



# The World Population Situation in 2014

Special Session of the General Assembly on  
the follow-up to the Programme of Action of  
the International Conference on  
Population and Development beyond 2014



United Nations, New York · 22 September 2014

## Ten key findings

**1. The world's population continues to grow, albeit at slower rates.**

In 2011, the world's population surpassed 7 billion, and may reach 9.6 billion in 2050. Between 2010 and 2014, the world's population grew at a rate of 1.2 per cent per annum, compared to 1.5 per cent per annum observed during 1994's International Conference on Population and Development, and is expected to keep decelerating.

**2. Future population growth will be predominately concentrated in Africa and Asia.**

Africa and Asia combined will account for 90 per cent of the growth in the world's population between 2014 and 2050. Approximately 40 per cent of the population growth will occur in the least developed countries in the world.

**3. In the next few decades, more than forty countries are expected to experience population decline.**

Population decline and the acceleration of population ageing are important concerns for a growing number of governments. Between 2014 and 2050, the populations of more than 40 countries are expected to decrease. Europe is projected to experience population decline after 2020.

**4. Countries are demographically more diverse than ever before.**

Considerable population diversity exists in future trajectories, driven mostly by differences in fertility. Between 2014 and 2050, all geographic regions should experience reductions in population growth rates. However, major differences will persist. In 2050, it is expected that Africa will be growing more than six times as fast as Latin America and the Caribbean and more than 15 times as fast as Asia.

**5. The "unmet need" for contraceptives remains high, despite family planning successes.**

In 2013, more than 90 per cent of Governments supported family planning programmes. Using 1994 as a baseline, however, only a few countries met the minimal benchmark of a 50 per cent reduction in unmet need, defined as the proportion of women who want to stop or delay child-bearing but are not using contraception.

- Increased efforts will be needed to provide universal access to voluntary and high-quality family planning information, counselling and services for all countries of the world.

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**6. Despite improvements in life expectancy, significant gaps remain.**

Life expectancy at birth for the world rose from 65 years in the period 1990-1995 to 70 years in the period 2010-2015. However, the gap in life expectancy at birth between developed countries and least developed countries, remains high, at 17.1 years.

- Increased efforts to meet the targets for life expectancy, infant mortality, child mortality and maternal mortality included in the ICPD Programme of Action will be needed.

**7. International migration has increased in demographic significance and development impact.**

In 2013, the number of international migrants worldwide reached 232 million, up from 154 million in 1990. There are more people living outside their country of birth than ever before, and it is expected that the numbers will increase in the future.

- With international migration increasingly recognized as an enabler of social and economic development, increased efforts are needed to ensure regular, safe and orderly migration.

**8. While the number of young persons stabilises, the number of older persons will continue to increase in all parts of the world.**

The number of young people has grown rapidly, but should stabilise over the next 35 years. The number and proportion of older people, in contrast, are expected to continue rising. Globally, the share of older persons (aged 60 years or older) in the total population increased from 9 per cent in 1994 to 12 per cent in 2014, and is expected to reach 21 per cent by 2050.

- Better policies are needed to meet the needs of ageing societies, to ensure older persons' economic security and well-being later in life and to remove barriers to their full participation in society, while protecting their rights and dignity.

**9. The future rise in the urban population creates both opportunities and challenges.**

More than half of the world's population now lives in urban areas. It is expected that almost all of the future population growth of the world will be absorbed by urban areas. The rapid growth of urban populations presents challenges to sustainable urban planning and good governance.

- Urban policies are needed that improve access to education, health care, housing and other services, especially for the urban poor, and expand economic opportunities, while reducing the environmental impact of human activity.

**10. Population trends shape the global context of the post-2015 UN development agenda.**

People are at the heart of sustainable development. Few factors will shape the global development agenda as fundamentally as the size, structure and spatial distribution of the world's population.

- Increased knowledge and understanding of population trends is key to develop and carry out a successful post-2015 development agenda, and to achieve other internationally agreed development goals.