
The World at Seven Billion

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Seven Billion People – Counting On Each Other

In October 2011, Earth’s population reaches 7 billion. This global milestone is both a great opportunity and a great challenge. Although people are living longer and healthier lives, and couples worldwide are choosing to have fewer children, huge inequities persist.

The current pace of growth is adding about 78 million more people every year—the population of Canada, Australia, Greece and Portugal combined.ⁱ

Nearly all that growth—97 of every 100 people—is occurring in less developed countries, some of which already struggle to meet their people’s needs. Gaps between rich and poor are growing. And more people than ever are vulnerable to food insecurity, water shortages, and weather-related disasters.

Meanwhile, many rich and middle-income countries are concerned about low fertility, declining populations and ageing.

Whether we can live together on a healthy planet will depend on the decisions we make now. In a world of 7 billion people and counting, we need to count on each other.

1804: World population reached 1 billion

1927: 2 billion (123 years later)

1959: 3 billion (32 years later)

1974: 4 billion (15 years later)

1987: 5 billion (13 years later)

1998: 6 billion (11 years later)

2011: 7 billion (13 years later)

2025: 8 billion (14 years later)

2043: 9 billion (18 years later)

2083: 10 billion? (40 years later)ⁱⁱ

The rate of increase appears to be slowing. But the large number of people now in their reproductive years, 3.7 billion,ⁱⁱⁱ means world population will keep growing for several more decades.

The date we reach the next billion—and the ones after that—depends on policy and funding decisions made now about maternal and child health care, access to family planning, girls’ education, and expanded opportunities for women.

The Trends

- Average life expectancy worldwide has increased by 20 years since 1950, from 48 to 69 years today.^{iv} Meanwhile, the death rate has steadily declined, as medical breakthroughs and access to sanitation and health care have saved millions of lives.
- The world total fertility rate has declined by nearly half in 50 years (from 5 children per woman in 1950 to 2.5 in 2010-15, with wide country variations). If current trends continue, humankind will number just over 9 billion by 2050 and more than 10 billion by the end of the century.^v
- Global rates mask wide disparity among countries. Japan, most European nations, Singapore and Russia have fertility rates of 1.5 children per woman or lower, while rates are 5.0 or higher in Afghanistan and many African countries.^{vi} If such differences continue, they could bring significant change to the world.
- Fertility levels matter. For example, Germany at 82 million people and Ethiopia with 83 million are now similar in population size. But Germany’s fertility rate is 1.4 children per woman and Ethiopia’s is 4.6. By 2050, Germany’s population will likely decline to 75 million while Ethiopia’s will nearly double, to 145 million.^{vii}

New Factors In The New Century

Economic, political and environmental factors are changing the way populations grow and shift. Since October 1999, when world population reached 6 billion:

- The communications revolution has spread worldwide. Cell phone technology and social media have created instant worldwide news and views from the grassroots. Internet commerce has changed global consumption, migration and trade patterns.
- China has transformed itself into a dominant factor in every global demographic, economic and environmental equation. September 11, 2001, altered the U.S. role in the world and reshuffled global politics, conflict zones and the resulting migration trends.
- The Millennium Development Goals established ending poverty as world leaders' top development priority, with women's reproductive health as key.
- The global economic downturn of 2008-10 raised food prices, undermined developing countries' prospects and slowed the flow of international assistance.
- Donor assistance for family planning has stagnated at US\$400 million per year worldwide, after peaking in 2002 at \$700 million.^{viii}
- HIV/AIDS has become a treatable chronic illness for those with access to the necessary drugs and medical care. For millions in poor countries, the pandemic continues to spread, and HIV/AIDS remains a certain death sentence.
- Climate change has become a much more certain prospect, with its attendant impacts on every aspect of life in every country.

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As of July 2011

Poverty And Inequality: Breaking The Cycle

Reducing poverty and inequality also slows population growth

While global trends point to poverty reduction, wide gaps persist between and within countries. In the poorest countries, extreme poverty, food insecurity, inequality, high death rates and high birth rates are linked in a vicious cycle. Reducing poverty by investing in health and education, especially for women and girls, can break this cycle.

As living conditions improve, parents can feel more confident that most of their children will survive. Many then choose to have smaller families. This takes pressure off families and governments, allowing greater investment in each child's health care and education, improved productivity and better long-term prospects – for the family and for the country.

Longer spacing between pregnancies improves the health of mothers and children, with long-lasting benefits to their families and communities. Women have more options to work, to earn more money, and to spend and save more.

