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Statistical Brief

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Our Increasingly Populated World

World population continues to grow. As recently as 1970, only 6 countries had over 100 million inhabitants; 4 have joined the list since; another 5 will be added by 2020. This Brief presents the Census Bureau's latest estimates and projections of world-wide population totals, population growth, fertility, life expectancy, infant mortality, population density, and contraceptive use. Data come from the International Data Base, housed at the Bureau's Center for International Research (CIR).

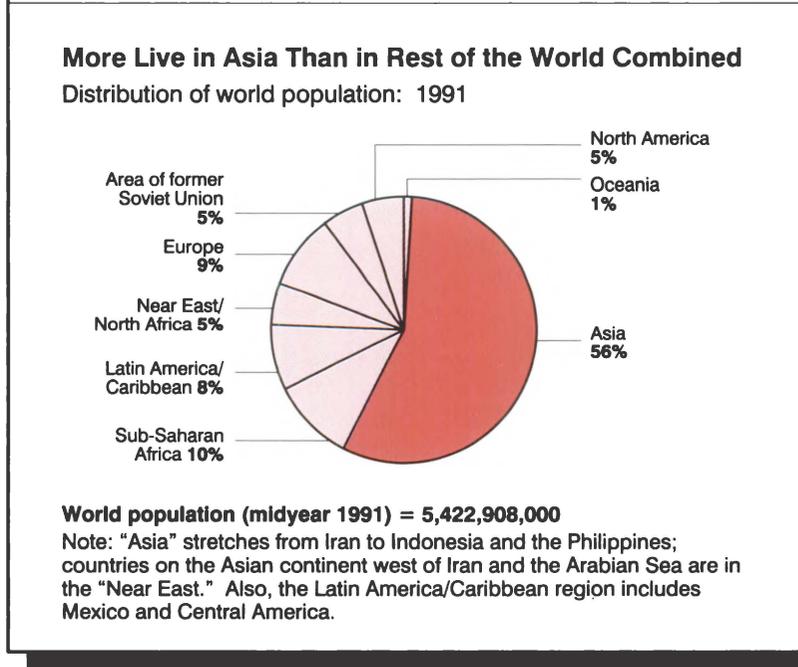
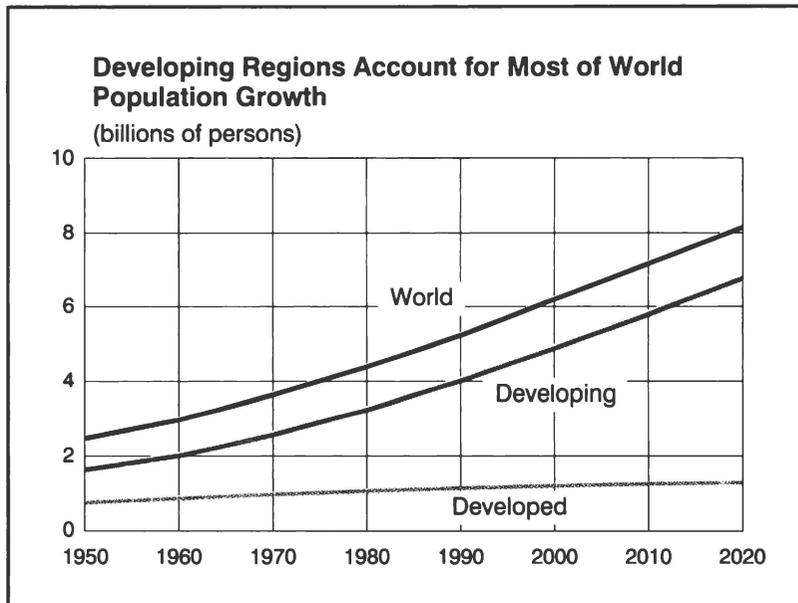
Rate of natural increase is four times as high in developing world as in the developed world.

