

Africa in the 21st century

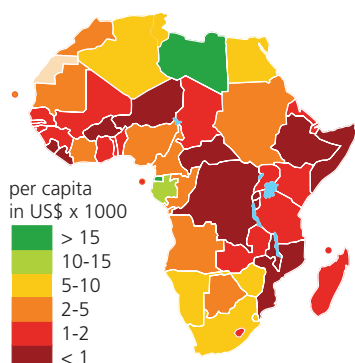
Ton Dietz & Akinyinka Akinyoade

Africa's development: 2001-2016

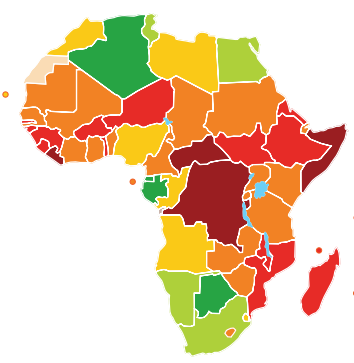
Africa's economy was booming between 2001 and 2015. 'Emerging Africa' was more than a slogan. Africa's 'human development index' (see <http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/human-development-index-hdi>) also showed major improvements – but not everywhere and certainly

not for all. And in 2015 and 2016, signs of a dramatic economic deterioration began to emerge as a result of falling prices for Africa's raw materials and lower demand from, for instance, China. The four maps below and the table show the changes in Gross Domestic Product (adjusted to purchasing power differences) and the changes in the Human Development Index.

GDP (PPP) in 2001

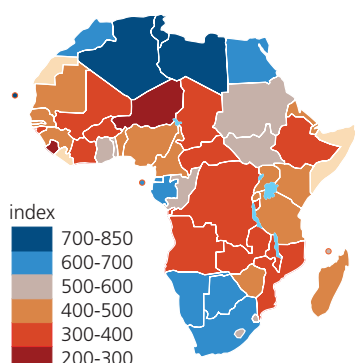


GDP (PPP) in 2016

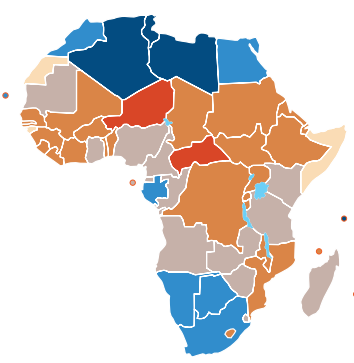


Sources: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_countries_by_past_and_projected_GDP_\(PPP\)_per_capita](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_countries_by_past_and_projected_GDP_(PPP)_per_capita)
http://www.unic.un.org.pl/hdr/hdr2003/hdr03_complete.pdf for HDI 2001
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_African_countries_by_Human_Development_Index

HDI in 2001



HDI in 2001



| GDP (PPP) per capita 2016/2001 | HDI 2016/2001 | | |
|--------------------------------------|---------------|--------|-----|
| | >1.10 | 1-1.10 | <1 |
| >1.7 | ANG | DJI | CVE |
| | BOT | EGY | EQG |
| | BFA | GHA | LES |
| | CHA | MRS | STP |
| | DRC | MOR | SUD |
| | ETH | NAM | SWA |
| | KEN | UGA | TUN |
| | MAW | | |
| | MAU | | |
| | MOZ | | |
| | NIR | | |
| | NIG | | |
| | RWA | | |
| | SLE | | |
| | TAN | | |
| | ZAM | | |
| 1.5-1.7 | BEN | ALG | SEY |
| | BUR | CAM | SAF |
| | CON | | TOG |
| | CDI | | |
| | MAL | | |
| 1.1-1.4 | GBI | GAB | COM |
| | | MAD | ERI |
| | | | GAM |
| | | | GUI |
| 1 and below | | ZIM | CAR |
| | | | LBY |

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Africa's demography: long-term trends

Africa has been experiencing rapid population growth since c. 1950, and this growth will continue in the 21st century. Table 1 presents the long-term population data and prospects and compares those with Europe.

