

U.N. Says World's Population Will Reach 9.8 Billion By 2050

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The world's population is growing by about 83 million people each year. The growth is largely driven by birth rates in the world's poorest countries.

Sakchai Lalit/AP

The world's population growth is slowing, according to a new [United Nations report](#), but the number of people living on Earth will still approach 10 billion by the year 2050.

The document tallies the current population at 7.6 billion people, up from 7.4 billion just two years ago.

This year's count means the world added roughly 1 billion people over the last dozen years. It will take 13 years to add the next billion, according to the report. The planet is expected to have 8.6 billion people in 2030, and

9.8 billion by 2050.

A decade ago, the world's population was growing by 1.24 percent per year; today it is 1.1 percent.

The report says China remains the most populous country, with 1.4 billion inhabitants – or 19 percent of the world's population. But India trails close behind at 1.3 billion people, and in just seven years, is expected to surpass China in population.

Other key findings in the report by the UN's Department of Economic and Social Affairs:

"Sixty per cent of the world's people live in Asia (4.5 billion), 17 per cent in Africa (1.3 billion), 10 per cent in Europe (742 million), 9 per cent in Latin America and the Caribbean (646 million), and the remaining 6 per cent in Northern America (361 million) and Oceania (41 million).

Much of world's population growth is expected to come from developing nations, which have the highest fertility rates – 4.3 births per woman. That rate is expected to fall to around 3.5 by 2030. Nevertheless, the populations in more than two dozen African nations are likely to "at least double" by 2050.

By contrast, the birth rate in Europe is just 1.6 births per woman. It has been on the rise in recent years and is expected to reach 1.8 by 2050 – but that's not enough to keep the continent's population from shrinking. Europe is the only region expected to have a smaller population in 2050 than it does today.

Life expectancy is also projected to get longer. "Globally, life expectancy at birth has risen from 65 years for men and 69 years for women in 2000-2005 to 69 years for men and 73 years for women in 2010-2015," the study finds. Its authors attribute the improvement, in part, to a lower mortality

rate among children and successful efforts to fight diseases — especially HIV/AIDS.

The projection that an extra 1 billion people will inhabit the Earth in 13 years raises questions about the ability of global resources to keep up.

Already, roughly 800 million people go to bed hungry, according to this 2015 U.N. [report](#). It says a full one-third of the world's food is wasted every year. If just a quarter of it could be recovered, it would be enough to feed 870 million people.