Smaller families can give their countries a “demographic dividend,” which is a spurt in productivity, wealth and economic growth that results when populations have a large number of working-age people with relatively fewer dependents. Reducing poverty and inequality in developing countries is also the best way to reduce migration.

Educating girls and women and expanding their access to credit, training, property ownership and legal rights gives them options for their lives beyond childbearing and expands their economic potential.

The Situationⁱ

- Studies show that about a third of East Asia's major economic growth between 1965 and 1990 was due to the “demographic dividend,” the productivity spurt that followed government investment in health and education, especially for women. Family size declined and the working-age population rose in relation to the number of dependents.
- Children in rural areas are nearly twice as likely to be underweight as urban children.
- The world's poorest countries are those that discriminate most against women, sidelining half the population's productivity. In descending order, the bottom ten countries on the UN's rankings for gender equality are Cameroon, Cote d'Ivoire, Liberia, Central African Republic, Papua New Guinea, Afghanistan, Mali, Niger, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Yemen.ⁱⁱ
- The many dimensions of poverty are worst in South Asia. The 26 poorest African countries together have 410 million people, but eight states in India alone have 421 million people who are just as poor.ⁱⁱⁱ

The Trends

- The number of people living in extreme poverty on \$1.25 per day or less declined from 1.8 billion in 1990 to 1.4 billion in 2005. In developing regions it dropped from 46 percent of the population to 27 percent in that period.
- About one in four children under age five was underweight in 2005 in the developing world. That's down from almost one in three in 1990, with particular success in China.
- The proportion of hungry people has fallen since 1990, and most of that success came in Asia (especially East Asia). But population growth means the absolute number of the hungry has increased – from 815 million to 925 million.
- Many families in the poorest countries already spend more than half of their incomes on food. Since June 2010, another 44 million people were pushed below the poverty line of US\$1.25 a day as a result of higher food prices.^{iv}
- In East Asia, the poverty rate has fallen since 1990 from nearly 60 percent to under 20 percent. But little progress was made in sub-Saharan Africa, where the rate fell only from 58 percent to 51 percent.
- The global economic crisis of 2008-2010 was expected to push another 64 million people into extreme poverty, mostly in sub-Saharan Africa and Eastern and Southeastern Asia.
- Wealth disparities are increasing. In 1960, the richest 20 percent of humanity claimed 70 percent of all income. In 2005, the World Bank found that their share had risen to 77 percent. Meanwhile the poorest fifth saw their share fall from 2.3 percent in 1960 to just 1.5 percent in 2005.^v
- Climate change may derail anti-poverty efforts in many ways, especially by ravaging crop yields through drought, floods and storms. Another 25 million children could be malnourished by 2050, mostly in South Asia.^{vi}

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As of July 2011

Women and Girls: Empowerment and Progress

Unleashing the power of women and girls will accelerate progress on all fronts.

In a world of 7 billion, every person should enjoy equal rights and dignity. We cannot afford to lose the full potential of half the world's population. Investing in women and girls is cost-effective and essential to solving the world's most challenging problems. When women are healthy and educated and can participate fully in society, they trigger progress in their families, communities and nations.

Yet women continue to face widespread discrimination and violence. They lag behind men in access to land, credit and decent jobs, and hold far fewer policy-making roles. Their social roles are often justified by culture or religion, but not biologically determined. These are societal arrangements which vary widely by locality and change constantly.

Advancing women's education, reproductive health and rights will enhance their well-being and productivity, improving prospects for current and future generations. Most of the money women earn is spent on their families' food, education and health care. Thus, investing in girls and women pays: it boosts national security by strengthening families, which promotes economic growth and community peace and stability.