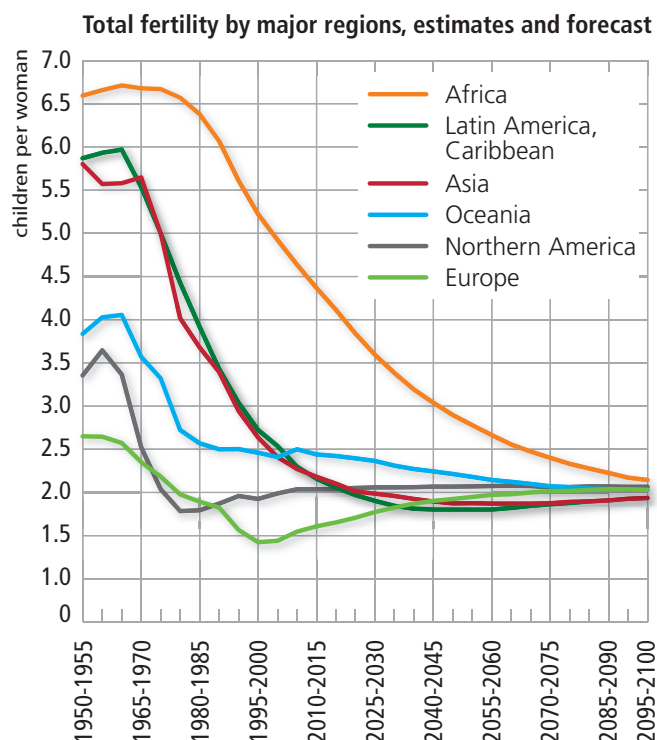
Table 1 Population growth Africa and Europe

nrs in millions of people; % of world population

| Year | Africa nrs | Africa % | Europe nrs | Europe % |
|------|------------|----------|------------|----------|
| 1650 | 80-100 | 15-17 | 100 | 17 |
| 1900 | 100-150 | 6-9 | 400 | 25 |
| 1950 | 230 | 9 | 550 | 22 |
| 2000 | 820 | 13 | 730 | 12 |
| 2015 | 1190 | 16 | 740 | 10 |
| 2050 | 2530 | 26 | 720 | 7 |
| 2100 | 4400 | 39 | 650 | 6 |

Africa's population growth is a result of a late and slow start to the demographic transition, which makes Africa currently the big exception in the world, see Graph 1. As a result, Africa has a very young population (see map 1), and although there is a clear demographic transition going on, according to the current UN forecasts, the continent's growth will result in a population between 3.4 and 5.6 billion inhabitants at the end of the 21st century (median: 4.4 billion).

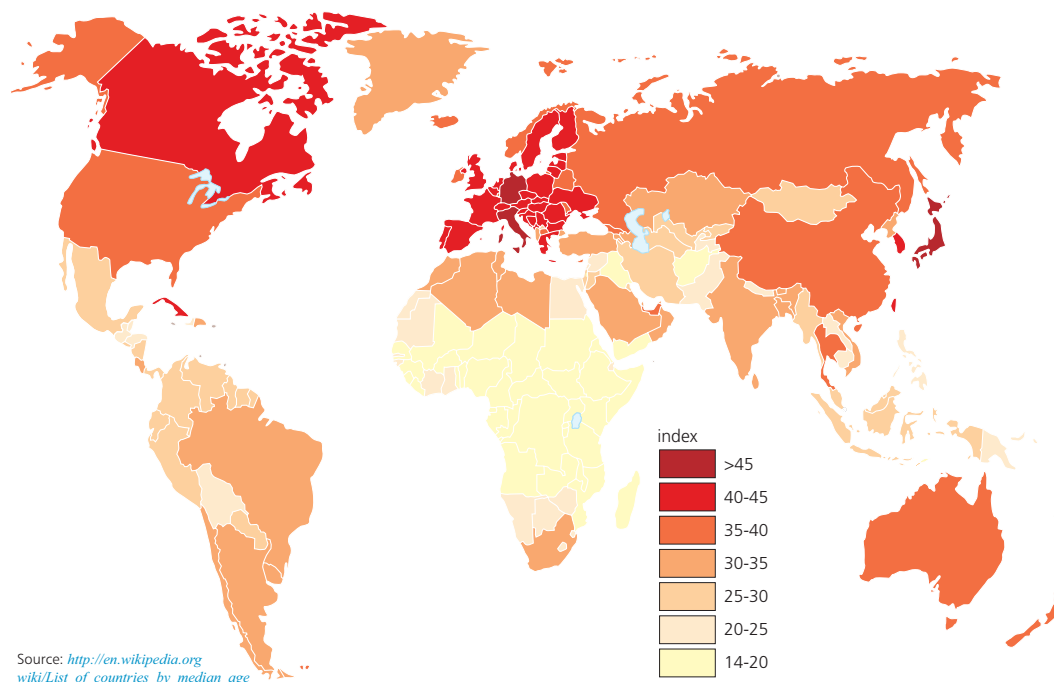
Graph 1 The demographic transition: Africa and other continents



