	2.4	49	152	145	93	47	16	4	27.3
Sub-Saharan Africa	5.8	5.2	5.2	5.1	4.7	117	285	249	214	153	75	29	29.3
AFRICA	6.7	5.7	4.9	4.7	3.9	104	216	231	198	138	66	25	29.3
Eastern Africa	7.1	7.4	5.2	5.2	3.8	111	248	232	205	159	66	25	29.3
Burundi	7.3	7.4	6.5	6.1	4.8	34	242	352	305	217	125	31	31.1
Comoros	7.1	5.3	5.1	4.7	3.9	58	210	296	244	137	53	17	29.6
Djibouti	6.8	5.9	3.8	3.4	2.7	22	121	196	188	129	69	36	31.6
Eritrea	6.6	6.4	5.2	4.7	3.5	77	205	248	218	166	85	41	30.4
Ethiopia	7.1	7.1	5.3	4.6	3.1	90	224	240	222	165	87	25	29.9
Kenya	8.0	5.6	4.8	4.4	3.5	100	234	229	176	128	55	38	29.1
Madagascar	7.3	6.1	4.8	4.5	3.7	134	234	227	175	120	60	15	28.3
Malawi	7.4	6.6	5.8	5.4	4.4	157	273	243	209	163	85	36	29.0
Mauritius	3.5	2.2	1.6	1.5	1.6	33	89	97	62	27	7	0	27.3
Mayotte	7.9	5.1	4.3	3.8	2.9	103	197	204	171	124	51	10	28.7
Mozambique	6.6	5.1	5.6	5.2	4.2	163	267	256	191	131	67	40	28.5
Réunion	3.9	2.4	2.4	2.2	2.0	45	104	137	117	98	17	1	28.5
Rwanda	8.3	6.6	5.1	4.6	3.4	43	203	259	226	171	102	22	30.8
Seychelles	5.4	2.6	2.3	2.2	1.9	60	115	129	92	51	12	1	27.5
Somalia	7.1	7.5	7.1	6.6	5.1	127	290	320	268	214	129	73	30.4
South Sudan	6.9	6.7	5.4	5.0	3.8	95	233	263	211	137	92	55	30.1
Uganda	7.1	7.1	6.4	5.9	4.6	150	329	308	238	156	66	29	28.4
United Republic of Tanzania	7.8	6.1	5.6	5.2	4.3	130	274	261	214	148	72	16	28.6
Zambia	6.4	6.3	5.9	5.7	4.9	140	262	252	230	183	86	28	29.3
Zimbabwe	7.4	4.8	3.9	3.5	2.7	73	207	194	145	97	49	15	28.7
Middle Africa	6.4	6.9	6.2	5.7	4.4	144	275	281	252	173	78	30	29.1
Angola	7.2	7.1	6.5	5.9	4.5	192	330	325	232	141	66	12	27.7
Cameroon	6.3	6.2	5.2	4.8	3.8	131	237	256	207	138	55	18	28.6
Central African Republic	6.0	5.7	4.8	4.4	3.3	107	197	202	176	136	79	74	30.4
Chad	6.7	7.4	6.9	6.3	4.8	182	355	328	276	169	64	15	28.1
Congo	6.3	5.2	5.1	5.0	4.1	130	246	225	192	136	69	21	28.7
Democratic Republic of the Congo	6.3	7.2	6.5	6.0	4.5	132	270	280	284	204	93	38	29.8
Equatorial Guinea	5.7	5.9	5.4	4.9	3.6	123	255	257	162	139	93	43	29.3
Gabon	5.2	5.2	4.3	4.1	3.2	115	234	207	143	94	50	14	27.9
Sao Tome and Principe	6.5	5.2	4.5	4.1	3.3	76	241	264	174	104	27	3	28.0
Northern Africa	6.4	4.1	3.3	3.0	2.6	45	132	165	138	99	35	9	29.4
Algeria	7.6	4.1	2.7	2.8	2.2	10	80	139	143	118	40	7	21.7
Egypt	5.7	3.9	3.0	2.8	2.4	49	166	184	121	58	17	3	31.1
Libya	7.9	4.3	2.7	2.4	1.8	3	42	133	183	124	43	6	32.5
Morocco	6.4	3.7	2.4	2.8	2.3	33	90	113	105	78	41	16	30.5
Sudan	6.9	6.0	4.8	4.5	3.6	107	204	236	200	129	62	27	29.2
Tunisia	6.0	3.1	2.1	2.0	1.8	6	53	119	128	81	23	2	31.2
Western Sahara	6.6	4.0	2.6	2.4	2.0	30	93	126	120	88	43	15	30.7
