



REPUBLIKA SLOVENIJA



STATISTIČNI URAD REPUBLIKE SLOVENIJE

Demography and social statistics » Population



World Population Day 2011

Thursday, July 07, 2011, Special release

According to United Nations forecasts, this year the world population will exceed 7 billion. By 2100 the population is expected to grow by another three billion. According to American demographer Carl Haub, so far 108 billion people have lived on planet Earth.



On 11 July 1987 the world population was five billion. Two years later the UN declared [11 July the World Population Day](#) in order to focus attention on the urgency and importance of population issues.

Unequal distribution

The current global population density is 51 people per square kilometre; however, population density is very diverse. The most densely populated continent is Asia with 130 people per km² and the least densely

populated Oceania with 4 people per km².

In general, the most densely populated are "city states" and micro countries with a high level of urbanisation on a very small area. The least densely populated are areas inappropriate for permanent settlement, such as deserts, tundra, high mountains. Similarly, densely populated urban centres differ from more sparsely populated rural areas. Examples are not far away: in our capital Ljubljana there are 1,662 people per km², while in the neighbouring settlement of Janče the density is less than 2 people per km².

Globally, the differences are much larger. One of the most densely populated areas is Monaco with almost 36,000 people per km². One of the least populated areas is Mongolia with only one person per km² outside the capital city.

A large increase in population in the next decades will lead to ever greater population concentration, especially in large cities in developing countries. Currently, there are around 20 cities with more than 10 million people. By 2050 the number will greatly increase. For example, in the past 60 years the population of Dhaka in Bangladesh and Kinshasa in the Democratic Republic of the Congo increased by nine times and it is expected that due to the population increase and lack of farmland in the future even more people will migrate to rapidly growing cities.

Unequal growth

Since 1960 the world population has more than doubled; however, growth was geographically very diverse. For example, the population of Slovenia increased by less than a third, while the population of Ivory Coast jumped by more than five times. In the past 50 years the number of people in Europe increased by a fifth, while in North and Central America it doubled, in Asia and South America it more than doubled and in Africa and Oceania it tripled.

According to UN projections, by 2100 the population will increase the most in countries with very high fertility rates in which currently every woman on average gives birth to more than 1.5 girls (i.e. in 58 countries, two thirds of them in Africa). In the next 90 years the population of these countries is expected to more than triple (from 1.2 billion to 4.2 billion). On the other hand, in countries with low fertility rates in which every woman on average gives birth to 1.6 children (Europe except Iceland and Ireland, 19 Asian countries, 14 American countries, two African countries and Australia) the population is expected to decline by about a fifth to 2.4 billion. In countries with medium fertility rates the population is expected to increase by 26% to 3.5 billion.

In 2100 only the population in countries with high fertility rates will still be growing (by about 0.5% per year), while in other countries the population will be declining (by about 0.3% per year).

What if...?

Every year about 140 million children are born and about 57 million people die. For all countries the UN population projections predict longer life expectancy at birth (lower mortality), while expectations regarding fertility differ.

In countries with high fertility rates for the next 90 years a significant decline in fertility is expected (from 4.5 to 2.1 live births per woman). In case fertility rates do not decline, by 2100 the population of these countries will increase by five times.

In countries with medium fertility rates fertility is also expected to decline (to 1.9 children per woman in 2100). In these countries fertility rates have declined significantly since 1960 (from 5.3 to 2.6 children per woman). In case fertility rates do not decline below population replacement level of 2.1 children per woman, by 2100 the population of these countries could double.

For countries with low fertility rates the UN expects a slow increase in fertility to 2.0 children per woman in 2100. In case fertility rates remain as low as today (on average 1.6 children per woman), these countries would experience a more rapid decline in population number and a much more significant population ageing.

Because of limited natural resources, with the increase in population number it will be almost impossible to meet even the most basic human needs for space, food and drinking water. A special challenge is the possibility to sustainably increase food production but it is definitely possible to reduce fertility as the key factor of world population growth. In the past individual countries implemented more or less radical population policies with varying success. In the long run the most appropriate is education and longer schooling. The longer women stay in school and the higher their education, the later they start giving birth and they give birth to fewer children.

Prepared by: [Barica Razpotnik](#)

Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia
Vožarski pot 12, SI-1000 Ljubljana | Tel: +3861/241-51-00 | Fax: +3861/241-53-44
E-mail: info.stat@gov.si | URL: www.stat.si

© Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia.
Use and publication of data is allowed provided the source is acknowledged.