The Situation

- In 1979, the United Nations approved the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), a landmark treaty that offers a practical blueprint for achieving human rights and equality for women around the world.
- Laws and customs often deny women and girls the right to schooling, to own land, inherit property, get credit, receive training or move up in their field of work. Laws against domestic violence are often unenforced. Achieving gender equality will therefore require the support of men, who exercise most of the power in these areas.
- Of the world's 776 million illiterate adults, two-thirds are women.ⁱ
- Women perform some two-thirds of the world's work and produce half of all food, but they earn only 10 percent of the world's income and own 1 percent of the property.ⁱⁱ
- More than 134 million women are "missing" worldwide – because of a preference for boy babies that leads to sex-selective abortions and neglect of infant girls.ⁱⁱⁱ
- In sub-Saharan Africa, girls and women age 15-24 are twice as likely as men their age to become infected with HIV, in part because of economic and social vulnerability.^{iv}
- Despite increasing coverage, HIV antiretroviral drugs reach only half of women in need.^v
- Up to 70 percent of women experience violence in their lifetimes.^{vi} Gender-based violence kills or disables as many women age 15-44 as cancer does.^{vii}
- More than 101 million primary-school-age children are not attending school, and more than half of them are girls.^{viii}
- Poor reproductive health is the leading cause of death and disability among women 15-49 in developing countries.^{ix}
- More than 350,000 women die each year—one every 90 seconds – from complications of pregnancy or childbirth. Nearly all these deaths (99 percent) are in developing countries.^x

The Trends

- The 186 countries that have ratified CEDAW report every four years on their progress for women and girls. The treaty has been a guide for success in reducing sex trafficking and domestic abuse, providing access to education and vocational training, ensuring the right to vote, improving maternal health care, ending forced marriage and child marriage, and ensuring inheritance rights, among other benefits worldwide.
- Nearly all maternal deaths are preventable with cost-effective measures developed countries take for granted, such as access to basic and emergency health care before, during and immediately after delivery.
- Providing women with a full package of family planning and maternal and newborn care would reduce productivity losses related to pregnancy and premature death by 66 percent.^{xi}
- Stereotyping of gender roles and gender based discrimination begins in childhood, so efforts to support gender equality must start there, by addressing the roles of girls and boys and men and women in the household.

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As of July 2011

Young People: Forging the Future

Energetic and open to new technologies, history's largest and most interconnected population of young people is transforming politics and culture

People under 25 make up 43 percent of the world's population, but the percentage reaches 60 percent in the least-developed countries.ⁱ As parents and teachers of the next generation, their choices will determine future population trends. Investing in young people creates a pathway for accelerated development.

When young people can claim their right to health, education and decent working conditions, they become a powerful force for economic development and positive change.

Investing in adolescent girls is one of the smartest investments a country can make. With health, education and opportunities, girls and women can contribute fully to their societies and help break the cycle of poverty.

The Situation

- More than 1.2 billion people are adolescents age 10-19, the parents of the next generation, and 88 percent of those teens live in developing countries.ⁱⁱ
- Of the world's 620 million young people in the labor force, fully 81 million, or 13 percent, were out of work at the end of 2009, the highest number ever. That rate is three times higher than the average adult unemployment rate worldwide.ⁱⁱⁱ
- Millions of young people live on their own or on the streets. Programs of sex education, peer mentoring and reproductive health services can reach them through special messengers: soap operas, comic books, posters, magazines, dramas and music videos.
- About 40 percent of new HIV infections are among young people age 15-24. In this age group, only 40 percent of men and 38 percent of women have accurate knowledge about HIV transmission.^{iv}

The Gender Divide

- Girls are more than half of the 143 million young people who are out of school.^v
- Girls' primary school enrollment rates are high worldwide, approaching those of boys, but their completion rates are below 50 percent in most developing countries. In 19 African countries, fewer than 5 percent of girls complete secondary school.^{vi}
- Some 100-140 million girls and women have undergone female genital mutilation/ cutting, and more than 3 million girls are at risk for the procedure in Africa alone.^{vii}
- Girls are often the last family members to receive food and health care. Nutritional anemia affects an estimated half of all girls in developing countries. It stunts growth and increases the risk for miscarriage, obstructed labour and fistula, stillbirth, premature birth and maternal death.^{viii}
- Worldwide, more than 50 million adolescent girls 15-19 are married, some with little understanding of reproduction. Most will not complete secondary education, and many will become pregnant before their bodies are mature enough to safely deliver a child.^{ix}
- Every year, 16 million adolescent girls become mothers. Half live in just seven countries: Bangladesh, Brazil, Congo, Ethiopia, India, Nigeria and the United States.^x
- Complications of pregnancy and childbirth are the leading cause of death in Africa and South Asia among girls age 15-19.^{xi}
- The proportion of girls age 10-14 that die in pregnancy or childbirth is five times higher than that of women age 20-24, and twice as high among girls age 15-19. The vast majority of these deaths take place within marriage.^{xii}

