



**United
Nations**

Department of
Economic and
Social Affairs

Overview of population megatrends since Cairo and prospects for the next 30 years

Expert Group Meeting on Assessing the Status of Implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action and
its Contribution to the Follow-up and Review of the 2030 Agenda
(Hybrid meeting) New York, 19-20 July 2023

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Session I, 19 July 2023

Outline

Selected topics

- Population growth (global/regional)
- Changes in age distribution
- Human capital
- International migration
- Urbanization
- Poverty
- Gender equality

Global population will continue to grow for several more decades...

Milestones

Nov. 2022: 8 billion

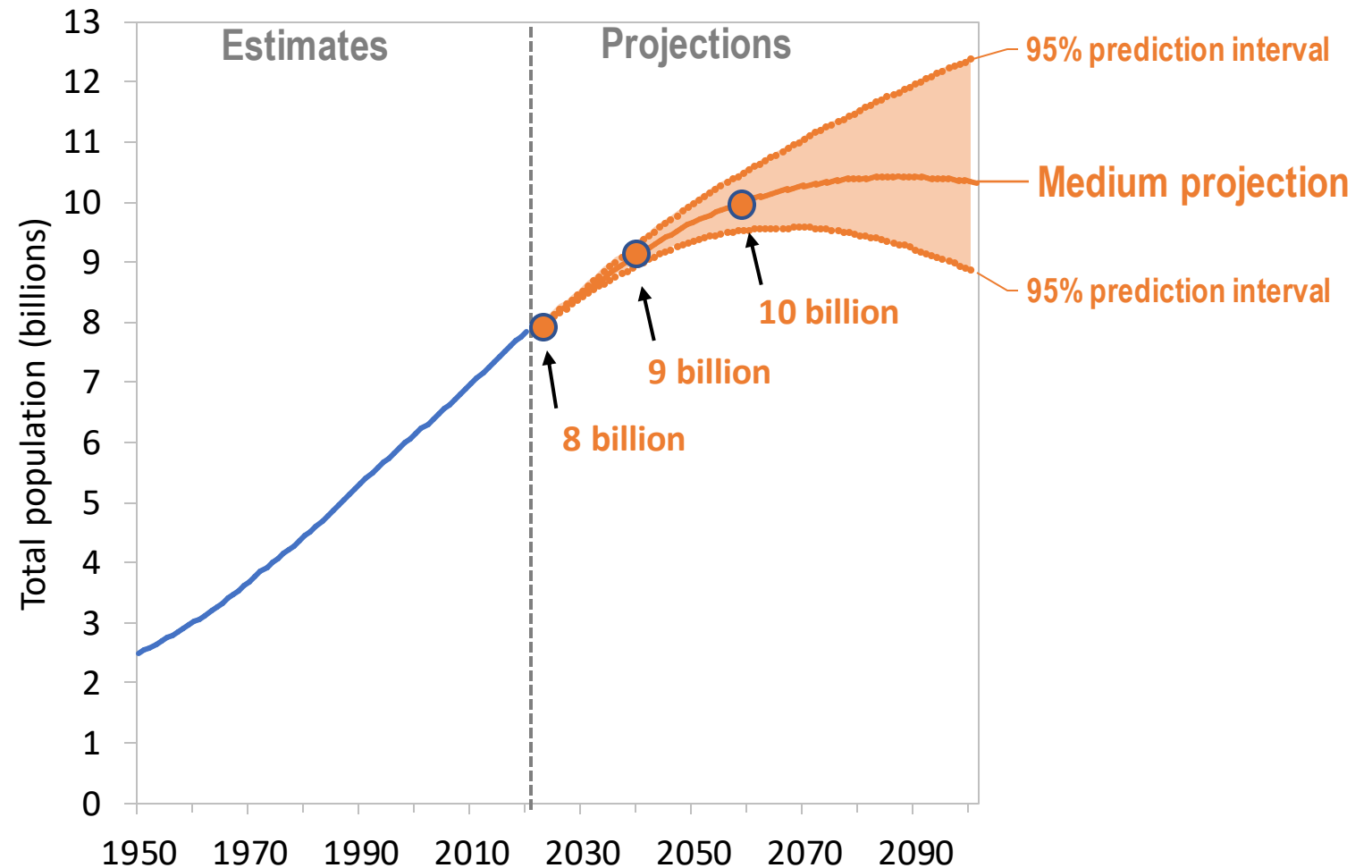
2037: 9 billion

2058: 10 billion

Late 2080s: Possible peak

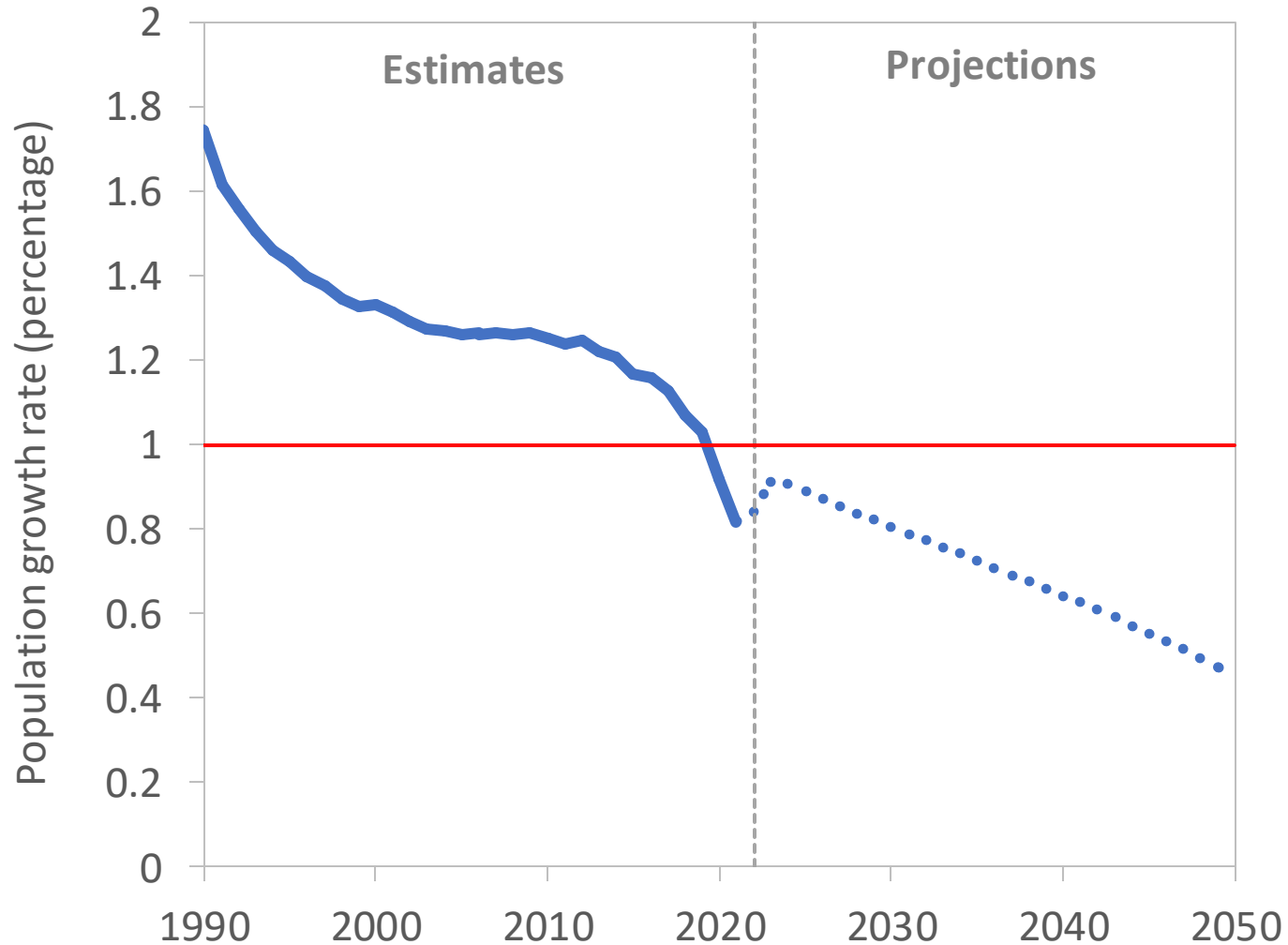
Important point

Uncertainty increases with longer-term projections (after 2050)



