
Session VII: Fuelling Future Green Growth - Competing crises, the demographic dividend and decent jobs

Simon Gilby, Sustainable Development Officer, UNOSD



DEPARTMENT OF
**ECONOMIC AND
SOCIAL AFFAIRS**

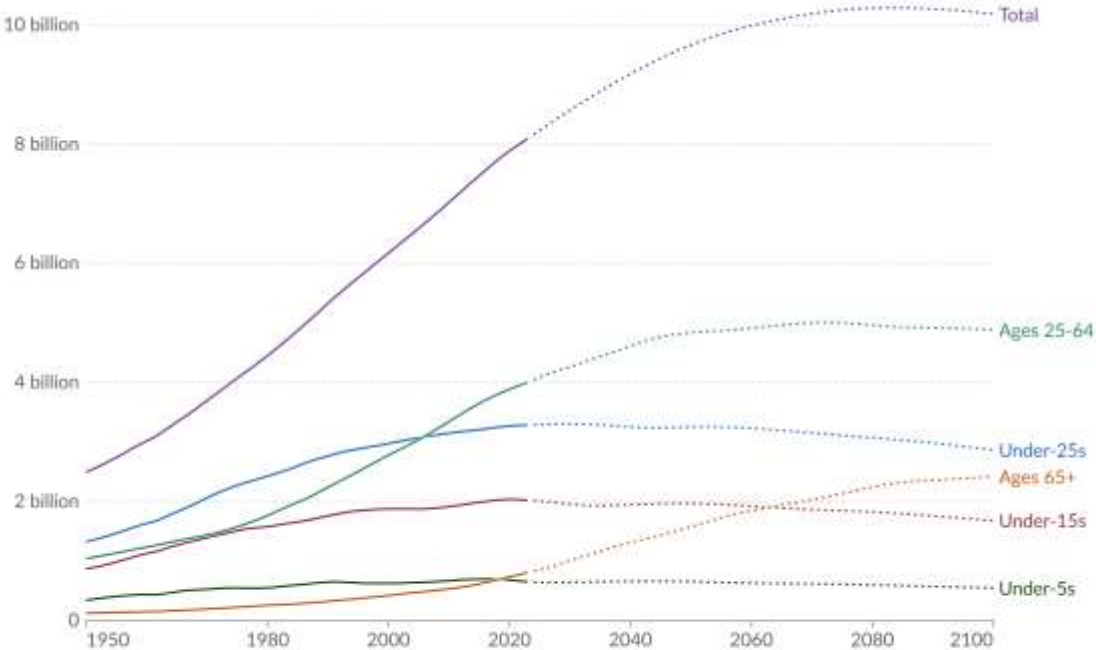


Population Prospects

Population by age group, World



Historic estimates from 1950 to 2023, and projected to 2100 based on the UN medium scenario¹.



Data source: UN, World Population Prospects (2024)

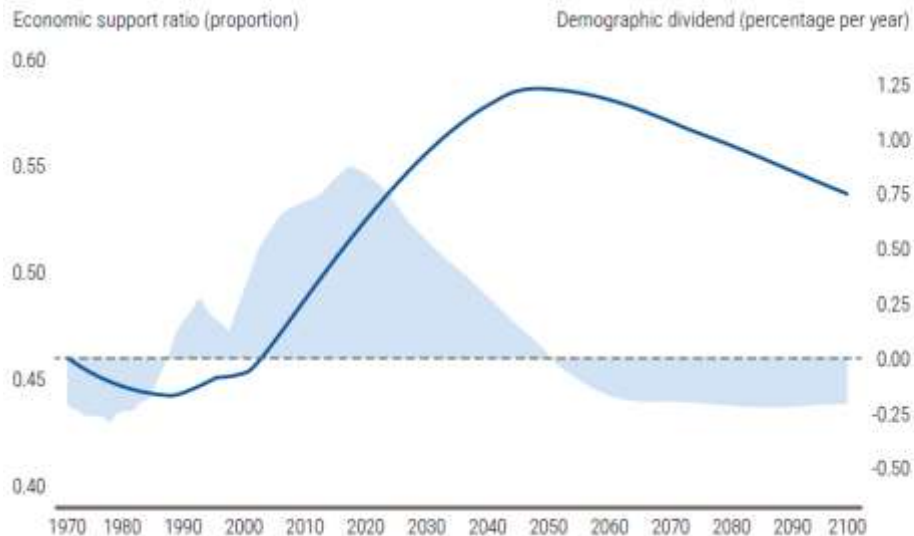
OurWorldinData.org/population-growth | CC BY