The Trends

- Adolescents worldwide are generally healthier today than in the past, largely due to investments in early- and mid-childhood health care. Accidents cause a third of adolescent deaths, especially for boys, who are also more prone to violent deaths.^{xiii}
- Many threats to young people from violence, abuse and exploitation are highest during adolescence: boys are forced to work as child soldiers, unpaid farmers or in hazardous jobs; girls are forced into sex or marriage or domestic labour.^{xiv}
- Involving young people in designing and running programmes aimed at helping them often leads to unique approaches, improving the projects' success rate, while teaching the young people communication, negotiation and civic participation skills.^{xv}
- A year of schooling for a girl reduces her children's mortality rate by 5 to 10 percent. With five years of school, her children are 40 percent more likely to live past age 5.^{xvi}
- Each year of secondary schooling increases girls' future wages by 10 to 20 percent, compared to the 5 to 15 percent return on an extra year of schooling for boys.^{xvii}
- Educated women are more likely to resist abuses such as domestic violence, traditions like female genital cutting and discrimination at home, in society or the workplace.^{xviii} These changes transcend generations, resulting in better health for women, their children and eventually their grandchildren.
- In 2007, UN agencies joined to form the UN Adolescent Girls Task Force to make girls a priority in national policies and promote investments in education, health care, data collection, prevention of violence and support for girls' leadership development. By 2015 the Task Force will roll out comprehensive programmes in 20 developing countries; work has already started in Ethiopia, Guatemala, Liberia, and Malawi.

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As of July 2011

Reproductive Health and Rights: The Facts of Life

Ensuring that every child is wanted, and every childbirth is safe, leads to smaller and stronger families.

The worldwide trend toward smaller families—average family size has declined by half since 1950ⁱ — is linked to advances in education and health care and increased opportunities for women. This great global success story can continue only if access to family planning continues to grow worldwide.

Individual decisions determine global population growth. However, some 215 million women in developing countries lack access to effective family planning and are not able to exercise their reproductive rights. Meanwhile, development assistance for contraception has stalled at US\$400 million a year, 50 percent below 1995 levels.ⁱⁱ

Too many women give birth too young, too often or with too little time between pregnancies to survive: every day 1,000 women die giving life, one every 90 seconds. This year an estimated 5.8 million newborns will die before their first birthday.ⁱⁱⁱ The risk is greatest for women in poor countries and for poor women in all countries.

These tragedies leave gaping holes in families, diminish the prospects of the surviving children and weaken communities.

The health of the mother is inseparable from the health of newborns, to the point that the World Health Organization now talks in terms of “maternal-newborn health.”^{iv}

Providing quality reproductive health care and other economic and social encouragements for safe motherhood is a cost-effective strategy that can also help countries concerned about low fertility rates.

The Situation

- Some 215 million women in the developing world want family planning but cannot get it. This unmet need for contraception results in 82 percent of all unintended pregnancies.^v
- Becoming a mother can be dangerous and life-threatening. More than 350,000 women die annually in pregnancy and childbirth, most from preventable causes: one every 90 seconds. Ninety nine percent of all maternal deaths occur in the developing world.^{vi, vii}

The Trends

- World Bank studies have found reproductive health care extremely cost-effective: an investment of US\$4.10 per person could avert 8 percent of the global burden of disease. (That's 90 cents for family planning, \$3 for prenatal and delivery care, and 20 cents to fight sexually transmitted infections.) Another \$1.70 in HIV/AIDS prevention could avert another 2 percent of the disease burden.^{viii}
- Strengthening systems to improve maternal health care also benefits many other areas of health, such as emergency treatment facilities, HIV/AIDS prevention, transportation and the availability of trained medical personnel.^{ix}
- Educating women has a direct impact on reducing child mortality. According to a recent analysis published in *The Lancet*, half the reduction in child mortality over the past 40 years can be directly attributed to better education for women.^x
- Providing pregnant women and their newborns with adequate maternal and newborn care would cost US\$23 billion a year (in 2008 dollars). Also satisfying the unmet need for family planning would add \$3.6 billion – but by averting 50 million pregnancies it would reduce health care costs by \$5.1 billion, thus saving \$1.5 billion: a very cost-effective investment.^{xi}
- Investing to both satisfy the unmet need for family planning and provide adequate maternal and newborn care in the developing world would reduce maternal deaths by more than two-thirds, from 356,000 to 105,000 per year; newborn deaths by more than half, from 3.2 million to 1.5 million; unintended pregnancies by more than two-thirds, from 75 million to 22 million; and unsafe abortions by almost three-quarters, from 20 million to 5.5 million.^{xii}

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As of July 2011

Environment: Healthy Planet, Healthy People

All 7 billion of us, and those who will follow, depend on the health of our planet.