Southern Africa	5.6	3.5	2.5	2.5	2.1	61	135	138	100	62	24	7	28.1
Botswana	6.5	4.3	2.9	2.6	2.2	52	125	145	123	86	42	6	29.4
Lesotho	5.8	4.7	3.4	3.1	2.5	90	175	157	116	87	41	8	28.2
Namibia	6.6	4.9	3.4	3.1	2.5	74	161	152	138	105	42	8	28.9
South Africa	5.5	3.3	2.6	2.4	2.1	59	132	135	96	58	23	7	28.1
Swaziland	6.9	5.3	3.8	3.4	2.6	88	194	176	147	94	35	16	28.4
Western Africa	6.8	6.4	5.7	5.6	4.2	124	234	260	232	168	88	39	29.7
Benin	6.8	6.6	5.3	4.9	3.8	105	247	261	218	142	67	24	29.1
Burkina Faso	6.7	6.9	6.1	5.6	4.4	130	267	271	240	186	95	27	29.5
Cabo Verde	6.9	4.9	2.6	2.3	1.9	82	136	122	81	55	30	24	28.4
Côte d'Ivoire	7.9	6.0	4.9	4.9	4.0	126	215	223	187	139	68	22	29.0
Gambia	6.2	6.1	5.8	5.8	4.9	111	245	268	235	179	77	43	29.8
Ghana	6.9	5.3	4.2	3.9	3.1	68	177	210	182	127	64	17	29.8
Guinea	6.3	6.5	5.4	5.0	3.8	154	226	237	211	150	76	25	28.9
Guinea-Bissau	7.3	6.5	5.3	5.0	4.1	123	219	241	218	154	74	25	29.3
Guatemala	6.8	6.3	5.2	4.8	3.8	142	234	220	196	146	80	28	29.0
Honduras	6.1	6.0	5.2	4.8	3.6	181	284	292	263	198	104	38	29.3
Liberia	6.8	5.8	5.0	4.7	3.8	83	175	225	222	168	91	29	30.6
Niger	7.5	7.8	7.6	7.6	6.8	210	329	322	284	218	106	48	29.1
Nigeria	6.6	6.4	6.0	6.0	5.1	124	236	271	245	177	97	50	30.0
Niger Republic	7.4	6.3	5.1	5.0	4.0	98	208	240	224	159	74	19	29.6
Sierra Leone	6.8	6.3	5.2	4.7	3.7	119	218	233	208	154	76	25	29.4
Togo	7.2	6.0	4.9	4.7	3.7	90	214	245	193	144	71	21	29.5
ASIA	5.0	3.0	2.3	2.2	2.0	35	155	139	75	32	11	3	27.0
Eastern Asia	4.4	2.0	1.8	1.7	1.7	8	130	117	49	14	4	1	26.6
China	4.8	2.1	1.6	1.7	1.7	8	142	120	42	11	3	1	26.2
China, Hong Kong SAR	3.3	1.2	1.0	1.1	1.4	3	24	55	76	40	6	0	31.1
China, Macao SAR	1.8	1.4	0.9	1.1	1.4	3	30	61	59	28	5	0	30.0
Democratic People's Republic of Korea	4.0	2.3	2.0	2.0	1.9	1	58	210	110	19	3	0	28.7
Japan	2.1	1.5	1.3	1.4	1.6	5	37	87	91	41	6	0	30.2
Mongolia	7.5	3.3	2.4	2.4	2.2	19	134	148	101	56	15	2	28.5
Republic of Korea	4.3	1.7	1.2	1.3	1.5	2	19	98	98	25	3	0	30.2
Other non-specified areas	3.4	1.8	1.3	1.2	1.3	7	41	86	85	30	4	0	29.5
South Central Asia	5.5	3.9	2.7	2.5	2.2	52	190	157	86	40	15	5	28.9
Central Asia	5.0	3.5	2.7	2.6	2.3	40	181	157	85	44	13	4	27.3
Kazakhstan	3.5	2.6	2.5	2.4	2.2	28	151	152	105	58	14	1	28.1
Kyrgyzstan	4.7	3.6	2.8	3.1	2.6	30	172	161	110	62	19	3	28.1
Turkmenistan	6.8	4.9	3.7	3.9	3.2	45	240	206	138	77	29	1	27.9
Tajikistan	6.2	4.0	2.5	2.3	2.0	21	116	101	42	7	1	27.7	
Uzbekistan	6.3	3.9	2.5	2.3	2.0	49	189	144	75	24	8	8	26.4
Southern Asia	5.6	3.9	2.7	2.5	2.2	53	190	157	85	40	15	5	28.9
Afghanistan	7.7	7.7	6.2	5.0	2.9	117	290	307					