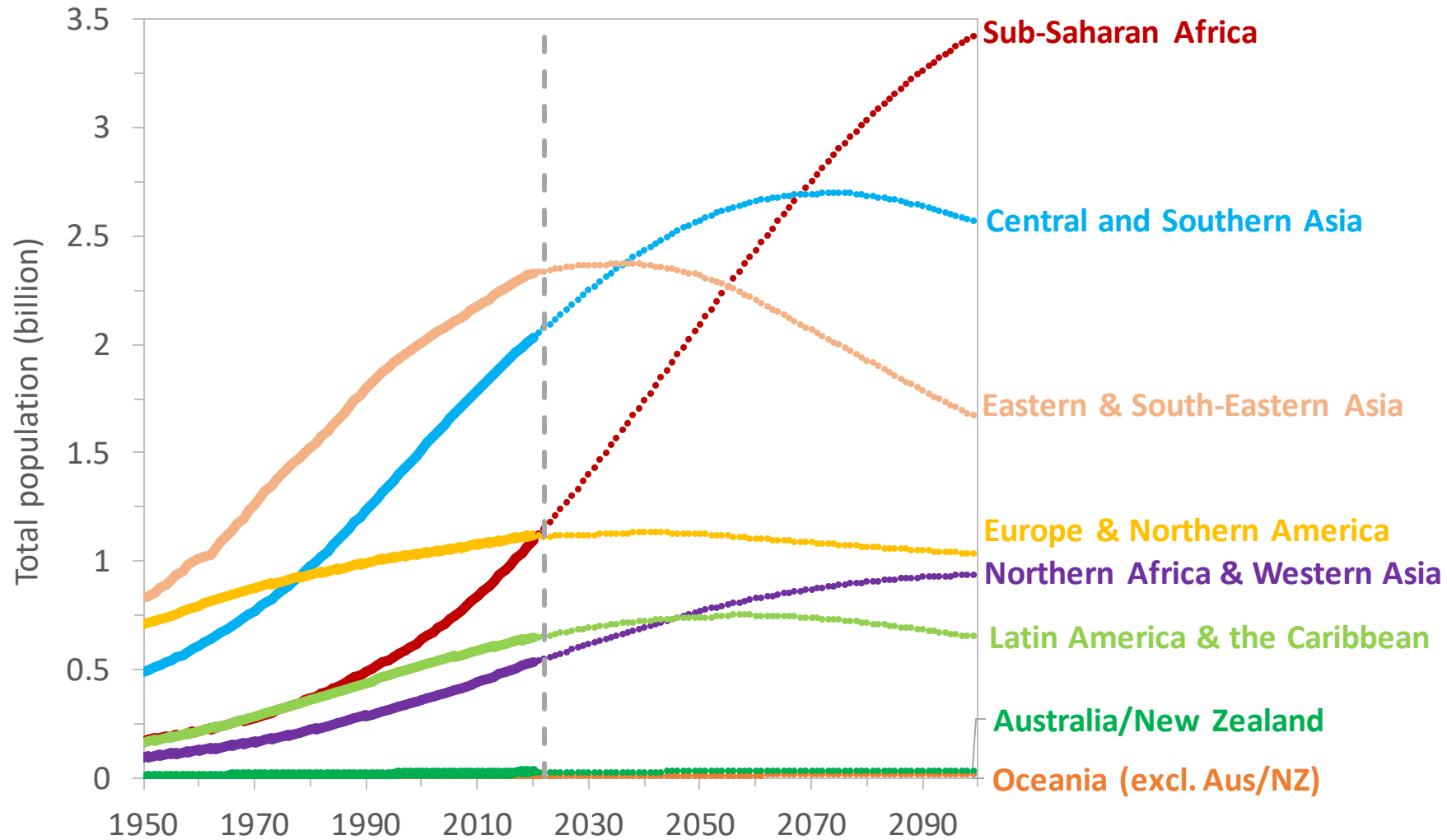
... but at declining annual rates

Projected to stay below 1 per cent per year

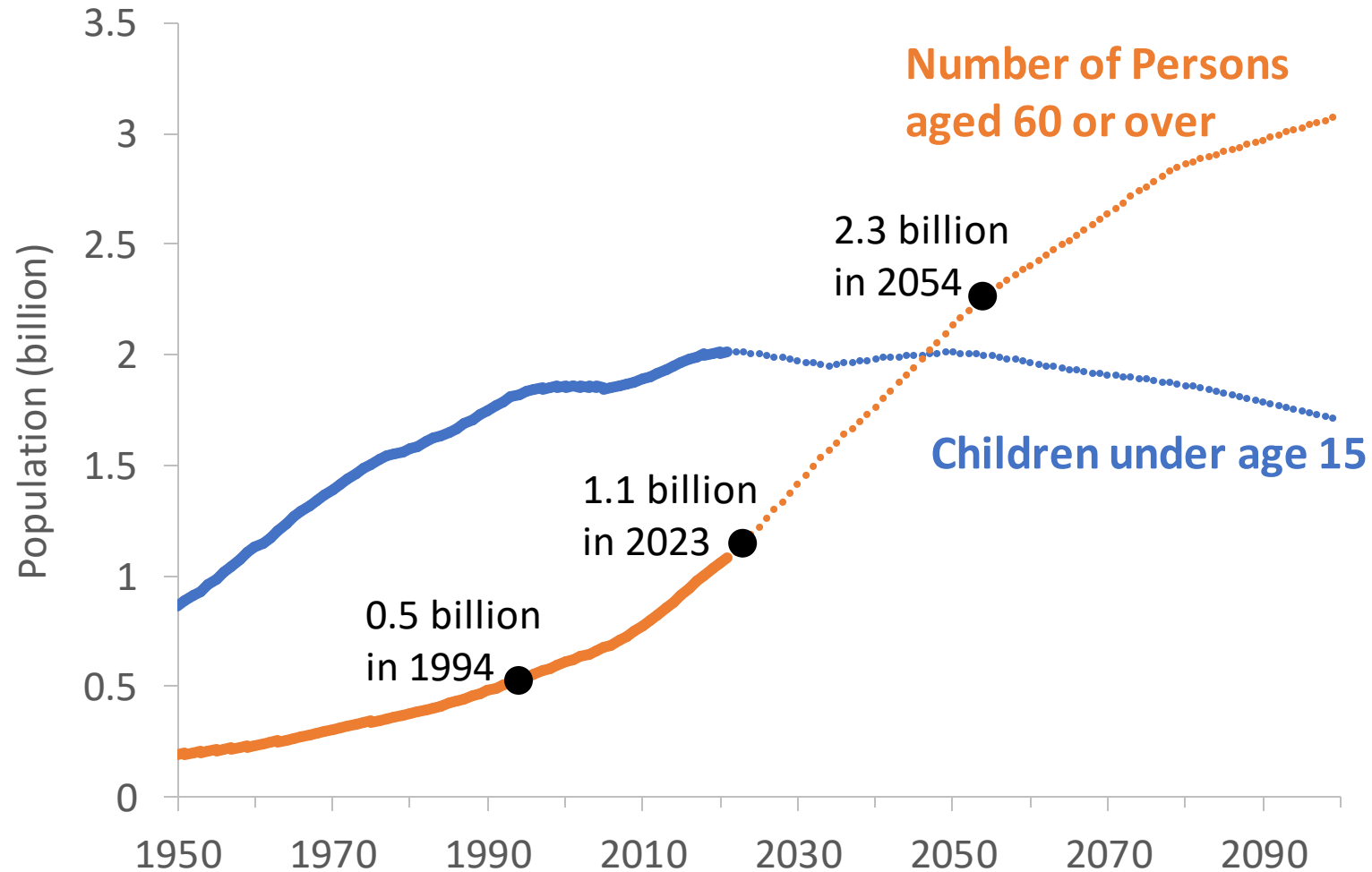


Population growth rate in early 2050s is expected to remain positive, but only about 1/4 of the growth rate of the early 1990s

