

Population Facts

Department of Economic and Social Affairs • Population Division

expected to add another billion in just 35 years (by 2044), times more populous than either Europe or Latin America even as its fertility drops from 4.6 children per woman in 2005-2010 to 3.0 children per woman in 2040-2045.

Asia's population, which is currently 4.2 billion, is expected to peak around the middle of the century (it is projected to reach 5.2 billion in 2052) and to start a slow decline thereafter. Consequently, whereas in 2100 Asia's population was four times as large as that of Africa (4.2 billion vs. 1.0 billion), by 2100 it may be only 28 per cent higher than that of Africa (4.6 billion in Asia vs. 3.6 billion in Africa).

The populations of all other major areas combined (the Americas, Europe and Oceania) amount to 1.7 billion in 2011 and are projected to rise to nearly 2 billion in 2060 and then decline very slowly, remaining still near 2 billion by the turn of the century. Among them, the population of Europe is projected to peak around 2025 at 0.74 billion and decline thereafter. The population of Latin America and the Caribbean is projected to reach a maximum around 2057 at 0.75 billion, but those of Northern America and Oceania are projected to continue increasing, albeit slowly, until 2100.

By the turn of the century, Africa's population, which in 2011 was equivalent to 61 per cent of the population of the Americas, Europe and Oceania taken together, might surpass them by 83 per cent. In 2100, Africa could be five times as populous as Northern America and over 4

Figure 2. Total population by major region, medium variant (billions)

Source: See note 1

3. Population growth in least developed countries

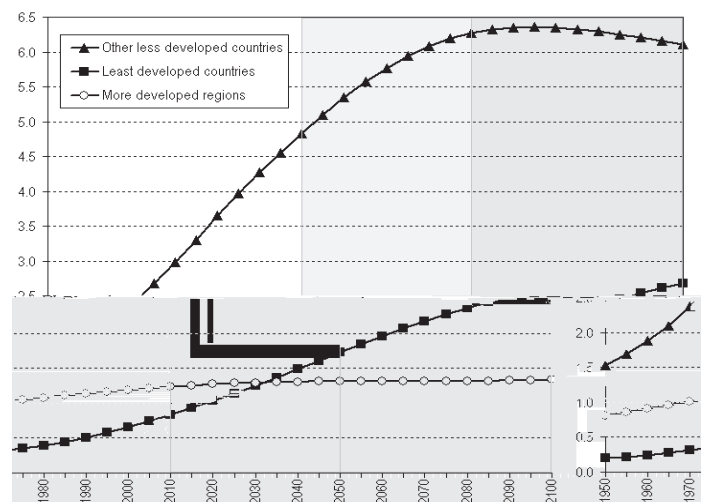
The population of the least developed countries is projected to surpass the population of the more developed regions by 2035. By 2100, the population of the least developed countries as a group is projected to be twice that of the more developed regions according to the medium variant.

According to the medium variant, the population of the more developed regions will remain largely unchanged between 2011 and 2100, passing from 1.2 billion in 2011 to 1.3 billion in 2100. In contrast, the population of the least developed countries, as a group, is projected to more than triple, passing from 0.85 billion in 2011 to 2.7 billion in 2100.

Such contrasting trends are shaped by the very different fertility levels that characterize those two groups of countries today. In the more developed regions, average fertility is estimated at 1.7 children per woman in 2005-2010, a number considerably below replacement level. Although the medium variant projects increasing fertility for the more developed regions as a whole, their average fertility does not surpass replacement level during the whole projection period (2010-2100).

Among the least developed countries, average fertility was estimated at 4.4 children per woman in 2005-2010

Figure 3. Projected population by development region, medium variant (billions)



Source: See note 1

both maintaining a positive rate of change throughout 2010-2100. By 2095-2100, the annual rate of population change in the instant-replacement scenario is nearly double that in the medium variant (0.12 per cent vs. 0.06 per cent).

The high variant, whose fertility remains just half a child above the fertility in the medium variant over the projection period, has annual rates of population change that stabilize at 0.8 per cent per year after 2060. Such high rates of change lead to rapid growth in the population, which keeps on gaining a billion people every 10 or 11 years during the whole 21st century.

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