It's taken only about 40 years for the world's population to more than double, from under 2.6 billion in 1950 to 5.4 billion in midyear 1991. By 2020, it's projected to reach 8.2 billion. The level of growth, though, has varied significantly between the world's regions, resulting in a changing population distribution:

■ Sub-Saharan Africa was, in 1991, the world's fastest-growing region, with a 3.1 per-

cent rate of natural population increase (births minus deaths). The rates were lower in other regions: 2.6 percent in the Near East and North Africa, 2.0 percent in Latin America and the

Caribbean, and 1.9 percent in Asia (excluding Japan). Relatively high growth rates in these regions during the past several decades have boosted the developing regions' share of world



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BUREAU OF THE CENSUS

Where in the World Do They Live?

Of every 100 people in the world in 1991,

- 21 lived in China (*mainland*)
- 16 lived in India
- 4 lived in Indonesia
- 2 lived in Japan, 2 in Pakistan, and 2 in Bangladesh
- 1 lived in Vietnam, 1 in the Philippines, 1 in Iran, and 1 in Thailand
- 5 lived in the United States
- 3 lived in Brazil
- 2 lived in Mexico

- 5 lived in the former Soviet Union
- 1 lived in Germany, 1 in Italy, 1 in the United Kingdom, and 1 in France

- 2 lived in Nigeria
- 1 lived in Ethiopia
- 1 lived in Turkey and 1 in Egypt.

Thus, 75 of each 100 persons lived in just 22 countries. The other 25 lived in the remaining 184 countries.

Life Expectancy Lower, Infant Mortality Higher in Developing Regions

	Life expectancy at birth (years): 1991	Infant deaths per 1,000 live births: 1991
World	63	65
Sub-Saharan Africa	52	104
Near East/North Africa	66	65
Asia	62	66
Latin America/Caribbean	68	50
North America/Europe/ former Soviet Union	74	14
Oceania	70	26

Life expectancy

- *Highest (country): Japan (79)
- *Lowest (country): Nigeria (49)
- *Among world's 25 most populous countries.

Infant mortality rate

- *Lowest: Japan (4)
- *Highest: Bangladesh (118)

Note: Latin America/Caribbean region includes Mexico and Central America.

the highest (8.4). In other developing regions, the fertility rate ranges from 4.8 in the Near East/North Africa region to 3.2 in both Asia and the Latin America/Caribbean region. The rate for an entire region, however, masks the variation within that region. In the Latin America/Caribbean region, for instance, the fertility rate in Cuba is 1.9; in nearby Haiti, however, the rate stands at 6.3.

Fertility in most developed countries, on the other hand, is below the replacement level of 2.1 — the number of births required for a couple to “replace themselves” in the population. In countries such as Japan, Germany, Italy, and Finland, where fertility is well below this level, the number of deaths will begin to exceed the number of births within the next 20 years.

Population age structures correspond to fertility levels of world regions.

High fertility rates result in a young population. In Sub-Saharan Africa, for instance, nearly one-half (46 percent) of the population is under 15 years old. In contrast, only about 1 in 5 North Americans is this age. At the other end of the age spectrum, a resident of North America is much more likely to be elderly (13 percent) than one who lives in Sub-Saharan Africa (3 percent).

population from 68 percent in 1950 to 78 percent in 1991; by 2020, it is expected to rise to 83 percent.

- In contrast, the rate of natural increase in developed regions was 0.5 percent in 1991. Europe's was even less (0.3 percent). A relatively low growth rate over the last several decades has caused Europe's share of the world's population to fall from 15 percent in 1950 to 9 percent in 1991. By 2020, it should shrink to 6 percent.

High fertility rates lead to faster growth.

Developing regions have both lower life expectancy and higher levels of infant mortality than developed regions (see table above). Yet, their population grows at a much faster rate. Why? Many more births.

Today, the average woman in Sub-Saharan Africa has more than 6 births. In fact, 12 countries in this region have fertility rates of 7 or higher; Rwanda has

Population growth increases density.

Except for relatively rare changes in national boundaries, a country's available land area remains stable. Therefore, population density (the number of persons per square mile of land) increases or decreases with the rate of population change. Back in 1960, Europe was the most densely populated region of the world, with an average of 233 persons per square mile. By 1991, it had been surpassed

by Asia, with 353 persons per square mile (compared with 275 in Europe).

By 2020, due to a growth rate at about the world's average, on top of a very large population base, Asia is expected to be nearly *twice* as densely populated as Europe (522 persons per square mile compared with 286). As a country with a large population and very small land area, Bangladesh was the most crowded country on earth in 1991, with over 2,200 persons per square mile; in 2020, it is expected to still be the most densely populated, with over 4,000 persons per square mile.