Regional distribution of population will change significantly in coming decades

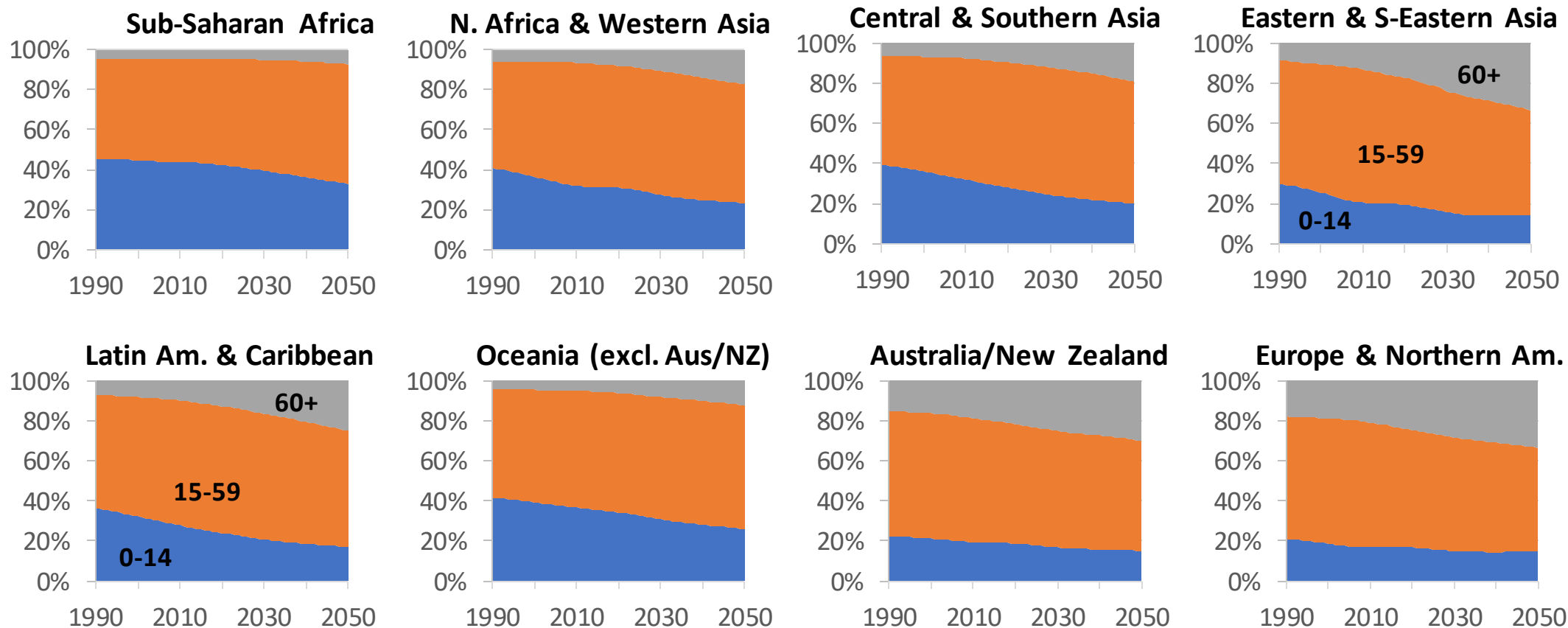


The world's population is facing continued and accelerated ageing



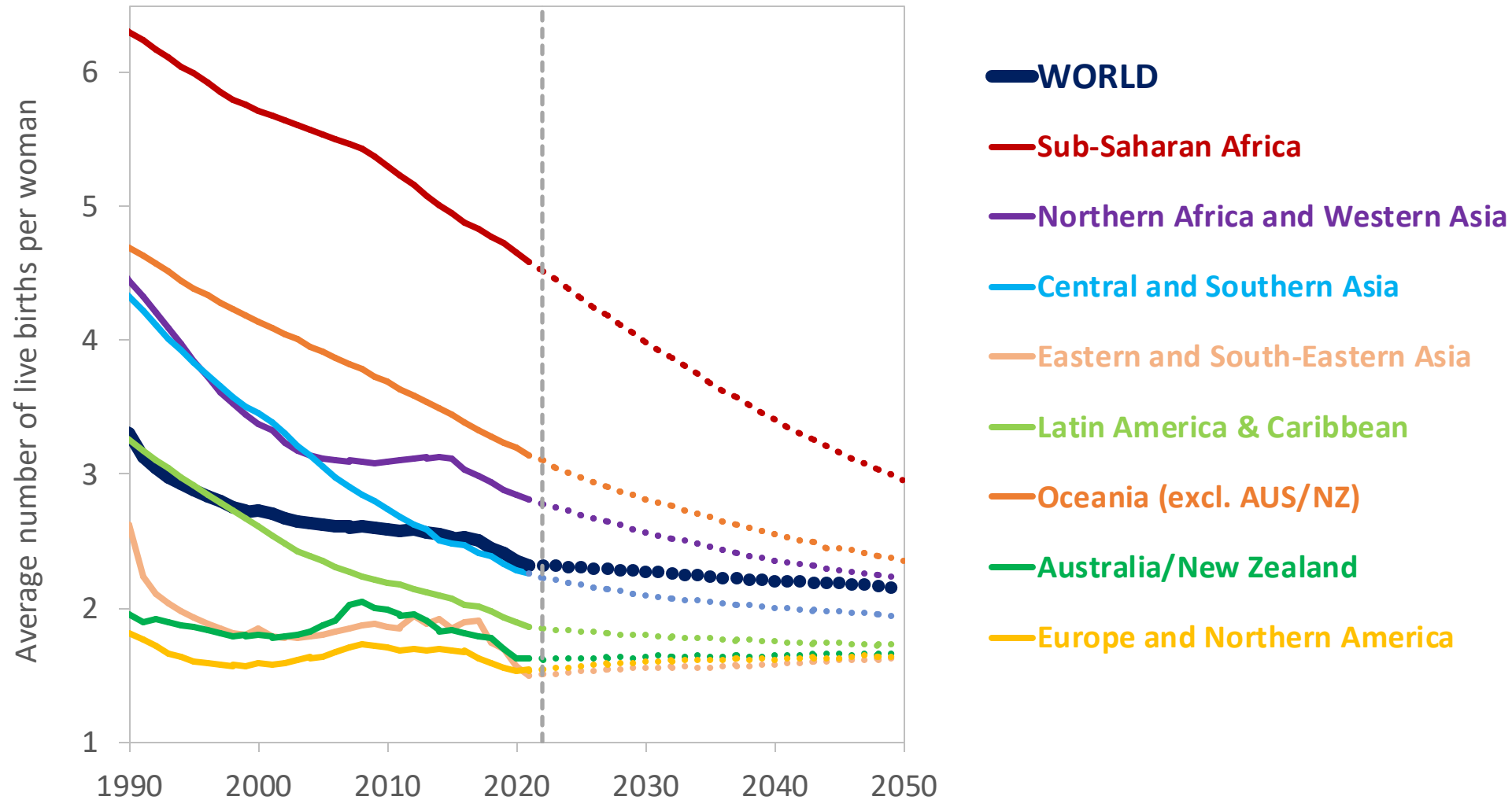
Age distribution by region: similarities and differences

