

# 4.1 Total and urban population

**World population surpassed 8 billion during 2022**



**World population growth rate dipped down to 0.8% in 2022**



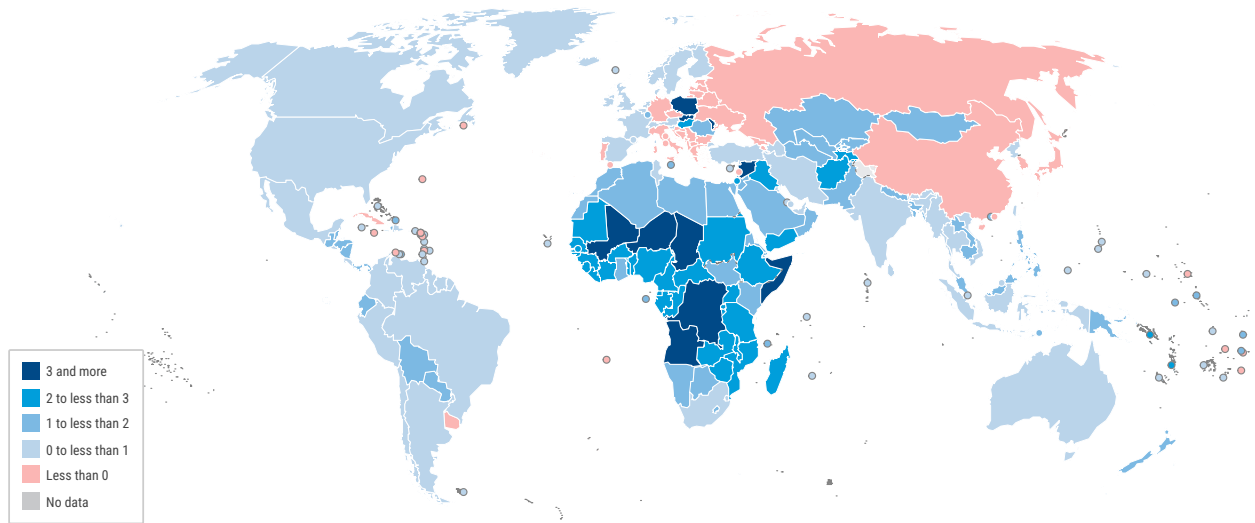
**Five in six people lived in a developing economy in 2022**



**57% of the world's population lived in urban areas in 2022**



**Map 1. Annual population growth, 2022**  
(Percentage)



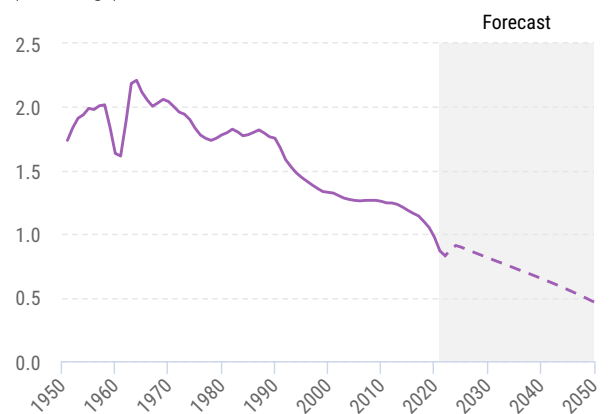
## Slowdown of world population growth

The world population is estimated to have surpassed 8 billion towards the end of 2022. Since the late 1980s, population growth has gradually slowed down. This slowdown was especially accentuated during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. Population growth has been projected to be 0.8 per cent in 2022 and is expected to accelerate in 2023, before continuing its descent towards a forecast 0.5 per cent annual growth in 2050.

Population was projected to decrease in 42 economies in 2022, including Bermuda, China, Germany, and Jamaica, which had all seen increases in 2021. The population of 62 economies is projected to be lower in 2050 than in 2022, including the four aforementioned economies. India has been projected to overtake China as the most populous country in the world in 2023.

Population movements from Ukraine to neighboring countries contributed to some economies in Eastern Europe having the fastest growing populations in 2022. Among continents, the population of Africa is growing fastest, with some African economies recording annual growth rates above 3 per cent.