Because it has the highest growth rates in the world, Sub-Saharan Africa's population density will increase more than that of any other region. It is projected to have 140 persons per square mile in 2020, more than double 1991's figure.

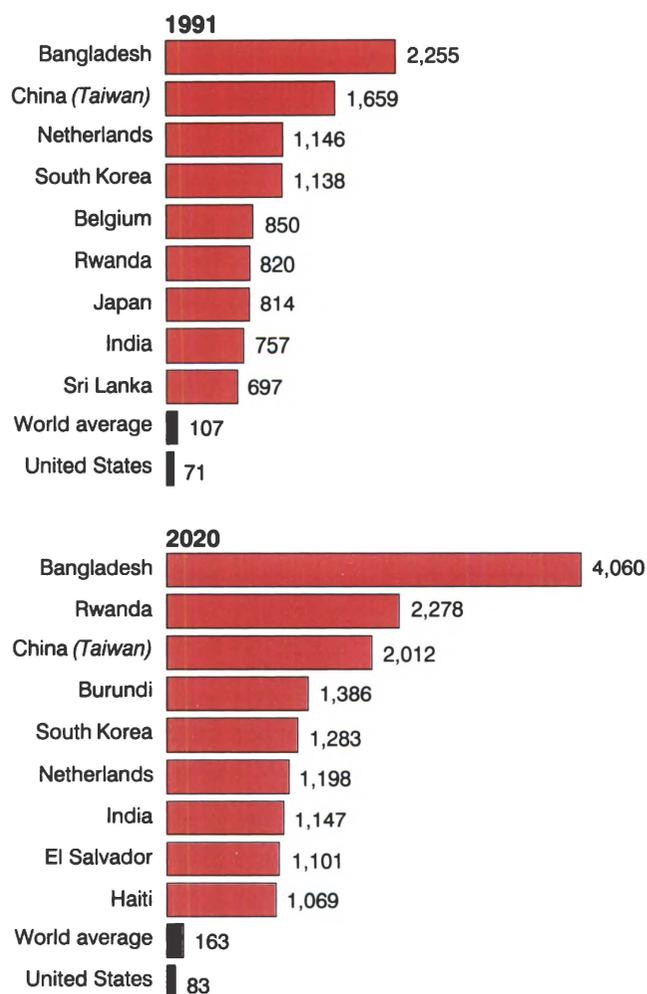
Family planning buys time.

One important factor in reducing population growth is the use of family planning methods. Not surprisingly, considering its higher levels of fertility, Sub-Saharan and North Africa had the lowest levels of contraceptive prevalence during the 1985-1990 period. In 17 of the 18 countries in these regions where information was available on this topic, less than one-half the married women of reproductive ages used contraception; in most, the rate was below 20 percent.

Prevalence was higher in Latin America and the Caribbean, where one-half or more of married women used contraception in 8 of the 16 countries with information. In Asia and the Near East, 8 of the 12 countries with information available had prevalence rates of 50 percent or higher; the figure for China (both mainland and Taiwan) was over 70 percent. In most developing

Bangladesh is the World's Most Densely Populated Country

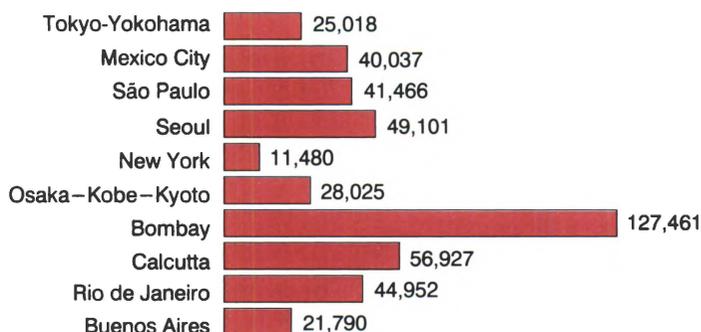
Countries with the most persons per square mile: 1991 and 2020



Note: Graph excludes countries with a population under 5 million in 1991. U.S. included for comparison.