Percentage of the population age 0-14, 15-59, and 60 or over



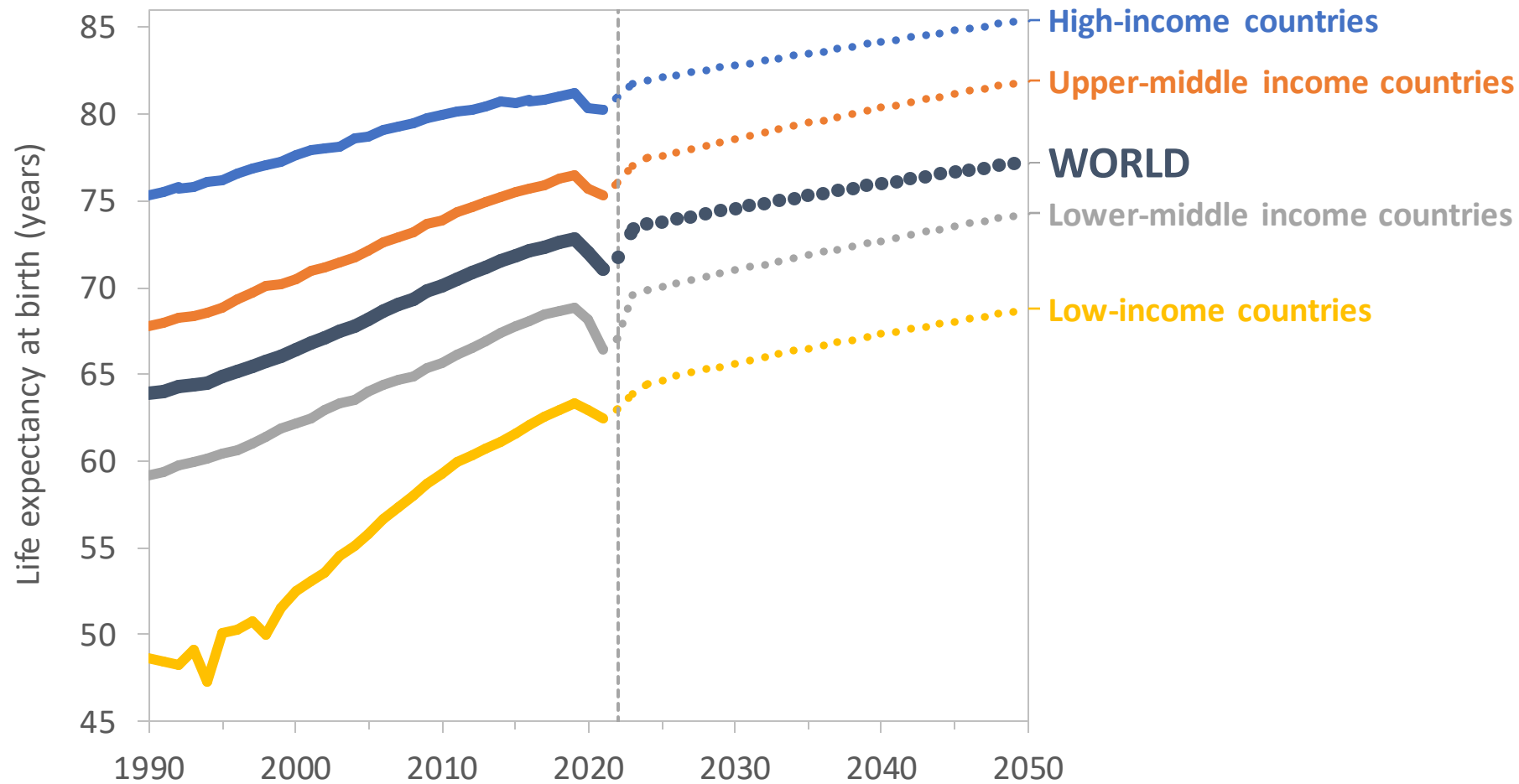
Broad convergence in fertility levels

with high fertility still a challenge in some countries and regions



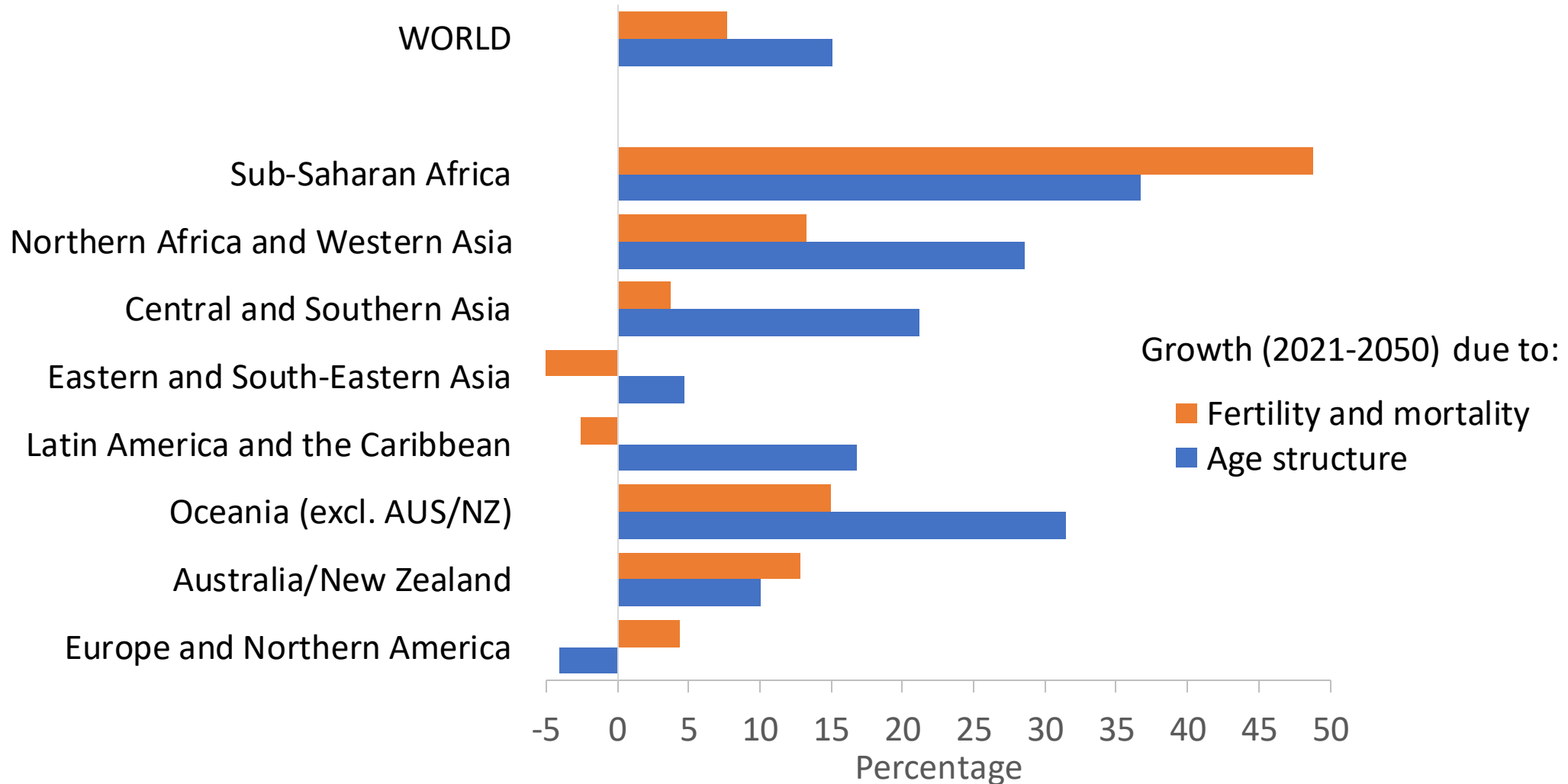