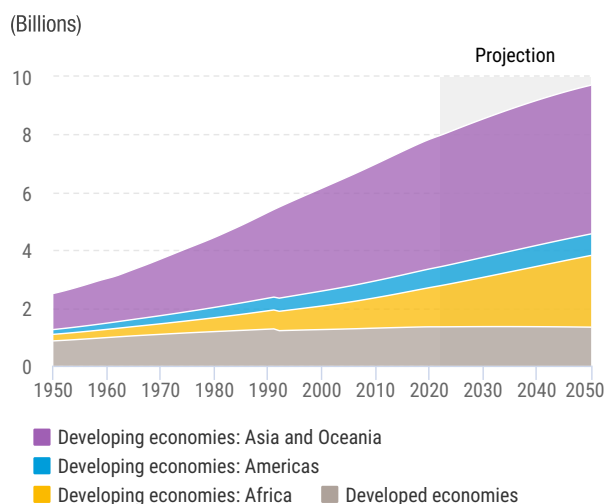
**Figure 1. Annual growth rate of world population**  
(Percentage)



Note: Annual exponential rate of growth of the population (see on the [Calculations methods](#) page).

## Developing economies drive population growth

**Figure 2. World population by group of economies**



Over the last 25 years, the world population has increased by 2.1 billion people. Almost all this growth has occurred in developing economies, mainly in Asia and Oceania (1.1 billion) and Africa (0.7 billion). In 2022, five in six people in the world lived in a developing economy.

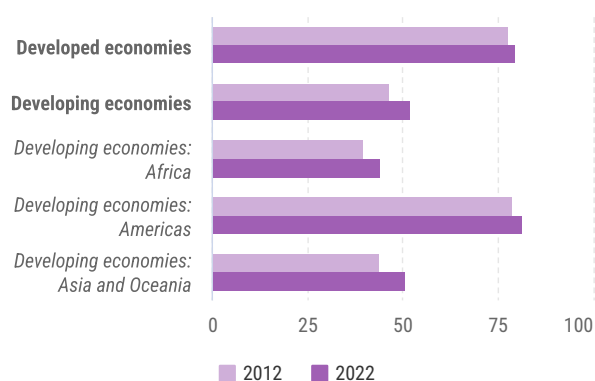
In the coming 25 years, the global population is projected to grow by 1.6 billion people. The population of the economies classified today as developing will continue to increase. Africa is expected to lead this growth (0.9 billion) followed by developing economies in Asia and Oceania (0.6 billion).

## Urbanization continues

All over the world, a growing proportion of the population lives in cities. In 2012, 52.5 per cent lived in urban areas. The share of urban population was projected to have increased to 56.9 per cent in 2022. It is generally higher in the developed (79.7 per cent in 2022) than in the developing world (52.3 per cent). In LDCs, the people living in urban areas are in the minority (35.8 per cent).

Over the last ten years, urbanization has been most pronounced in developing economies, especially in Asia and Oceania, which saw the urban rate increase from 44.0 in 2012 to 50.6 per cent in 2022. Africa has seen a 4.6 percentage point increase in the same period. By contrast, the share of people living in urban areas was already high in developing economies of the Americas and further urbanization has been relatively modest.

**Figure 3. Urban population by group of economies**  
(Percentage of total population)



## Concepts and definitions

The population estimates and projections reported in this chapter were made in 2022 and represent the population present in an economy (including residents, migrants and refugees) as of 1 July of a given year (UN DESA, 2022a, 2022b).

The figures for the years from 2022 to 2050 are based on the medium fertility variant projection. The assumptions for these projections imply that the average fertility rate of the world will decline from 2.3 births per woman in 2021 to 2.1 in 2050. The United Nations also produce other projection variants. Their outcome is highly dependent on the path that future fertility takes (UN DESA, 2022b).

Urban population is defined as the population living in areas classified as urban according to the criteria used by each country or territory. The latest estimates and projections for urban population were made in 2018 (UN DESA, 2018, 2019).