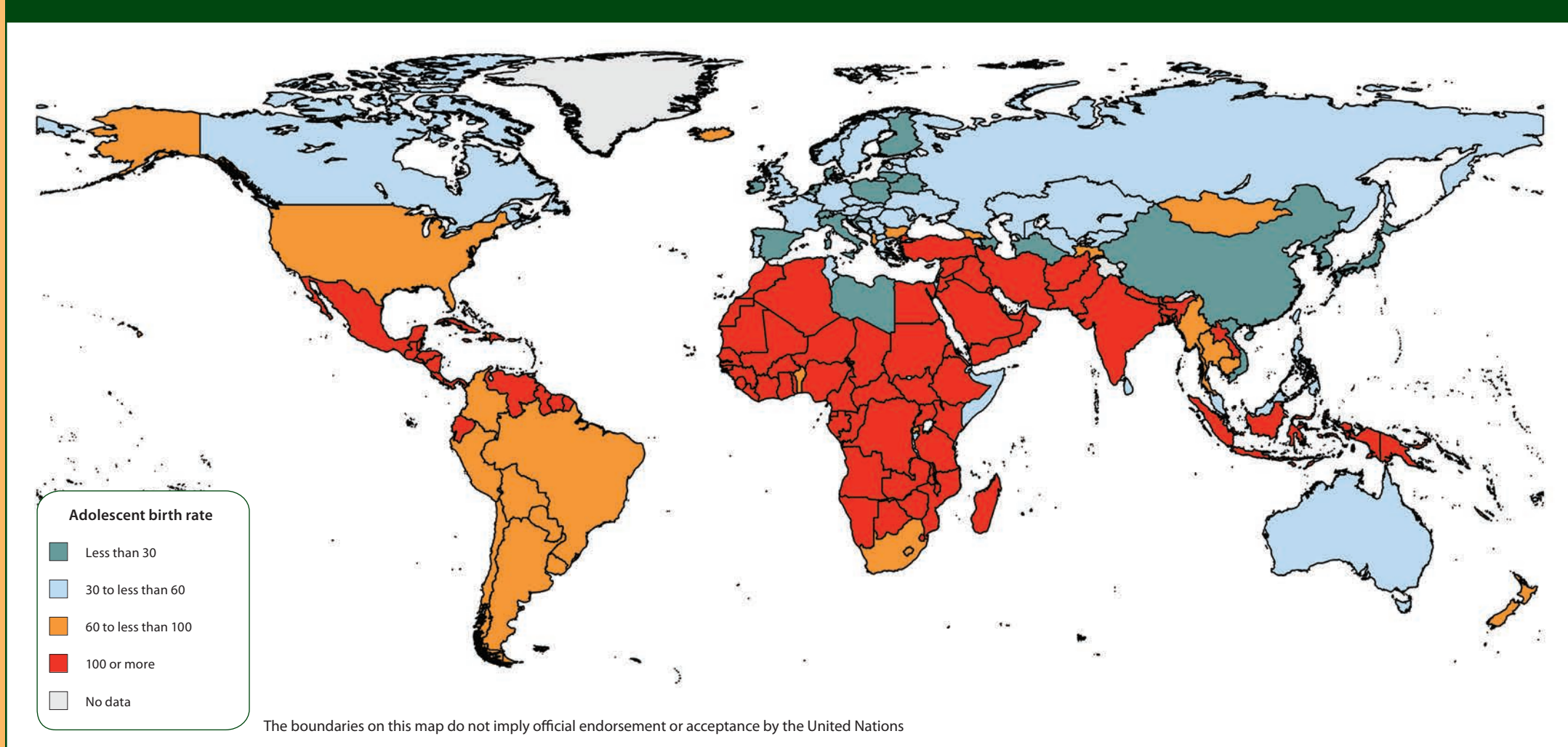
Total fertility 1970-1975



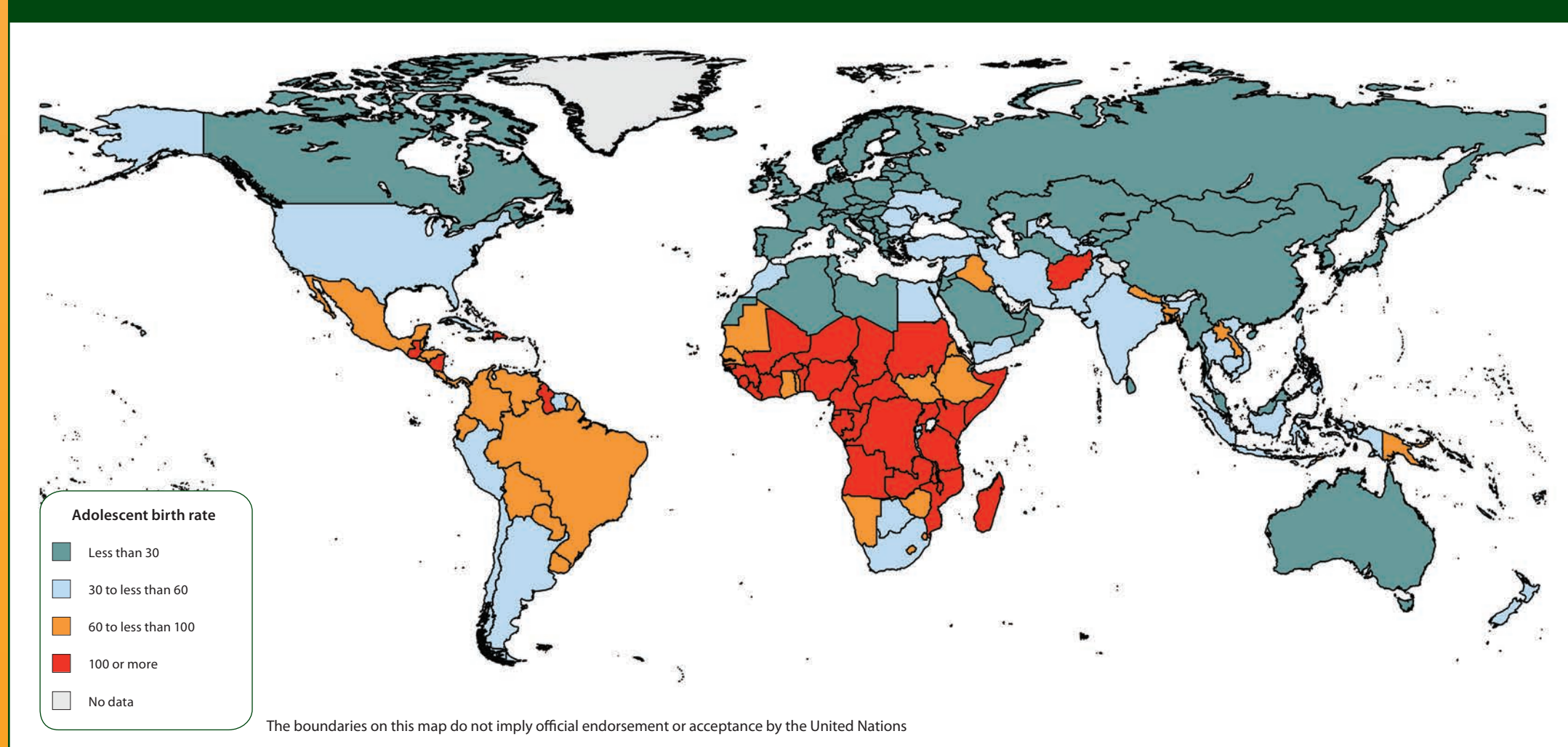
Total fertility 2005-2010



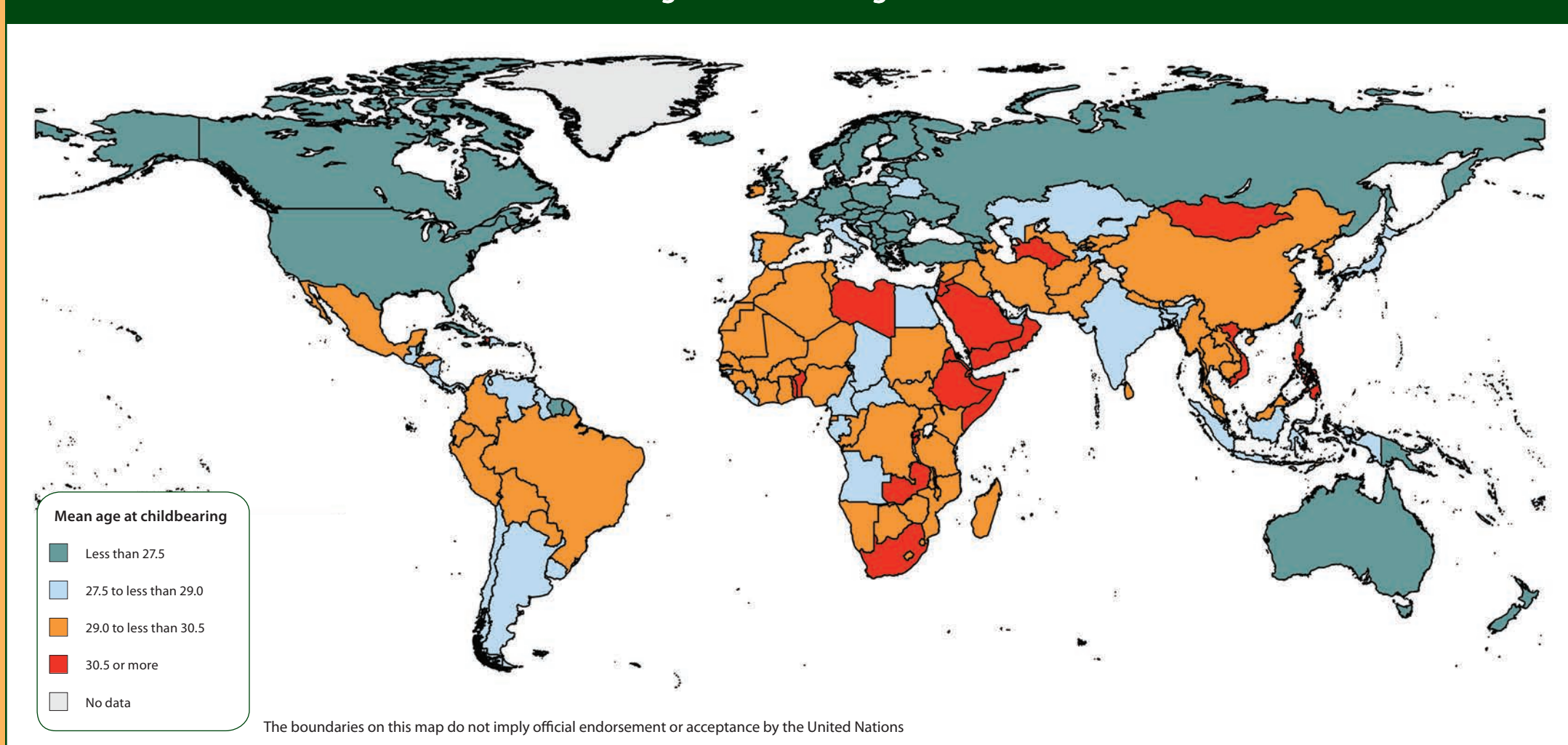
Adolescent birth rate 1970-1975