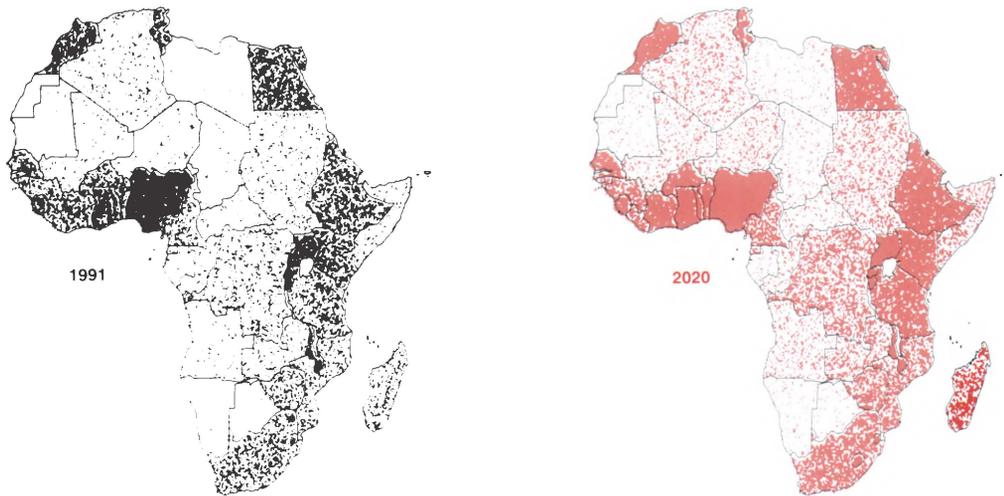
Among the World's 10 Largest Cities, New York is the Least Crowded

Persons per square mile (cities ranked by population size): 1991



In Most African Countries, Population Density Will Double in the Next 30 Years

Population of Africa, by country: 1991 and 2020 (1 dot = 25,000 persons)



Note: Dots are evenly distributed, thus representing average density within each country.

countries that have information on contraceptive trends, use is increasing. For instance:

- The prevalence rate stood at 37 percent in South Korea in 1974; it rose to 70 percent in 1985. Fertility, which stood at 3 births per woman in the mid-1970's, is now well below 2. The prevalence rate in the United States is 74 percent.
- Twenty-six percent of married women in Mexico used contraception in 1978; 53 percent did in 1987. Fertility rates fell from 6.6 in 1971 to 3.4 in 1991.
- Prevalence rates in Kenya rose from 7 percent in 1978 to 27 percent in 1989. Fertility has declined by over one birth per woman in recent years.

Population growth rates in developing regions are declining.

Steadily increasing contraceptive use, along with various other factors (women's higher educational attainment and labor force participation in the modern economic sector, marriage at older ages) will lead to

significant drops in fertility in developing regions in the future. By 2020, the world's fertility rate is expected to fall 0.8 births to 2.6 births per woman. Especially large drops are projected to occur in Sub-Saharan Africa (2.4 fewer births) and the Near East/North Africa region (1.6 fewer births). Women in the Latin America/Caribbean and Asia regions will have 1 and 0.9 fewer births, respectively, on average. According to recent projections:

- By the 2010-2020 period, overall growth will slow to 2.6 percent in Sub-Saharan Africa (where it's now peaking) and 2.1 percent in the Near East/North Africa region (where rates peaked in the early 1980's).
- The level of growth in Asia (excluding Japan) and the Latin America/Caribbean regions, which peaked before 1970, will drop to 1.2 percent — comparable to North America's growth rate in the early 1970's.

Still, because growth rates are applied to a larger population base each year, the number of persons added yearly to the

world's population (95 million in the early 1990's; 100 million in the late 2010's) won't decline for many years.

More information:

World Population Profile: 1991. Series WP/91. For sale by U.S. Government Printing Office. Stock No. 003-024-08074-5, \$9.50.

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This Brief is one of a series that presents information of current policy interest. It includes data primarily from the International Data Base as well as other sources. The data base is a collection of data for individual countries from numerous sources such as administrative and government records and statistical agencies. These data are subject to certain limitations such as differences due to collection methodologies and definitions as well as classification, reporting, and processing errors. Therefore, as with all data from different sources, use caution when comparing these data.