For references, see UNCTAD Handbook of Statistics 2023, annex 6.4

**Table 1. Total population by group of economies (as of 1 July)**

Group of economies	Population			Annual growth rate <sup>a</sup>		
	(Millions)			(Percentage)		
	2017	2022	2050	2017-2022	2022	2022-2050
<b>World</b>	7 600	7 975	9 709	1.0	0.8	0.7
Developed economies	1 333	1 343	1 332	0.1	-0.0	-0.0
Developing economies	6 266	6 632	8 377	1.1	1.0	0.8
Developing economies: Africa	1 262	1 425	2 483	2.4	2.3	2.0
Developing economies: Americas	631	656	745	0.8	0.6	0.5
Developing economies: Asia and Oceania	4 373	4 550	5 149	0.8	0.6	0.4
<b>Selected groups</b>						
Developing economies excluding China	4 856	5 206	7 065	1.4	1.3	1.1
Developing economies excluding LDCs	5 267	5 506	6 449	0.9	0.7	0.6
LDCs	999	1 125	1 928	2.4	2.3	1.9
LLDCs	501	564	954	2.4	2.3	1.9
SIDS (UN-OHRLLS)	67	70	84	1.0	0.9	0.6
BRICS	3 175	3 263	3 421	0.5	0.3	0.2
G20	4 807	4 932	5 181	0.5	0.4	0.2

<sup>a</sup> Exponential growth rate (see on the [Calculation methods](#) page).

**Table 2. Urban population by group of economies (as of 1 July)**

Group of economies	Urban population			Share in total population		
	(Millions)			(Percentage)		
	2017	2022	2050	2017	2022	2050
<b>World</b>	4 162	4 540	6 605	54.8	56.9	68.0
Developed economies	1 050	1 070	1 153	78.7	79.7	86.6
Developing economies	3 112	3 470	5 451	49.7	52.3	65.1
Developing economies: Africa	532	634	1 463	42.1	44.5	58.9
Developing economies: Americas	507	535	654	80.3	81.5	87.7
Developing economies: Asia and Oceania	2 074	2 301	3 334	47.4	50.6	64.8
<b>Selected groups</b>						
Developing economies excluding China	2 295	2 563	4 400	47.3	49.2	62.3
Developing economies excluding LDCs	2 781	3 067	4 438	52.8	55.7	68.8
LDCs	331	403	1 013	33.1	35.8	52.5
LLDCs	153	180	435	30.5	32.0	45.6
SIDS (UN-OHRLLS)	40	43	56	59.6	60.7	67.4
BRICS	1 598	1 753	2 316	50.3	53.7	67.7
G20	2 840	3 045	3 814	59.1	61.7	73.6

 **Table 3. Most populated economies (as of 1 July)**

Economy	Population	Total		Share in total population	Urban	
		Annual growth rate <sup>a</sup>			Annual growth rate <sup>a</sup>	
	(Millions)	(Percentage)		(Percentage)	(Percentage)	
	2022	2017-2022	2022-2050	2022	2017-2022	2022-2050
China	1 426	0.2	-0.3	63.6	2.1	0.5
India	1 417	0.9	0.6	35.9	2.2	2.0
United States of America	342	0.5	0.4	83.2	0.7	0.6
Indonesia	276	0.8	0.5	57.9	2.0	1.3
Pakistan	236	1.7	1.6	37.7	2.4	2.7
Nigeria	219	2.4	2.0	53.5	4.0	2.9
Brazil	215	0.6	0.2	87.6	0.9	0.4
Bangladesh	171	1.1	0.6	39.7	3.2	2.0
Russian Federation	145	-0.1	-0.3	75.1	0.1	0.1
Mexico	128	0.7	0.4	81.3	1.1	0.7
Japan	124	-0.4	-0.6	92.0	-0.3	-0.5
Ethiopia	123	2.6	2.0	22.7	4.8	3.9
Philippines	116	1.6	1.1	48.0	2.1	2.0
Egypt	111	1.7	1.3	43.0	1.9	2.2
Congo, Dem. Rep. of the	99	3.2	2.8	46.8	4.5	3.9
Viet Nam	98	0.9	0.3	38.8	2.8	1.7
Iran (Islamic Republic of)	89	0.9	0.4	76.8	1.6	0.8
Türkiye	85	0.8	0.4	77.0	1.4	0.8
Germany	83	0.2	-0.2	77.6	0.3	0.1
Thailand	72	0.2	-0.2	52.9	1.7	0.8

<sup>a</sup> Exponential growth rate (see on the [Calculation methods](#) page).