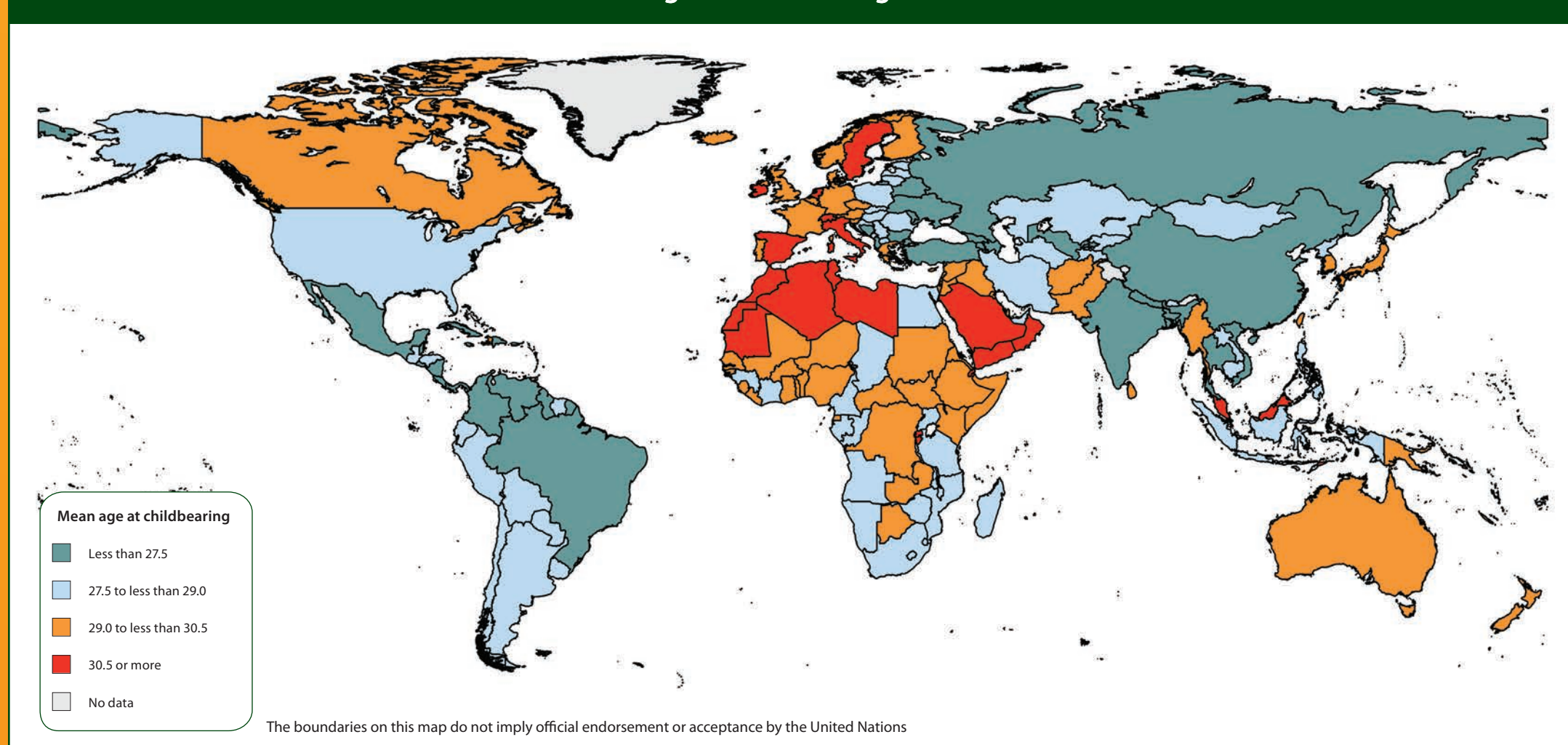
Adolescent birth rate 2005-2010



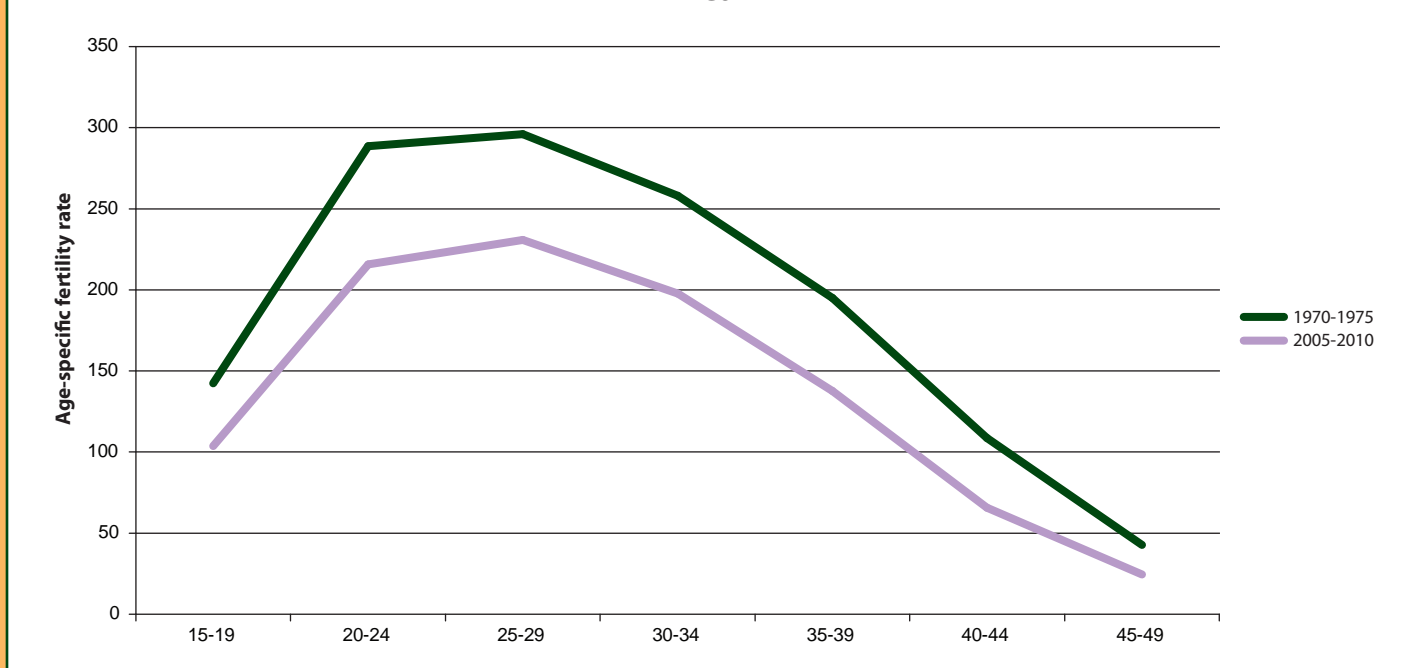
Mean age at childbearing 1970-1975



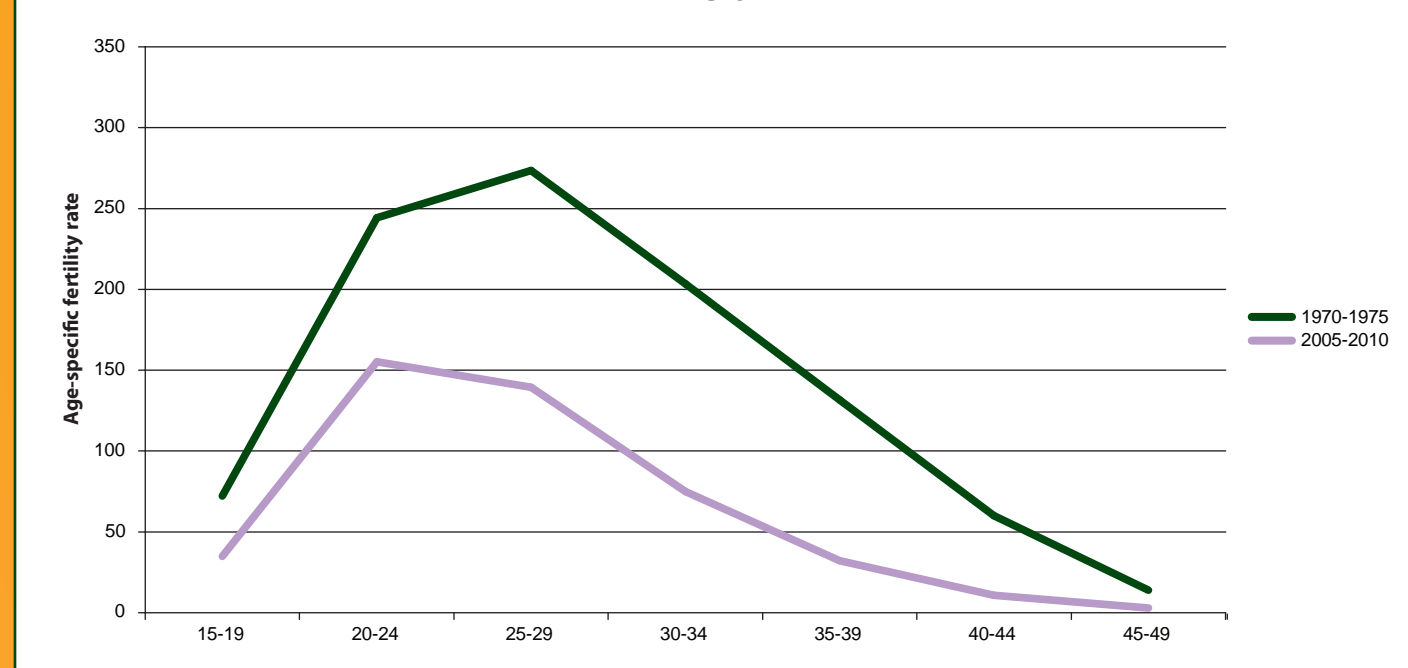