The paramount challenge of this century is to meet the needs of 7 billion human beings now – and the billions to come – while protecting the intricate balance of nature that sustains life.

Demands for water, trees, food and fossil fuels will only increase as world population grows. Human activity has altered every aspect of our planet, including its climate. Shortages of clean water and arable land are already a problem, while species loss continues. The resilience of ecosystems – from fisheries to forests – is threatened.

Impoverished people, who contribute the least to climate change, are likely to suffer the most from its effects – drought, floods, heat waves, tornadoes, blizzards and other extreme weather disasters – and many will seek a better future elsewhere.

Wealthier countries, meanwhile, are consuming resources at a rate that the earth cannot sustain for all humankind. Rising expectations everywhere put more pressure on the earth, and will require everyone to adopt more efficient, 'greener' ways so that all people may have decent lives.

Our collective future depends on rapidly lowering greenhouse gas emissions while reducing excessive consumption. Greater social equity and slower population growth will help make cooperative solutions possible.

The Situation

- The world's richest half-billion people (7 per cent of the global population) are responsible for half the world's emissions of carbon dioxide, a main contributor to global climate change. The poorest half create just 7 per cent of those emissions.ⁱ
- Carbon dioxide emissions of one person in the United States today equal those of around 4 Chinese, 20 Indians, 30 Pakistanis, 40 Nigerians or 250 Ethiopians.ⁱⁱ
- The United States is the world's largest consumer in general: sustaining the lifestyle of the average American uses all the resources available from 21 acres of land (9.5 hectares). Germans require 10 acres (4.2 hectares), while Indians and most Africans require less than 2.2 acres (1 hectare). The world average is 4.8 (2.2 hectares).ⁱⁱⁱ
- Worldwide, some 884 million people have no access to safe drinking water, and 2.6 million lack access to basic sanitation services such as latrines or toilets.^{iv}
- Seeking safety from conflict zones or natural disasters, gainful employment or just a better life, some 214 million people have migrated to live in countries other than their own, and 49 per cent are female.^v

The Trends

- Per-capita water consumption is rising twice as fast as world population. Over the next 20 years, the human need for fresh water will be 40 per cent more than today's.^{vi}
- From 1970 to 2008, world-adjusted net financial savings fell by more than half (from 19 per cent of gross national income to 7 percent) while total emissions of carbon dioxide (the main “greenhouse gas” contributing to climate change) more than doubled.^{vii}
- About 17,000 known species of plants and animals are at current risk of extinction by habitat loss, invasive species, high consumption rates, pollution and climate change that are not being adequately addressed.^{viii}
- This loss of biodiversity reduces human food security, puts remaining species at greater risk of disease and extinction by natural disasters, and reduces possible sources of new medical and scientific breakthroughs.

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As of July 2011

Ageing: An Unprecedented Challenge

Lower fertility and longer lives add up to a new challenge worldwide: ageing populations.

As expansion of family planning allows people to have smaller families, and as people live longer through medical breakthroughs and better access to health care, the proportion of older people is increasing almost everywhere.

This is a major global success story, but it also presents societies with new challenges related to economic growth, health care and personal security for people as they age.

Smaller percentages of people in their prime working years, relative to older or younger dependents, skew social and economic structures. When fertility drops below replacement level, labor shortages may result, because the number of retiring workers each year will eventually exceed the number of new workers coming into the labor market.

Yet healthy older workers represent a growing reservoir of unrealized human capital. When they remain active in the workforce, older people can contribute much to their families, communities and countries. This may require a rethinking of work, family and institutional arrangements.

Population ageing is particularly pronounced in Asia, Europe and Latin America. While more developed countries have higher proportions of older persons, less developed countries are ageing at a faster pace, with less time to prepare.

