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WORLD POPULATION PROSPECTS 2019: Ageing in G20 countries

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Presently there are about half a billion older persons aged 65 years or older living in G20 member states. With life expectancy in all G20 member states continuing to rise, this number is expected to grow to over 700 million older persons over the next 20 years, and by 2050 it will likely have passed the one billion mark. While some countries are expected to age rapidly, some others, which are already at a more advanced stage of ageing, are experiencing a slow-down in this process. This demographic transformation will profoundly affect the health and socioeconomic development of all nations. Given the right conditions, population ageing will continue to be a human success story, essential to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

*The following key findings are based on **Profiles of Ageing in G20 countries**, which are informed by **World Population Prospects 2019**. The Profiles of Ageing present a selection of key ageing indicators for the world, regions and sub-regions, development and income groups, and countries or areas.*

Ten key findings

1. The population of G20 member states, more than half of the world's total, is growing slowly

The total population of G20 member states is estimated at 4.6 billion in 2019, accounting for nearly 60 per cent of the world's population (7.7 billion). In the coming decades, the G20 population is expected to grow slowly to reach five billion in 2050, reducing its share of the global population to 52 per cent.

2. A growing number of G20 countries are expected to experience population decline

Between 1990 and 2019, population growth was positive in all G20 countries except for the Russian Federation, where the total population decreased slightly. In half of the G20 countries, the population grew by over 40% during the last thirty years. Most G20 countries will continue to experience positive growth in the next few decades. However, Japan, Italy, the Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation, Germany and China are likely to start to see population decline (negative population growth) before 2050. .

3. The absolute number of older persons is increasing in all G20 member countries

G20 member countries are presently (2019) home to more than 70 per cent of the world's population aged 65 years or over ("older persons"). All G20 member states will experience an increase in the number of older persons during the coming 30 years, with the smallest increases expected for the Russian Federation, Germany, Italy and Japan (up to 1.3 times the number in 2019), while the largest increases are anticipated in Indonesia, Mexico and Saudi Arabia (at least 2.5 times their 2019 numbers). The population aged 80 years or over (80+) is growing even faster than the number of older persons overall.

4. The share of older and oldest persons is increasing in all G20 populations

The share of older persons (65+) is at present (2019) above 10 per cent of the total population in 12 of the 19 G20 member states. That share is lowest in Saudi Arabia (3.4%) and highest in Japan (28%). By the year 2050, all G20

continues

member states are projected to have at least 10 per cent of their populations at ages 65 and above, with values of more than one third in Italy, Japan and the Republic of Korea. The share of “oldest persons” (aged 80+) will increase rapidly in most countries, surpassing 15% of the total population in Japan and Korea by 2050.

5. Female predominance at the older ages

Presently in all G20 countries except for Saudi Arabia, women account for more than half of the population aged 65 or over. The largest share of women amongst older persons is that of the Russian Federation (67% female). More than 60 per cent of persons aged 80 or over in G20 countries are women. Despite the projected continued increase in male life expectancy, women will remain the majority of older persons in all G20 countries except in Saudi Arabia, where older men will continue to outnumber older women until 2050.

6. Women continue to live longer than men, but the gap is closing

Women outlived men by an average of 4.7 years in the G20 member states during 2015–2020, leading to female predominance at the older ages mentioned above. In the coming years, because of relatively rapid increases in male survival, the gender gap in life expectancy at birth is projected to narrow by half a year between now and 2050.

7. The median age of G20 member states will continue to rise

The median age of G20 member states was 28.3 years in 1990, ranging from 19.5 years in Saudi Arabia to 37.6 years in Germany. The median age of the G20 member states increased to 32.9 years in 2015, ranging from under 27 years in India and South Africa to over 45 years in Italy, Germany and Japan. The median age is expected to increase further, by almost 10 years between now and 2050, reaching 42.2 years for G20 countries as a group, with the lowest values expected in South Africa and Indonesia (under 38 years) the highest in Japan and the Republic of Korea (55 years or more).

8. The potential old-age support ratio is projected to decrease in all countries of the G20

The potential old-age support ratio in the G20 countries was on average eight persons aged 20–64 per person aged 65 or over in 1990, ranging from 16 in Saudi Arabia to four in France, Italy, Germany and the United Kingdom. That ratio has decreased in all G20 member states, except for Saudi Arabia, decreasing to less than six persons aged 20–64 per person aged 65 or over in 2019. This support ratio is projected to continue to decline and to reach an average of three in 2050. The lowest ratios are expected in Japan (1.2) and the Republic of Korea (1.3) and the highest, in South Africa (5.8) and India (5.8).

9. Living arrangements of older persons vary across the G20 member states

The most recent United Nations estimates on the living arrangements of older persons (aged 65+) show considerable variations across G20 countries. Living alone among older persons is very common in countries of Europe (prevalence of more than 30%) while living with extended family is the most common living arrangement for older persons in India, Indonesia and South Africa (more than 60%). In all other G20 states, the most common living arrangement for older persons is to live only with a spouse (in households with no children or other household members).

10. Policy recommendations

Given the right conditions, population ageing will not lead to economic decline — just the opposite may be true under the right conditions. Governments may consider supporting continuing and lifelong education and health care for all; encourage savings behaviour and healthy lifestyles throughout the life course; promote employment among women, older persons and others traditionally excluded from the labour force, including through a gradual increase in the official retirement age; promoting family-friendly policies to facilitate work-life balance; and encouraging gender equality in both public and private life.



Prepared by the Population Division of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, these key findings are based on **World Population Prospects 2019: Highlights**, a report presenting the main results of the 26th round of official global population estimates and projections by the United Nations. More work of the Population Division is available at www.unpopulation.org. G20 Osaka Summit - Ageing.