

World's population reaches 6.5 billion this year, could reach 7 billion by 2012

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The world's population has reached 6.5 billion this year, a billion more than 1993, despite low fertility in developed countries and high mortality in developing countries, a new United Nations report says.

It estimates that the world's population could reach 7 billion in 2012 and could stabilize at 9 billion in 2050. The rate of growth has fallen, however, to 1.2 per cent now from 2 per cent in the late 1960s.

The report, covering population size and growth, urbanization and city growth, population aging, fertility and contraception, mortality and international migration, was released in advance of the next session in April of the 47-member Commission on Population and Development.

Based on the work of the UN Population Division, the report says, "Most developed countries exhibit fertility levels at or below the replacement level. Although most developing countries are far advanced in the transition from high to low fertility, some developing countries, mainly in Africa, still exhibit high fertility."

In the last century, "mortality experienced the most rapid decline in the history of humanity, owing to better hygiene, improved nutrition and medical practices based on scientific evidence," it says. In Africa, however, HIV/AIDS has markedly increased mortality.

Six countries account for the 77 million people added to the population each year since 2000: India, China, Pakistan, Nigeria, the United States and Bangladesh.

People are moving to urban centres and the urban population will account for half the world's population by 2007. Urban dwellers are expected to increase to about 5 billion in 2030 from 3.2 billion today, it says.

The “urban agglomerations” – Tokyo, Mexico City, New York-Newark, Mumbai, São Paulo and Delhi – each has more than 15 million residents, the report says, but most urban dwellers live in towns of fewer than half a million people.

About 175 million people live outside of their countries of birth and 60 per cent of the world's migrants live in more developed countries, the report says.

Presenting both opportunities and challenges in this century, it says, “the current population picture is one of dynamic population change, reflected in new and diverse patterns of childbearing, mortality, migration, urbanization and aging.”

Read the report [here](#).

Source: UN

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