Broad convergence also in mortality

With reduced but still significant gaps between high and low-income countries



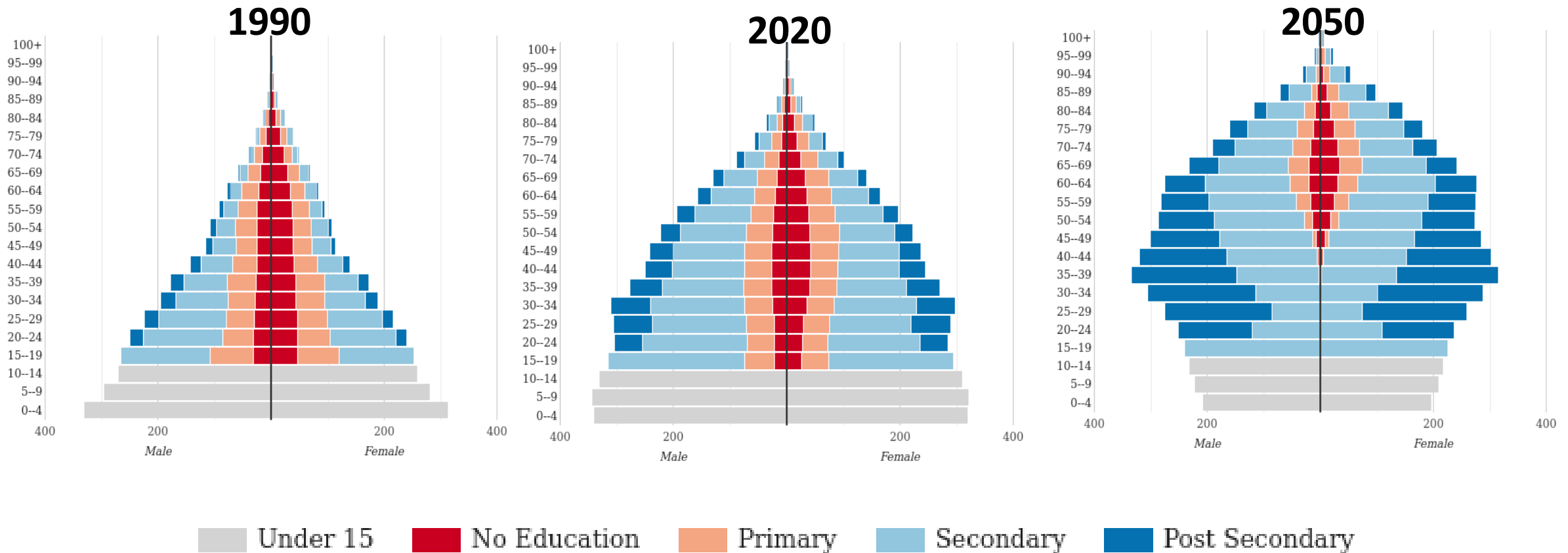
Inevitable future population growth

Role of population momentum (2021-2050)



