



PRESS RELEASE

An older, more urban world population creates new challenges and opportunities for UN Member States

healthier compared to their counterparts in 1994. They are also more likely to attend school, to postpone entry into the labour force and to delay marriage and childbearing.

Changing patterns of birth and death

By 1994, total fertility for the world had fallen to around three children per woman, compared to around 4.5 children per woman in the early 1970s. In 2014, total fertility for the world was around 2.5 children per woman.

The availability of safe and effective contraceptives and accessibility to family planning programmes and reproductive health care have been instrumental in reducing fertility levels. However, few countries are expected to achieve a 50 per cent reduction in the unmet need for family planning by 2014, as called for in 1994.

Declining fertility rates have also been driven by expanded opportunities for women and significant declines in infant and child mortality. Worldwide, the risk of death for children under age 5 fell by 40 per cent between 1994 and 2014.

In the 20 years since the Cairo conference, life expectancy has increased worldwide. Life expectancy at birth rose for the world as a whole from around 65 years in 1990-1995 to around 70 years in 2010-2015. Despite these significant gains, many countries will fail to meet the targets for life expectancy included in the ICPD Programme of Action.

The world becomes more urban and more mobile

More than half of the world's population now lives in urban areas. The urban population of the world increased from 2.3 billion in 1994 to 3.9 billion in 2014 and is projected to grow further to 6.3 billion by 2050. Cities present opportunities for increased access to economic activity and various services, but their rapid growth poses challenges to sustainable urban planning.

By comparison, the rural population of the world changed little between 1994 and 2014 and is projected to contract in future decades. As a result, there could be 300 million fewer rural inhabitants in 2050 than there are today.

International migration has increased in size, scope, complexity and impact over the last 20 years. In 2013, the number of international migrants worldwide reached 232 million, up from 154 million in 1990.

Commission to assess challenges and progress since 1994

According to Mr. Wu Hongbo, Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, the Commission's assessment of the status of implementation of the Programme of Action of the Cairo conference "is happening at a critical moment, as Member States are elaborating new sustainable development goals and the post-2015 development agenda." Moreover, he said "The challenges of sustainable development are inseparably linked to population patterns and trends. Therefore, the work of this session has direct relevance for preparations for the post-2015 development agenda."

During the upcoming session of the Commission on Population and Development, representatives and experts from UN Member States, various UN entities and civil society will gather to consider the theme, "Assessment of the status of implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development." The discussion at the Commission will help guide the elaboration of the [post-2015 development agenda](#) and will inform the special session of the UN General Assembly commemorating the Cairo conference in September 2014.

For more information, visit:

<https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/commission/sessions/2014/index.shtml>

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