

Table 3 - Demographic Yearbook 2000

Table 3 presents for each country or area of the world the total, male and female population enumerated at the latest population census, estimates of the mid-year total population for 1995 and 2000, the average annual exponential rate of increase (or decrease) for the period 1995 to 2000, and the surface area and the population density for 2000.

Description of variables: The total, male and female population is, unless otherwise indicated, the de facto (present-in-area) population enumerated at the most recent census for which data are available. The date of this census is given. Unless otherwise indicated, population census data are the results of a nation-wide enumeration. If, however, a nation-wide enumeration has never taken place, the results of a sample survey, essentially national in character, are presented. Results of surveys referring to less than 50 percent of the total territory or population are not included.

Mid-year population estimates refer to the de facto population on 1 July. In some areas the mid-year population has been calculated by the Statistics Division of the United Nations as the mean of two year-end official estimates.

Mid-year estimates, calculated in this manner, are assumed to be sufficiently similar to official estimates for the population on 1 July; they, therefore, have not been footnoted.

Mid-year estimates of the total population are those provided by national statistical offices, unless otherwise indicated. As needed, these estimates are supplemented by mid-year population estimates prepared by the Population Division of the United Nations Secretariat²⁶ when for example official mid-year estimates of the total population either are not available or have not been revised to take into account the results of a recent population census or sample survey. The United Nations Secretariat estimates are identified with a superscript (x) and are based on data available in 2000 including census and survey results, taking into account the reliability of base data as well as available fertility, mortality, and migration data.

The policy of using United Nations Secretariat estimates is designed to produce comparable mid-year estimates for population for 1995 and 2000 which are not only in accord with census and survey results shown in this table but also with estimates for prior years shown in table 5. Unrevised official estimates as well as results of censuses or surveys and estimates for dates other than the mid-year have been eliminated in favour of the United Nations Secretariat consistent mid-year estimates.

Surface area, expressed in square kilometres, refers to the total surface area, comprising land area and inland waters (assumed to consist of major rivers and lakes) and excluding only Polar Regions and uninhabited islands. Exceptions to this are noted. Surface areas, originally reported in square miles, have been converted to square kilometres using a conversion factor of 2.589988.

Computation: The annual rate of increase is the average annual percentage rate of population growth between 1995 and 2000, computed using the mid-year estimates (unrounded) presented in this table using an exponential rate of increase.

Although mid-year estimates presented in this table appear only in thousands, unrounded figures, when available, have been used to calculate the rates of population increase. It should be noted that all United Nations Secretariat estimates used to calculate these rates are rounded.

Density is the number of persons in the 2000 total population per square kilometre of total surface area.

Reliability of data: Reliable mid-year population estimates are those which are based on a complete census (or a sample survey) and have been adjusted by a continuous population register or adjusted on the basis of the calculated balance of births, deaths and migration. Mid-year estimates of this type are considered reliable and appear in roman type. Mid-year estimates which are not calculated on this basis are considered less reliable and are shown in italics. Estimates for years prior to 2000 are considered reliable or less reliable on the basis of the 2000 quality code and appear in roman type or in italics accordingly.

In addition, census data and sample survey results are considered reliable and, therefore, appear in roman type.

Rates of population increase that were calculated using population estimates considered less reliable, as described above, are set in italics rather than roman type.

All surface area data are assumed to be reliable and therefore appear in roman type. Population density data, however, are considered reliable or less reliable on the basis of the reliability of the 2000 population estimates used as the numerator.

Limitations: Statistics on the total population enumerated at the time of the census, estimates of the mid-year total population and surface area data are subject to the same qualifications as have been set forth for population and surface area statistics in sections 3 and 2.4 of the Technical Notes, respectively.

Regarding the limitations of census data, it should be noted that although census data are considered reliable, and therefore appear in roman type, the actual quality of census data varies widely from one country or area to another.

When known, an estimate of the extent of over-enumeration or under-enumeration is given. In the case of sample surveys, a description is given of the population covered.

Because the reliability of the population estimates for any given country or area is based on the quality for the 2000 estimate, the reliability of estimates prior to 2000 may be overstated.

The mid-year estimates prepared by the Population Division of the United Nations Secretariat, used to supplement official data in this table, have the advantage of being prepared by a consistent methodology. However, it is very important to note that, among countries or areas, the actual amount of data and the quality of those data upon which the estimates were based vary considerably.

Percentage rates of population growth are subject to all the qualifications of the population estimates mentioned above. In some cases, they admittedly reflect simply the rate calculated or assumed in constructing the estimates themselves when adequate measures of natural increase and net migration were not available.¹ For small populations, an error up to approximately 0.5 may be introduced by chance alone. Despite their shortcomings, these rates do provide a useful index for studying population change and, used with proper precautions, they can be useful also in evaluating the accuracy of vital and migration statistics.

Because no indication in the table is given to show which of the mid-year estimates are rounded and which are not, the rates calculated on the basis of these estimates may be much more precise in some cases than in others.

With respect to data on population density, it should be emphasized that density values are very rough indexes, in as much as they do not take account of the dispersion or concentration of population within countries or areas nor the proportion of habitable land. They should not be interpreted as reflecting density in the urban sense nor as indicating the supporting power of a territory's land and resources.

Coverage: Population by sex, rate of population increase, surface area and density are shown for 234 countries or areas with a population of 50 or more.

ⁱ Demographic Yearbook 1956, Sales No. 57.XIII.1, United Nations, New York, 1957. p. 13.