

Launch of *World Population Prospects 2022: Summary of Results*

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Statement by John Wilmoth, Director of the Population Division,
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Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen.

World Population Prospects is the largest recurrent project of the Population Division. The 2022 edition, which we are launching today, is based on data from more than 1,750 national population censuses, almost 2,900 sample surveys, and information from civil registration and vital statistics systems for 169 countries.

The new report is being released amidst a global crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Even though the evidence remains incomplete at this moment, *World Population Prospects 2022* reflects the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in its estimates of mortality, fertility and migration for 2020 and 2021, and in its projected trends starting in 2022.

For the first time, the 2022 edition of the *World Population Prospects* presents all demographic indicators from 1950 to 2100 in one-year intervals of age and time instead of the five-year intervals we used previously. This greater level of precision allows for more accurate monitoring and analysis of the linkages between population trends and indicators of sustainable development.

There is inherent uncertainty in population projections. This uncertainty depends on the plausible range of future trajectories of mortality, fertility and international migration, which have been assessed for each country or area using demographic and statistical methods. The projections typically become more uncertain over time. An assessment of this uncertainty is included in our analyses in the form of prediction intervals, which represent the plausible range of future trajectories of population size and other indicators.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The global population will continue to grow and could reach 9.7 billion in 2050. It is projected to reach a peak of around 10.4 billion people during the 2080s and to remain at that level until 2100. The projected global population of 10.4 billion at the end of the century is more than a half billion lower than what we projected three years ago.

This difference is due mainly to a downward revision of recent population estimates for China, and to changes in estimated and projected levels of fertility for China and Nigeria in the recent past and near future.

We currently project that India will surpass China to become the world's most populous nation as early as next year, or 2023.

Other salient findings of the report include the following ten key messages:

1. The world's population continues to grow, but the pace of growth is slowing down.
2. Even though policies to reduce fertility will have little immediate impact on the pace of global population growth, they can significantly reduce global population growth after 2050.
3. Rapid population growth presents challenges to achieving sustainable development. In turn, achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly those related to health, education and gender equality, is likely to hasten the transition towards lower fertility.
4. While life expectancy continues to increase globally, large disparities between countries continue to exist.
5. A rising share of the population in the working ages, currently observed in most of sub-Saharan Africa, as well as in parts of Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean, can help boost economic growth per capita, the so-called "demographic dividend".
6. The population of older persons is increasing both in numbers and as a share of the total.
7. More and more countries are beginning to experience population decline.
8. International migration is having important impacts on population trends for some countries. Over the next few decades, migration will be the sole driver of population growth in high-income countries.
9. The COVID-19 pandemic has affected all three components of population change. Global life expectancy at birth fell to 71.0 years in 2021, down from 72.8 in 2019, due mostly to the impact of COVID-19.
10. The COVID-19 pandemic has also interrupted many data collection operations, including the 2020 round of population censuses.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The 2022 edition of the *World Population Prospects* has benefitted from a major technical and methodological upgrade. The new version provides more detailed data, as mentioned earlier, as well as greater transparency concerning the methods applied and the data used to update national-level population estimates and projections.

In closing, I wish to thank and congratulate Mr. Patrick Gerland, who led the technical work in preparing the 2022 edition of the *World Population Prospects*. I would also like to thank Mr. Victor Gaigbe-Togbe and Mr. Pablo Lattes, who led specific aspects of this work, as well as all members of the WPP team and other colleagues in the Population Division who contributed their time, skills and expertise to complete a major upgrade of this important data set and its entire production system.

We would welcome any questions that you may wish to ask.

Thank you.