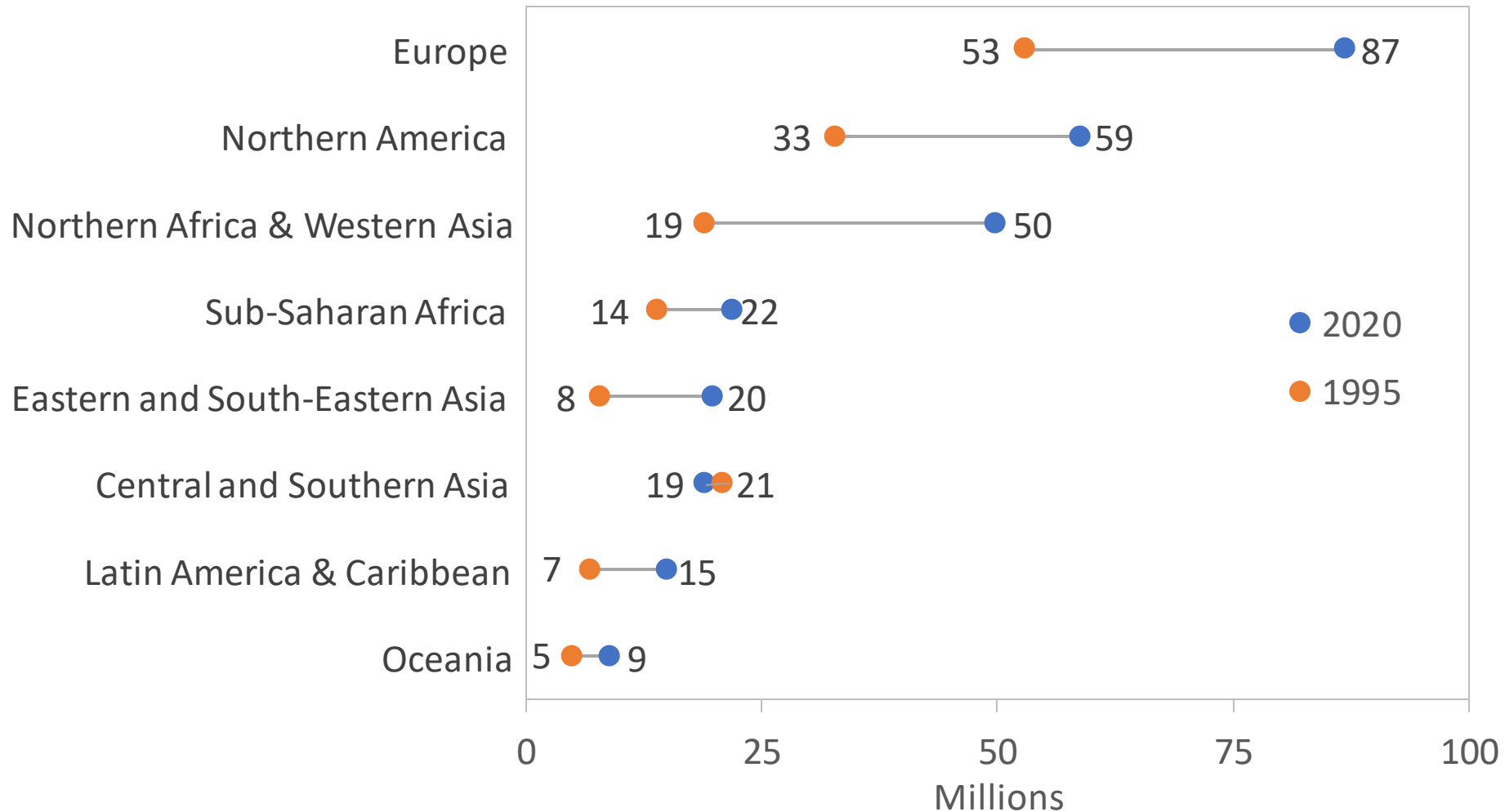
Major progress in human capital since Cairo

The share of the global population with less than secondary education will have gone* from almost half to a small minority

