

1. The household: A fundamental unit of society

A household is a group of persons who make common provision of food, shelter and other essentials for living. Households are at the centre of many demographic, social and economic processes, since decisions about childbearing, living arrangements, education and health care, labour force participation, migration and savings often are made at the household level.

The characteristics of households, including their size and composition, are closely associated with sustainable development, poverty and well-being in general, as well as with patterns of consumption are shaping the human impact on the environment. This brief summarises estimates of household size and composition of the newly compiled United Nations Database on Household Size and Composition.

2. Average household size across the globe ranges from 2 to 9 persons per household

Small average household sizes, of fewer than three persons per household, were found in most countries of Europe and Northern America. For example, households in Monaco and in Serbia averaged 1.5, and 1.8, persons, respectively, with 2.5 persons per household in the

1. Average household size has declined nearly every where# mirroring the fall in fertility rates

In)rance, for e*ample, average household size fell from 7.8 persons per household in 1975 to 6.7 in 2015, at the same time that the total fertility rate fell from 2.5 to 1.8 live births per woman. In Kenya, the average household size fell from 9.7 persons per household in 1975, to 6.2 in 2015, concurrent with total fertility decline from 5.8 to 2.2 live births per woman. In addition to fertility, trends in household size are influenced by trends in health, longevity and migration: cultural patterns surrounding intergenerational co-residence, home leaving, cohabitation, marriage and divorce: and socioeconomic

3one-father households are rare, comprising between \$