Mean age at childbearing 2005-2010



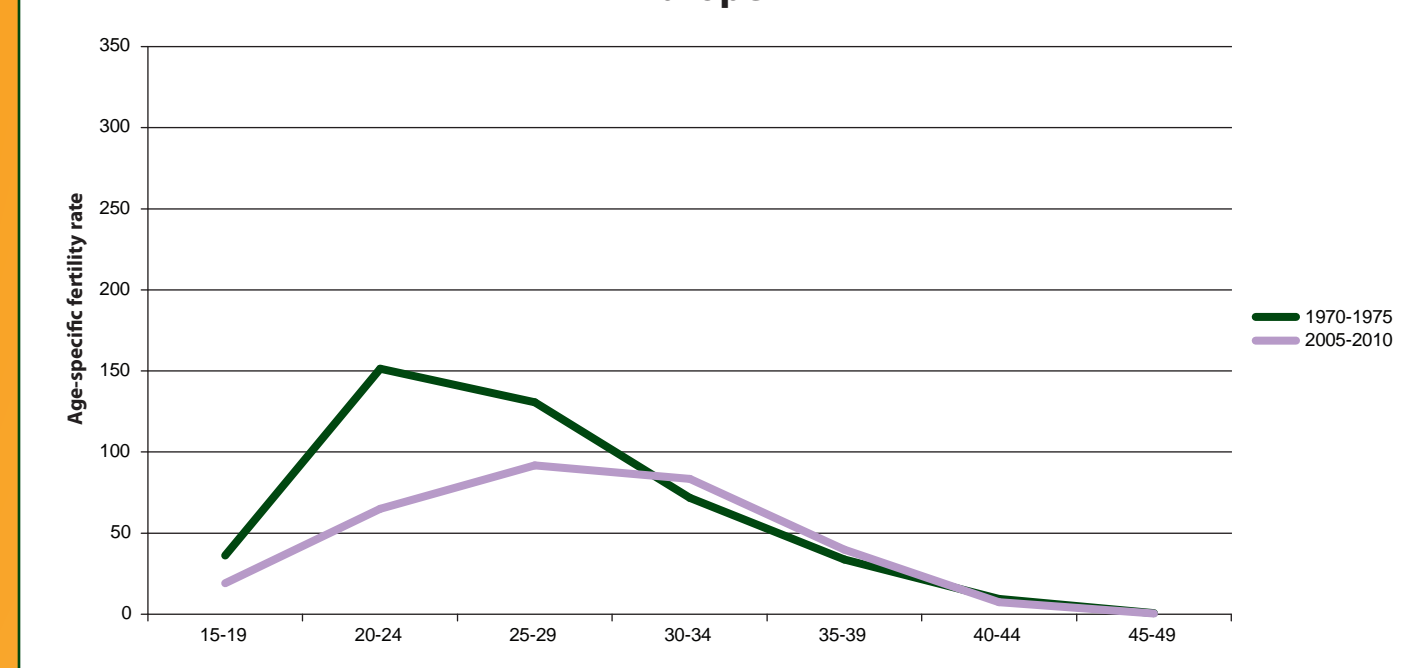
Africa



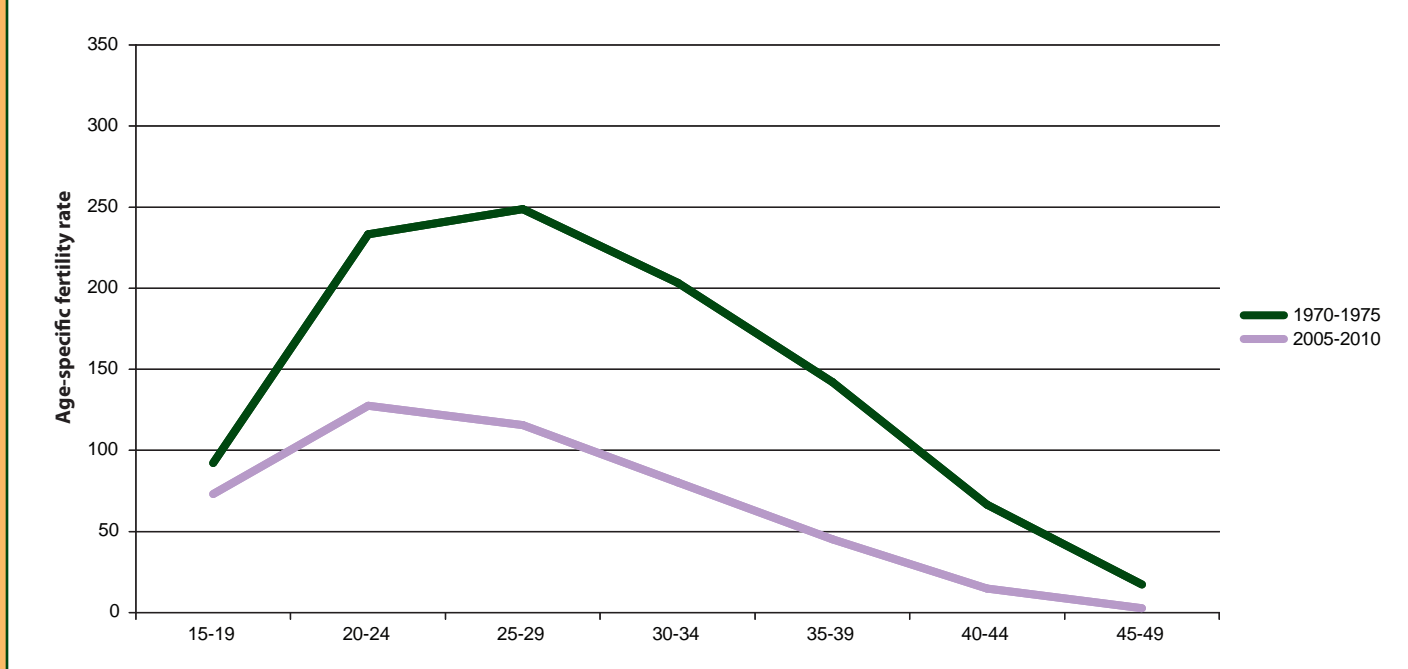
Asia



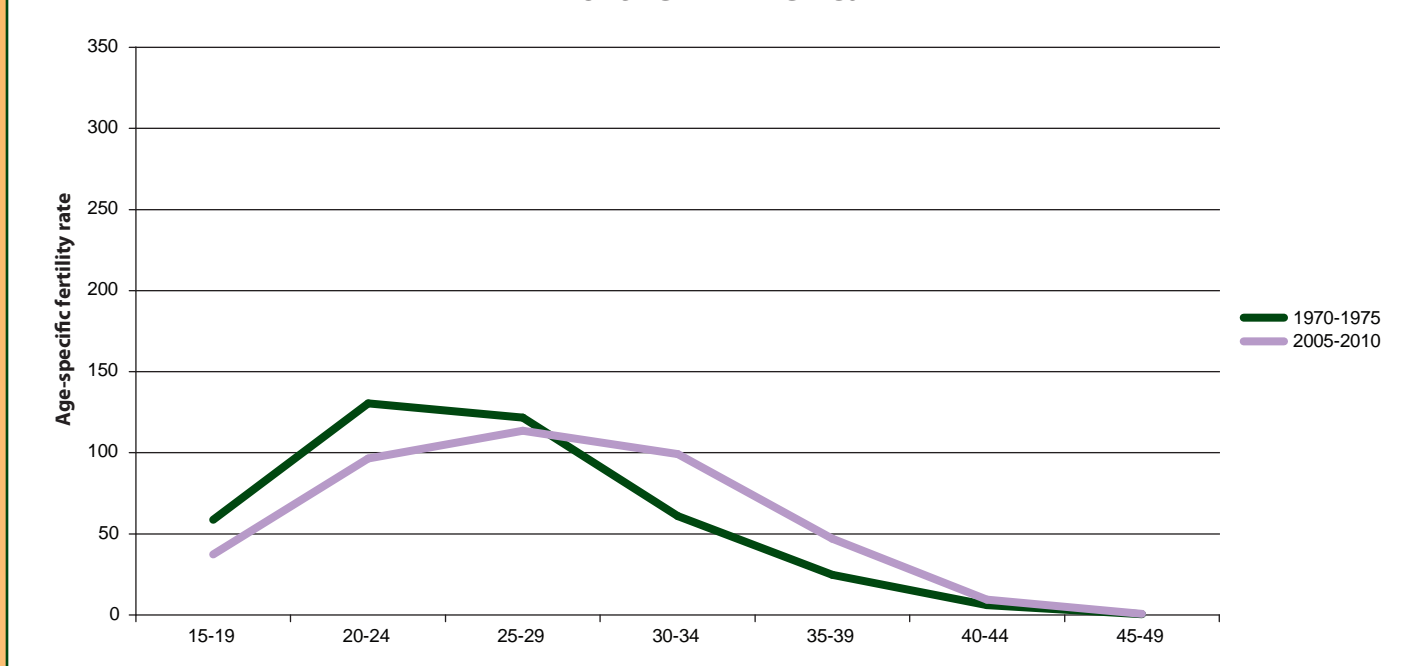
Europe



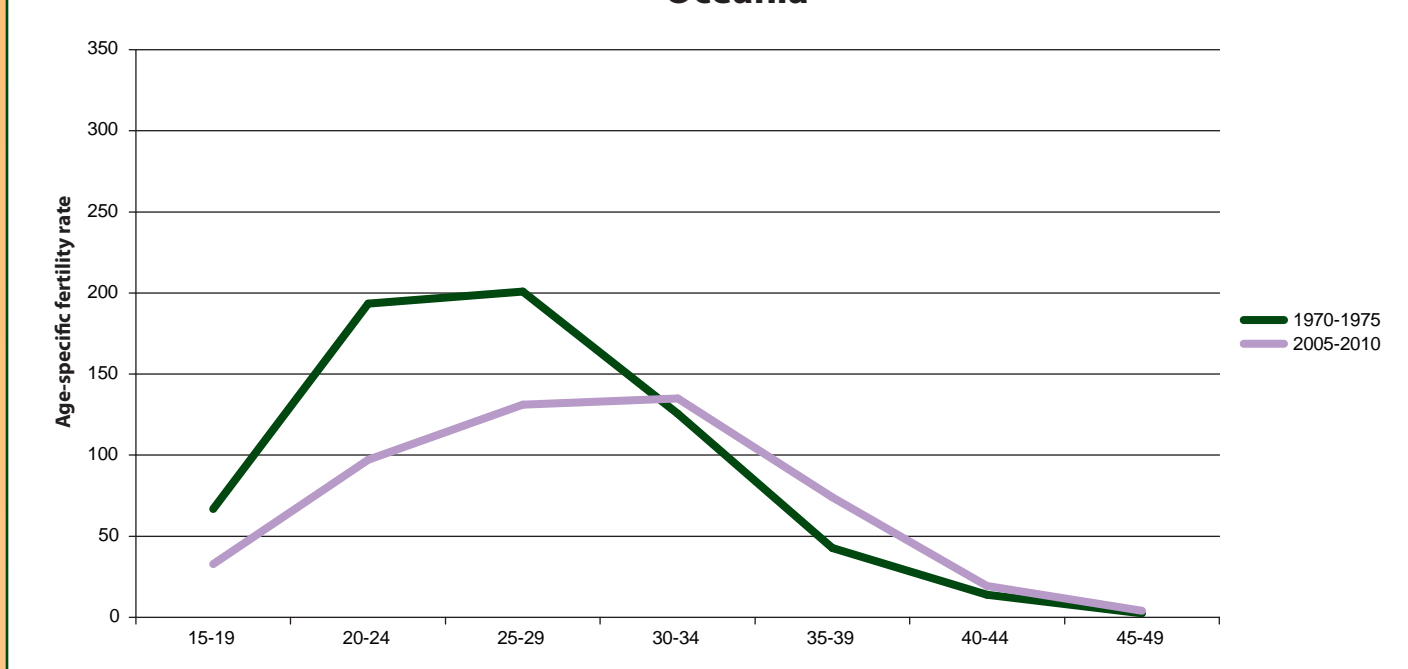
Latin America and the Caribbean



Northern America



Oceania



Copyright © United Nations, 2014
All rights reserved
ST/ESA/SER/A/340
Sales No. 14.XIII.5
Enquiries should be directed to:
Director, Population Division
Department of Economic and Social Affairs
United Nations
New York, NY 10017
United States of America
population@un.org
Fax number: 1 212 963 2147

Published by the United Nations, New York
13-60545—January 2014—2,817

USD 12.00
ISBN 978-92-1-151514-5



Economic & Social Affairs

WORLD FERTILITY PATTERNS 2013



United Nations
Department of Economic and Social Affairs
Population Division