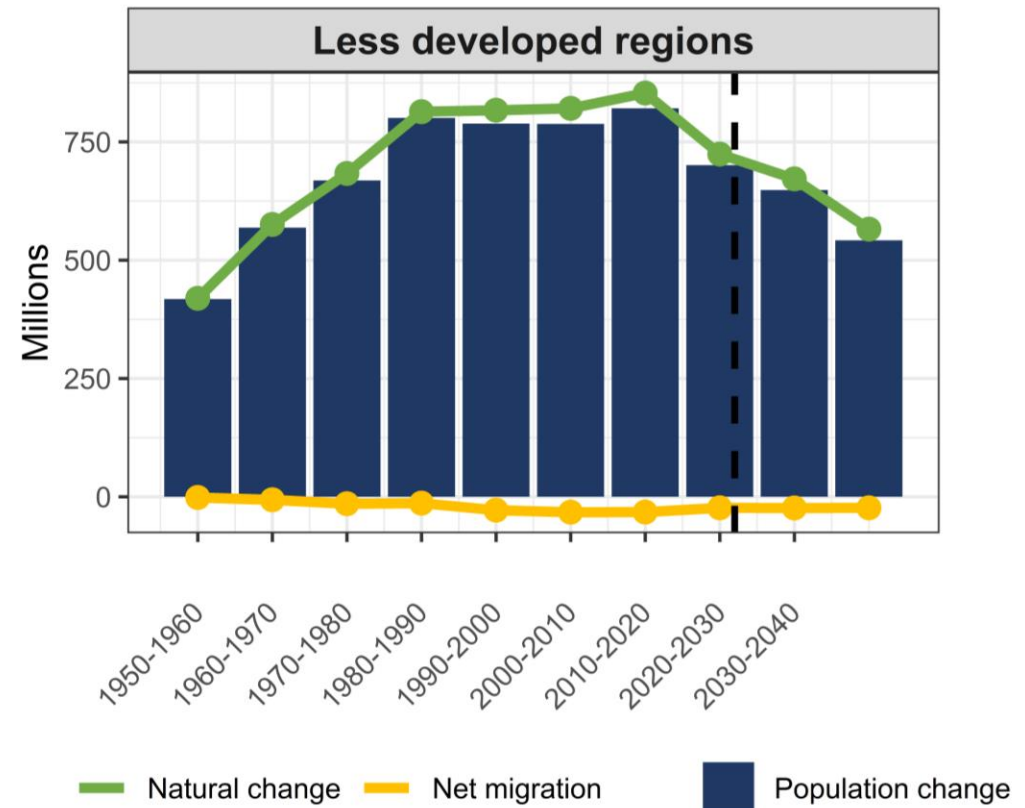
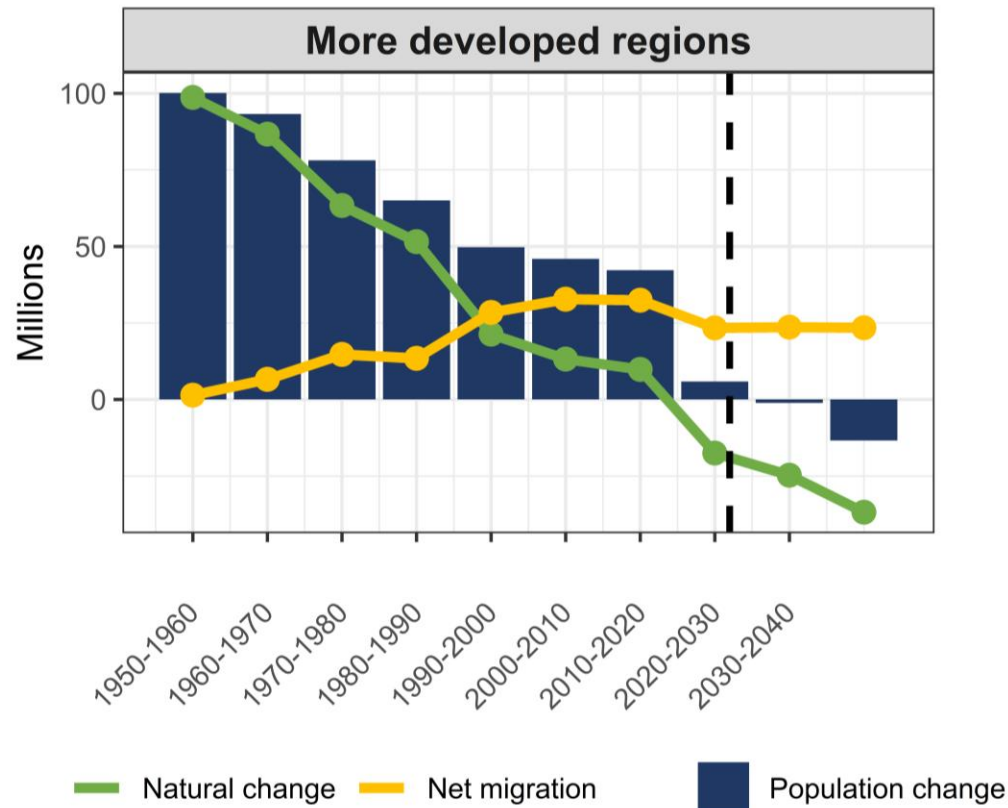


Increased international migration

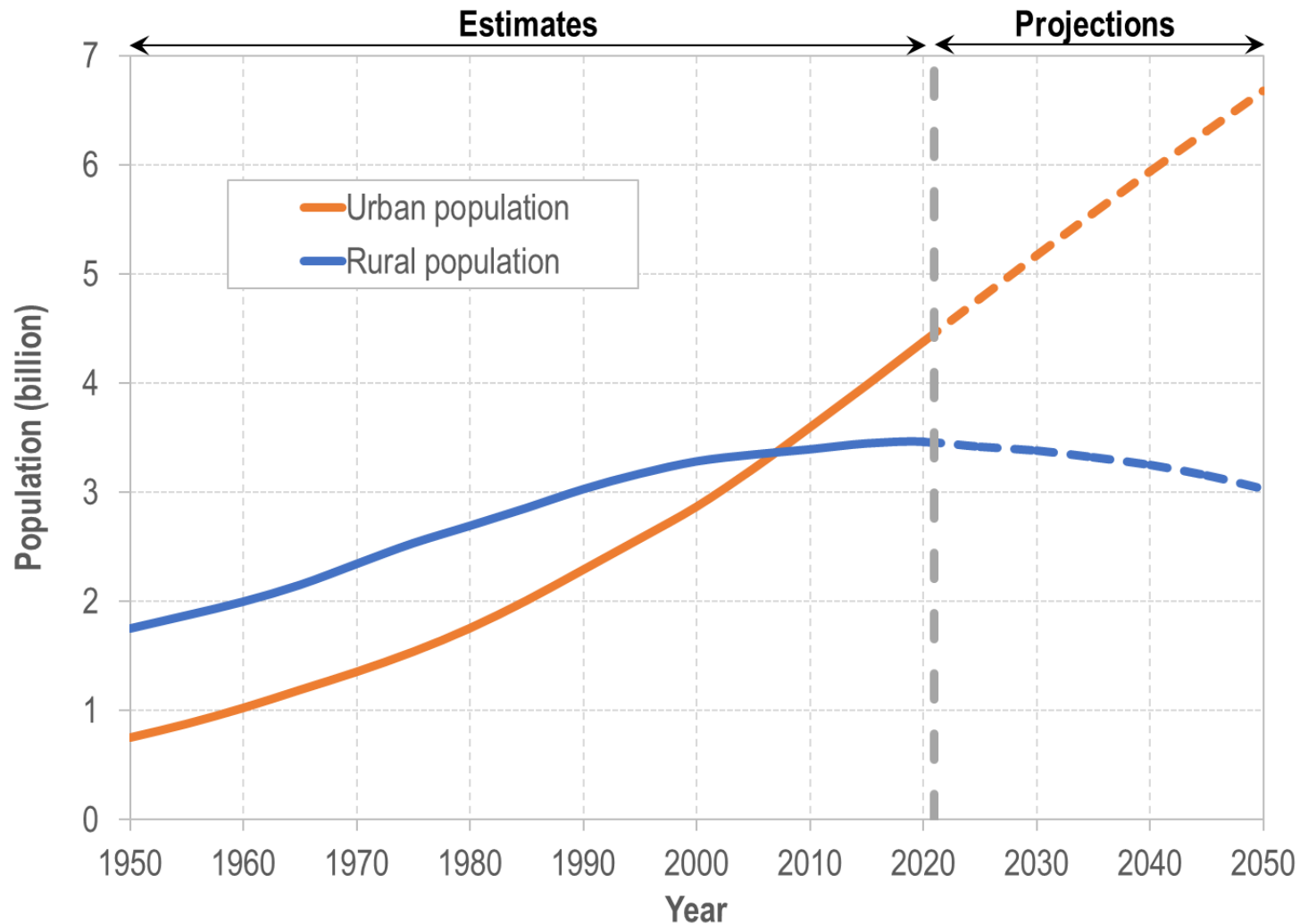
Globally, from 161 million in 1995 to 281 million in 2020



Population growth driven by *natural change* (births minus deaths) in the global South, but by *net migration* (immigration minus emigration) in the global North