The Situation

- Average life expectancy is now at an all time high of 69 years (67 for men, 71 for women). But regional disparities are huge: from 54 years in sub-Saharan Africa (53 for men, 55 for women) to 80 in northern Europe (77 for men, 82 for women).ⁱ
- The number of people over age 60 worldwide has been rising steadily. In 1980 there were 384 million people in the world aged 60 or above.
- Now, that figure has more than doubled, to 893 million. By 2050, the number is projected to rise to 2.4 billion.ⁱⁱ
- People age 80 or over used to be rare, but today they are the world's most rapidly growing age group.ⁱⁱⁱ They use a greater proportion of medical and social support services than younger people.
- In the industrialized countries of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), where aging populations are of greatest concern, three-quarters of people age 24-49 are employed, but fewer than 60 per cent of people 50 to 64 are.^{iv}
- Four out of five adults of retirement age or older have no retirement income from pensions or government programs.^v
- Laws in 61 countries require women to retire earlier than men, usually five years earlier, despite women's longer life expectancy. These include Algeria, Austria, Italy, Panama, the Russian Federation, Sri Lanka and the United Kingdom.^{vi}

The Trends

- In the more developed regions, about 1 in 4 people is now over age 60. By 2050, more than 1 in 3 will be. In the least-developed countries, one in 20 people is now over age 60; by 2050, 1 in 9 will be.^{vii}
- By 2050, the number of working-age people available to support each person 65 or older will decline by half worldwide,^{viii} straining government social support and retirement financing.
- In 1950, there were 12 working-age people for every person over 65 worldwide. Now there are 7, and by 2050 there will likely be only three.^{ix}
- The median age worldwide (half the people are older and half are younger) will rise from 29 in 2010 to 42 in 2100.^x But disparities among countries are enormous: Niger's median age now is the world's lowest at 15.5, while Japan's is highest at 44.7.^{xi}
- Programs to encourage older people to keep working – and to encourage employers to hire them – include tax code revisions, pension system reform, training incentives, microcredit programs, health care subsidies and work-time scheduling flexibility.

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As of July 2011

Urbanization: Planning For Growth

The Next Two Billion People Will Live In Cities, So We Need To Plan Now.

Almost all future population growth in the next 40 years will be absorbed by cities of the developing world, which are unprepared for such rapid expansion. Planning needs to begin now to take advantage of the many benefits cities can offer.

While cities concentrate poverty, they also provide the best means of escaping it. Cities have long been the engines of economic growth. Densely populated areas can be more environmentally sustainable than sprawling communities and allow for more efficient provision of services. The ideas, connections and activities in cities often generate the solutions to the problems they create.

Urbanization also accelerates the trend toward smaller families and offers more opportunities for women and young people.

The Situation

- In 1960, one in three people lived in a city. The urban population has more than quadrupled since then, and today about half of all people do:
- 3.4 billion people. By 2045, more than two out of three people will likely live in urban and peri-urban areas.ⁱ
- The 21 “mega-cities” with 10 million or more inhabitants (such as Tokyo, Sao Paulo, Mexico City and New York, the four largest) account for only 9 percent of the world’s urban population.
- Most urbanites (52 percent) live in cities of 500,000 or fewer.ⁱⁱ
- Most people who move to cities seek better jobs and higher incomes, as productive industries, services and technologies tend to cluster in cities: 80 percent of the world’s gross domestic product is thought to be generated in urban areas.ⁱⁱⁱ
- Overall, some 60 percent of urban growth is due to natural increase, with rural-urban migration and reclassification of land accounting for the remainder.^{iv}
- Governments often focus on ways to reduce migrant flows to large cities. Many refuse to give slum dwellers access to legal land tenure, and that lack is often a barrier to access to basic services such as water, sanitation, electricity and waste collection. Meanwhile the threat of eviction gives residents little incentive to make home improvements.^v

The Trends

- More than 200 million slum-dwellers have gained access to improved water, sanitation or more durable and less crowded housing in the last ten years, greatly enhancing their prospects of escaping poverty, disease and illiteracy.^{vi} By mid-century, the world's urban population will likely be the same size as the world's total population was in 2004.^{vii}
- Most cities in the developing world will double in size by 2025.^{viii}
- By 2025, the world will have eight more megacities: Asia will gain another five, Latin America two and Africa one. Today, Tokyo is the largest, with 36.5 million people.^{ix}
- Between 2009 and 2050, Asia's urban population will double, from 1.7 billion to 3.4 billion. Africa's will triple, from 399 million to 1.2 billion, and Latin America and the Caribbean will rise from 462 million to 648 million. Europe's city dwellers, meanwhile, will increase from 531 million to 582 million, and North America's from 285 million to 404 million.^x
- Over the past 10 years, the share of the urban population living in slums in the developing world has declined significantly: from 39 percent in 2000 to 33 percent in 2010. However, in absolute terms, the number of slum dwellers in the developing world is actually growing, and will continue to rise in the near future.^{xi}

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As of July 2011