Source: <http://explainingprogress.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/UN-Estimates-and-Forecasts-Total-fertility-by-major-regions-1950-2100-children-per-woman-UN.png>

Sources: www.populationpyramid.net/africa; www.scottmanning.com/content-year-by-year-world-population-estimates/; www.thuto.org/ubh/ub/h202/wpop1.htm, based on R. Cameron, Concise Economic History of the World (New York: O.U.P., 1993) p. 193; Europe includes Russia; www.ksh.hu/interaktiv/grafikonok/vilag_nepessege_en.html, based on United Nations, World Population Prospects, the 2017 revision.

Map 2 Countries by median age



Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_countries_by_median_age

Africa's urbanization trends

Africa's population is not only growing rapidly, there is also a massive geographical redistribution taking place: towards the cities and towards the coasts. Mobility has replaced stability as the norm (if you one can ever talk of Africa as having been stable), and many (young, well-informed) people move to the cities looking for better economic opportunities, escaping oppression by gerontocratic leaders at home, and in search of freedom to live aspired to lifestyles. Part of that mobility includes foreign destinations, in neighbouring countries, in other parts of Africa, and increasingly also beyond the continent: still mainly in Europe, but ever more in Asia. Table 2 shows the historical, present and future urbanization.

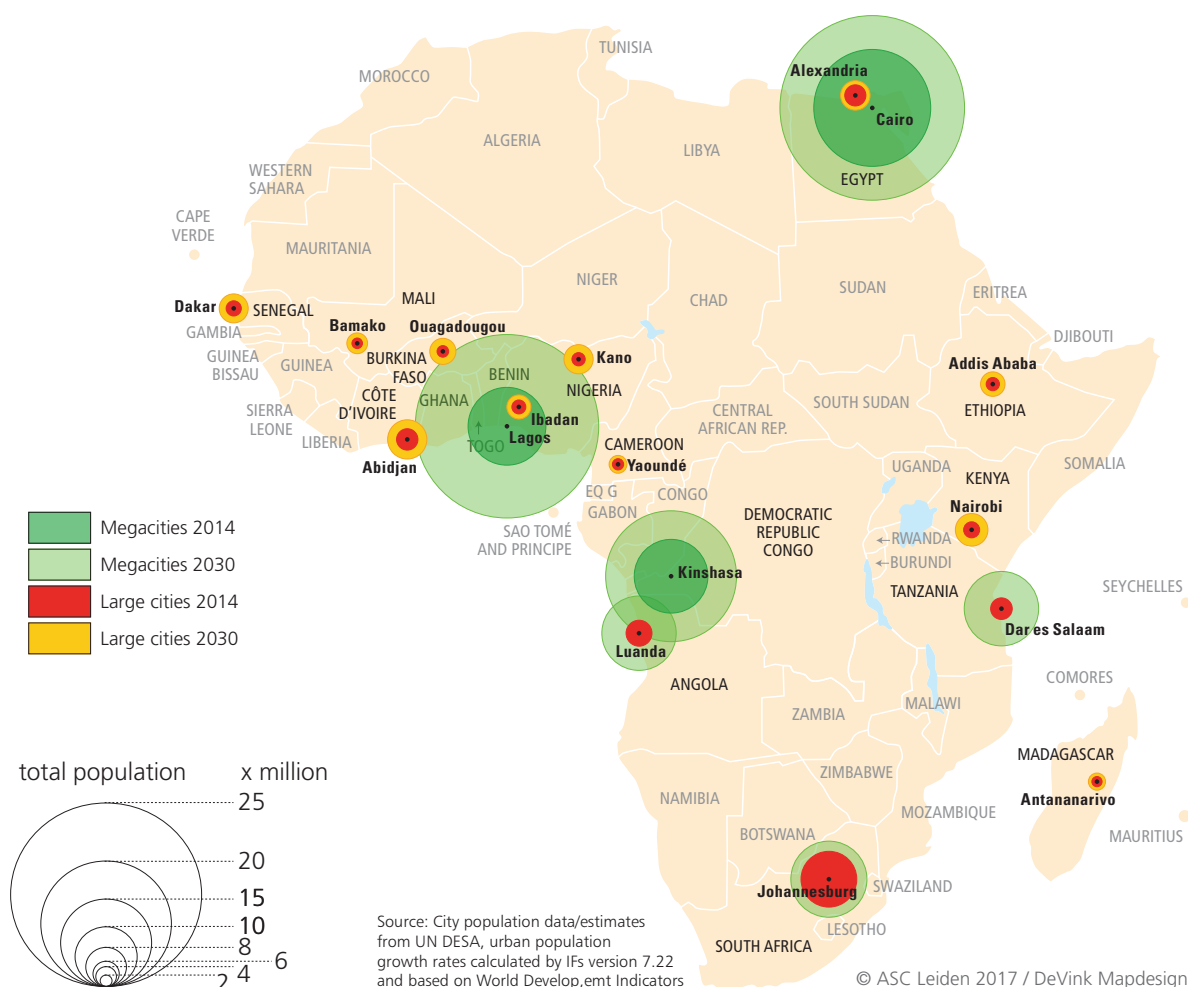
Sources: historical data: <http://uaps2007.princeton.edu/papers/70296> (Hayashi, Reiko: 'Long-term population dynamics in Africa: a perspective from the urban structure' (2007); current and recent data: <https://esa.un.org/unpd/wup/publications/files/wup2014-highlights.pdf>; prospects: UN medium scenarios; own estimate for urban % in 2100. Note: 'Urban' can mean many things. In UN statistics, it generally refers to administrative areas with more than 5,000 inhabitants, and working populations whose major occupation is not in agriculture.