Global rural and urban population, 1950-2050

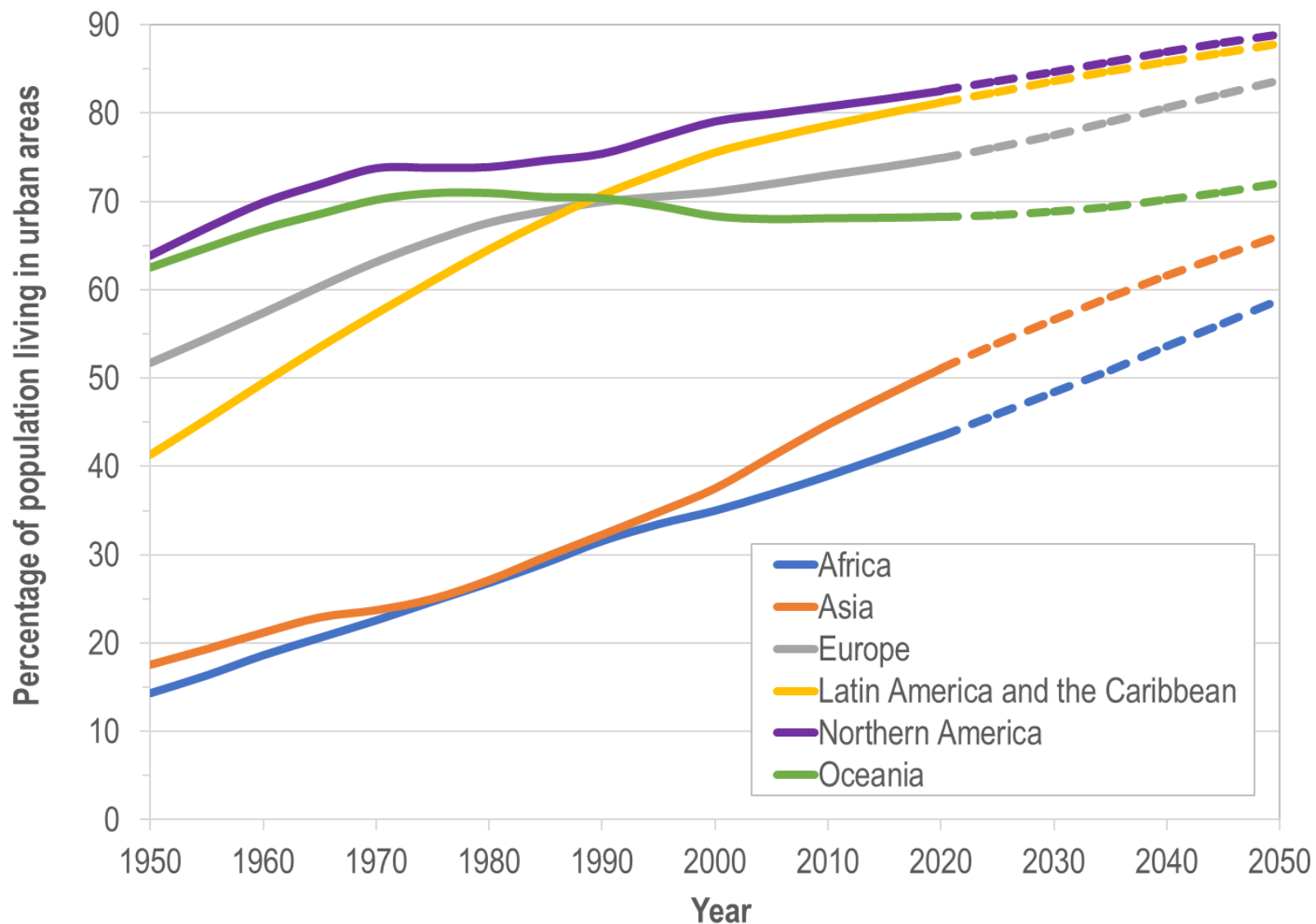


In **1990**, **57%** of the world population lived in rural areas

In **2050**, close to **70%** of the world population is projected to live in urban areas

Source: WPP2022/WUP2018 - Medium

Percentage urban by region, 1950-2050



Source: WUP2018

Much global progress in poverty reduction, but more is needed

- The world made major progress in reducing poverty since the Cairo Conference. The global poverty rate declined from 37.8% in 1990 to 11.7% in 2013, resulting in over a billion fewer people living in extreme poverty.
- The pace of progress slowed since the mid-2010. Global poverty reached 8.3% in 2019 but due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it rose to 9.2% in 2020, rewinding progress by about 3 years.
- In developing countries, rapid population growth continue to pose challenges for poverty eradication, hunger and malnutrition, and for efforts to provide universal access to essential services like healthcare and education.

Much progress in poverty reduction, but more is needed

- At the individual level, poverty, limited education, and gender inequality curtail people's opportunities and choices, hindering their ability to control their fertility
- Conversely, developing countries that manage to expand access to education and healthcare, including reproductive health and family planning services, can break that vicious cycle, and accelerate their transition from high to low fertility rates
- Success stories include China and India, where robust economic growth has been accompanied with reduced rates of extreme poverty, to virtually zero in China since December 2020, and to only 6% of the population of India in 2019

Improvements in gender equality since Cairo must be expanded, and protected from reversals

- Although both men and women of all ages have benefitted from better health and increased longevity since Cairo, women continue to outlive men almost everywhere. At the global level, in 2023, life expectancy was 76.0 years for males and 70.8 years for males
- This female advantage, of about 5 years in life expectancy at birth at the time of the Cairo conference, has stayed fairly stable and is projected to remain around that level by the 2050s
- Another area in which women have seen considerable improvements is in education. Women are achieving higher levels of education and tend to academically outperform men, especially among the post-Cairo generations

Improvements in gender equality since Cairo must be expanded, and protected from reversals

- **However**, girls still lag behind boys in educational attainment in low-income countries, and where they do achieve higher levels of education, these have not translated, on average, in corresponding advantages in their integration and pay in the labour market.
- Also, much progress still remains to be made in women's political participation, decision-making, and many other spheres.
- And, the UN Secretary-General has recently noted that, “after years of incremental progress, women's and girls' rights have stalled, and are going into reverse”, that women's and girls' sexual and reproductive rights are under siege, and that their rights and opportunities in this regard need to be protected.

In conclusion

- The world population will continue to grow, age and become more urbanized over the next 30 years
- We will most likely see continued broad demographic convergence across major groups of countries, as well as considerable diversity across countries
- The world has witnessed much progress in reducing poverty, in increasing longevity and educational attainment of post-Cairo generations especially among women, but progress is still needed to achieve gender equality, including by providing universal access to sexual and reproductive health and the exercise of reproductive rights
- As stated in Cairo, an early stabilization of the world population will make a crucial contribution to realizing the overarching objective of sustainable development