1. UN projection scenarios: The UN's World Population Prospects provides a range of projected scenarios of population change. These rely on different assumptions in fertility, mortality and/or migration patterns to explore different demographic futures. [Read more: Definition of Projection Scenarios \(UN\)](#)

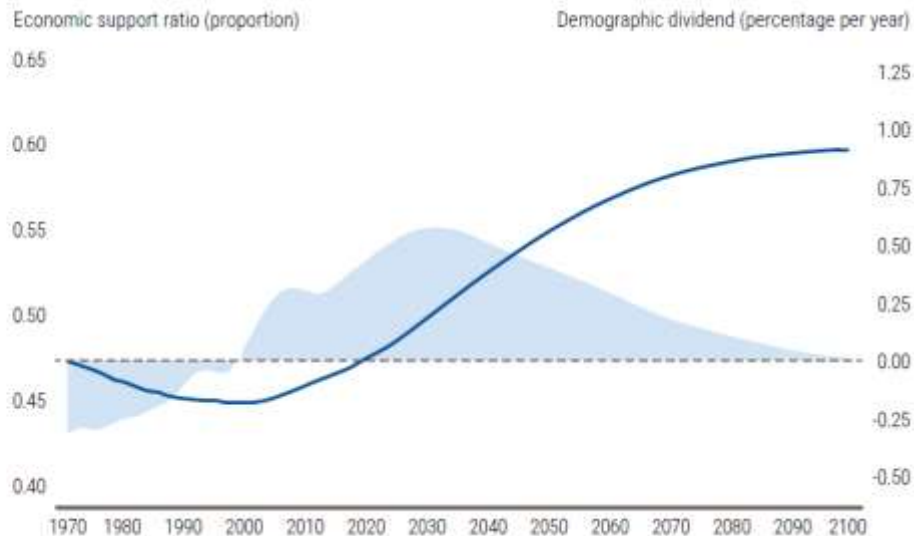
Economic support ratio (line, left scale) and demographic dividend (area, right scale), Asia-Pacific LDCs (left panel) and African LDCs (right panel), 1970–210

■ Demographic dividend — Economic support ratio

A. Asia-Pacific LDCs



B. African LDCs



Source: *National Transfer Accounts* (NTA) database (NTA, 2023).

Note: The demographic dividend equals the rate of change (per cent per year) in the ratio of effective producers to effective consumers (the “economic support ratio”) (United Nations, 2013). The blue area above zero (dashed line) represents the total gain from the demographic dividend.

Demographic Dividend

- Definition: Economic growth potential due to a larger share of working-age population.
- Potential Benefits:
 - Increased economic productivity
 - Greater investments in health, education
 - Enhanced female labour participation
- Example: Rwanda's integrated national strategy to maximize its demographic dividend.



Projected Growth of Older Populations

- Current Statistics (2023): Only 4% of LDC populations are 65+, compared to 20% in developed countries.
- Projections by 2050:
 - Share of older persons will rise to around 6% in LDCs.
 - Number of older individuals in LDCs expected to nearly triple.
- Implications: Preparing for these changes is crucial.



Challenges in Harnessing the Demographic Dividend

- **High Fertility Rates:** Slows the demographic transition.
- **Insufficient Infrastructure:** Education, healthcare, and employment support are limited.
- **Fiscal Constraints:** High debt levels limit government spending.



Policy Recommendations

- Accelerate Demographic Transition: Improve access to family planning and reproductive health.
- Strengthen Social Protections: Expand healthcare and social protection for all, especially informal workers.
- Invest in Human Capital: Prioritize education, job training, and economic diversification.
- Promote Gender Equality: Encourage female labour participation and rights.



But also

- How to deliver these reforms and changes in the context of planetary boundaries?
- How can growth be delivered that gives the material wellbeing necessary for human flourishing while being in harmony with nature, not simply exploiting it?





United Nations

Department of Economic and Social Affairs



Thank you.

Guiding Questions

- What key crises will hold back green growth in the context of low and middle-income countries?
- What implications does a demographic dividend have on future SDG progress, given current the role of crises in slowing growth?
- How can proven solutions around women's economic inclusion, decent jobs and targeted investments have on future well-being and green growth?
- What is the role of science and evidence-based policy in overcoming competing crises and their future implications?