Urbanization in africa 1600-2100

| Year | Urban % | Urban people in millions |
|------|---------|--------------------------|
| 1600 | 10 | 10 |
| 1900 | 15 | 13 |
| 1960 | 20 | 65 |
| 2015 | 40 | 475 |
| 2050 | 55 | 1390 |
| 2100 | 70 | 3080 |

Africa currently has c. 55 cities with more than 1 million inhabitants, and its 'megacities' are increasing. According to a study by Julia Bello-Schunemann and Chiara Aucoin (2016; <https://www.howwemadeitinafrica.com/2030-six-worlds-41-megacities-will-africa/>), six of the world's 41 megacities (more than 10 million inhabitants) will be in Africa in 2030: Lagos (part of a huge urban belt from Abidjan via Accra to Lagos: 'Afro-Atlantic City'), Cairo, Johannesburg, Kinshasa/Brazzaville, Luanda, and Dar es Salaam. See map 3.

Map 3 Africa's current and emerging megacities and large cities, 2014 and 2030



Harvesting the demographic dividend? or dancing on volcanoes? probably both, and with global consequences

| The opportunities | The challenges |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Population growth and urbanization → major growth in demand → hinterland economic transformation, including agricultural expansion (in area, volumes, and productivity, Africa's 'green evolution'); In East Africa: reaping the benefits of climate change-driven improvements in rainfall; Young, energetic people → innovations in production and lifestyles; Information revolution will continue → well-informed youth → political demands for better lives and more equality in opportunities; As a result of increasing migration → more remittances; more innovation; Growing connectivity → regional integration → growing importance of African Union; Rapid development of green energy solutions; Major industrialization for African consumption; growth of African multinationals; also increased FDI in industry and services; Expansion of entertainment industry, and religious entrepreneurship; More bold leadership by economic and political elites at urban, national and continental levels; More protection of infant industries. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increasing pressure on land and water; threats to remaining forests and wildlife; threats to tourism; At the expense of nature, biodiversity and climate stability; In most of Africa (except Eastern): growing drought risks; along coasts: more storm risks and damage by sea level rise, and floods; climate change-related calamity migration; Higher chances of conflicts over natural resources and between people with different (ethnic, religious, national, etc.) identities; Shortfall in African production of food and other basics → growing need for imports → balance of trade; balance of payments; and geo-political risks; Employment shortfalls → angry and impatient youth (re: waitness) → political stability risks → growing fragility and violence; Erratic food prices → urban revolts → political implosion → calamity emigration; Militarization of life in urban centres and in green-energy spots in Africa's peripheries; Continuous violence in other peripheries, and occasionally in urban hotspots of turmoil → more 'no-go areas'. |



Photo: Wikimedia Commons