

EXPLANATORY NOTES: 2015 REVISION

World Population Policies Database: 2015 Revision provides information on 197 countries, including all 193 Member States, two Observer States (the Holy See and the State of Palestine) and two non-member States (Cook Islands and Niue) of the United Nations.

Countries are grouped geographically into six regions: Africa; Asia; Europe; Latin America and the Caribbean; Northern America; and Oceania. These geographic regions are further divided into 21 sub-regions. In addition, countries are classified as belonging to either of the two general development groups: more developed regions and less developed regions.

Following common practice, the “more developed regions” comprise all countries in Europe and Northern America, plus Australia, New Zealand and Japan. The “less developed regions” comprise all countries in Africa, Asia (excluding Japan), Latin America and the Caribbean plus Melanesia, Micronesia and Polynesia.

The distinction between “more developed regions” and “less developed regions”, also referred to as “developed regions” and “developing regions”, derives from the sharp bifurcation of socioeconomic conditions that existed as recently as the nineteen-sixties but has since diminished as many countries of the less developed regions have undergone rapid development. The terms continue to be used because the distinction remains meaningful for some purposes despite its apparent limitations.

The current list of least developed countries (LDCs) includes 48 countries (34 in Africa, 9 in Asia, 4 in Oceania and 1 in Latin America and the Caribbean), as decided by the latest United Nations General Assembly resolution on this issue A/RES/70/78: Afghanistan, Angola, Bangladesh, Benin, Bhutan, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Haiti, Kiribati, Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mozambique, Myanmar, Nepal, Niger, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Solomon Islands, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Timor-Leste, Togo, Tuvalu, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania, Vanuatu, Yemen and Zambia. Further information on LDC's can be found at: http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/policy/cdp/ldc/ldc_list.pdf.

Symbols of United Nations documents are composed of capital letters combined with figures.

Various symbols have been used in the tables throughout this report, as follows:

Two dots (..) indicate that data are not available or are not separately reported.

NA indicates that the item is not applicable.

Use of en dash (–) between years, for example, 2010–2015, signifies the full period involved, from 1 July of the starting year to 1 July of the ending year.

Use of en dash (–) between ages, for example, 15–49, signifies age range in completed years, from exact 15 years up to, but not including, exact age 50 years.

Use of en dash (–) between any other pair of numbers, for example, dates: 5–13 September and page numbers: pp. 90–101, signifies the full range inclusive of both the starting and the ending numbers.

Percentages in tables and figures do not necessarily add to 100 per cent because of rounding.

The 2015 Revision of World Population Policies Database uses estimates and projections of demographic indicators from the most recent *2015 Revision of World Population Prospects*. This may result in minor discrepancies from *the 2013 Revision of World Population Policies Database* that used *the 2012 Revision of World Population Prospects*.

For any newly formed States, Government views and policies are not available for previous time points, but estimates of population indicators are provided using the *2015 World Population Prospects*.