

INTRODUCTION

This issue of the *Population and Vital Statistics Report* presents data for countries or areas¹ on population size (total, male, and female) from the latest available census, estimated total population size for 2007 or 2008 (the later available year), and the number and rate of vital events (live births, deaths, and infant deaths) for the latest available year within the past 15 years (1994-2008). These data are presented as reported by national statistical authorities to the *Demographic Yearbook* of the Statistics Division of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs.² This issue also presents data for the world and its major areas and regions¹ on estimated population size for both 2007 and 2008. These estimates were prepared by the Population Division of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs.³ The data described in this paragraph are presented in three tables:

Table 1. Estimated mid-year population by major area and region, 2007 and 2008

Table 2. Population, latest available census and estimates for 2007 or 2008

Table 3. Live births, deaths, and infant deaths, latest available year within the past 15 years (1994-2008)

TECHNICAL NOTES

A. Population

Population estimates for 2007 and 2008 for the world and its major areas and regions (table 1) refer to 1 July of the given year, and are produced by the United Nations Population Division.³

Latest population census figures for countries or areas (table 2) refer to the given date, and are presented as reported by national statistical authorities to the *Demographic Yearbook* of the United Nations Statistics Division. The data are from nationwide population and housing censuses. These censuses use different methods of enumeration: conventional/traditional, based on administrative/population registers, or a combination of methods that may include a sample survey.⁴ The censuses are conducted on either a *de facto* or a *de jure* basis, as indicated in the column "Code." The *de facto* population consists of all persons who are physically present in the country or area at the reference date, whether or not they are usual and/or legal residents. The *de jure* population consists of all usual residents, whether or not they are present at the time of the enumeration and/or legal. Population census data are presented for 236 countries or areas that conducted a census during the period 1960-2008.

Mid-year population estimates for 2007 or 2008 for countries or areas (table 2) refer to 1 July of the given year unless otherwise stated, and are presented as reported by national statistical authorities to the *Demographic Yearbook* of the United Nations Statistics Division. They are also coded as either *de jure* or *de facto*, since for some countries or areas the code is not the same as for the census figure.

B. Vital statistics

Table 3 presents data for countries or areas on live births, deaths, and infant deaths (excluding foetal deaths) for the latest available year within the last 15 years (1994-2008). The data usually refer to vital events that *occurred* in the specified year, even if some were registered later. In some countries or areas, however, they refer to events that were *registered* in the specified year, and, therefore, include some events that occurred previously, and exclude some events that occurred in the specified year but that were or will be registered later. In this case, the symbol "+" is displayed in the column "Code."

¹ In table 1 of this report "countries or areas" are grouped geographically into 21 "regions" (for example, Central America), which are then grouped into six "major areas" (for example, Latin America and the Caribbean). In tables 2 and 3 they are listed by six "continents" (for example, North America).

² Data on these and many other demographic variables are maintained and continuously updated in the *Demographic Yearbook* database. A small selection is published twice annually as the *Population and Vital Statistics Report*, and a much larger selection is published annually as the *Demographic Yearbook*, which also has complementary statistics and extensive technical notes. The *Demographic Yearbook* is also available online, at: <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/products/dyb/default.htm>.

³ United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2009). *World Population Prospects: The 2008 Revision*, <http://esa.un.org/unpp>.

⁴ If the census method of enumeration is not conventional/traditional, the type of method is indicated in a footnote to the census date in the table.

Most of the vital statistics data presented in table 3 come from national civil registration systems. These systems differ markedly in the completeness of the data that they produce. If the country or area reports to the *Demographic Yearbook* its own estimate of the completeness of its civil registration data, then this estimate is classified in the column "Code" as follows: "C" indicates virtually complete data (that is, representing 90 per cent or more of the events occurring in the specified year); and "U" indicates incomplete data (that is, less than 90 per cent of the events). Data not derived from civil registration - usually official estimates from sample surveys or demographic analyses - that are assumed reliable are indicated by "|".

The table shows both the number of vital events and the rates at which they occur. *Crude birth and death rates* are the number of live births and (total) deaths, respectively, per thousand persons in the same year. These rates are based on estimates of mid-year population as reported by national statistical authorities to the *Demographic Yearbook*. The *infant mortality rate* is the number of deaths of persons less than one year of age per thousand live births in the same year. Unless otherwise stated, the rates shown were computed by the United Nations Statistics Division. Rates were only computed when the numerator - the number of vital events - is at least 30 and when the denominator (mid-year population or the number of live births) is available for the same year. Furthermore, rates were computed only if the code for vital events (see the previous paragraph) is "C" or "|".

C. Symbols

The following symbols and notations are used:

...	Data or information not available/rates not computed
-	Magnitude zero
*	Provisional figure
+	Data tabulated by year of registration rather than occurrence
C	Civil registration, estimated 90 per cent or more complete
U	Civil registration, estimated less than 90 per cent complete
	Source other than civil registration, estimated reliable
DF	Population de facto
DJ	Population de jure
SSDF	Sample survey, population de facto
SSDJ	Sample survey, population de jure

D. Highlights

1. Population censuses

One goal of this report is to present the most recent data for total, male, and female population collected by a national population census. In the majority of cases, national population censuses are carried out once every ten years, that is, every census round. A census round, as defined and implemented by the United Nations, encompasses ten years starting with the fifth year of a decade and ending in the fourth year of the next decade (for example, the 2000 census round started on 1 January 1995 and ended on 31 December 2004). Detailed information on planned or conducted national population censuses is collected by the United Nations Statistics Division and presented at the website mentioned below. <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/sources/census/>.

The latest available census figures for total population (for 1960-2008) are given in this publication for 236 countries or areas, whenever available disaggregated by sex. Of these figures, 58 (or 25 per cent) refer to the current 2010 census round (2005 – 2014), 157 (or 67 per cent) refer to the 2000 census round (1995-2004), 11 (or 6 per cent) refer to the 1990 census round (1985-1994), and 9 (or 4 per cent) refer to the 1980 or previous census rounds. There is one territory (Åland Islands) for which no census data are available.

2. Vital statistics

The main source of vital statistics is civil registration. "Civil registration is the continuous, permanent, compulsory and universal recording of the occurrence and characteristics of events, including vital events, pertaining to the population, as provided by decree or regulation, in accordance with the legal requirements of a country."⁵ The availability of detailed vital

⁵ *Principles and Recommendations for a Vital Statistics System, Revision 2*, Sales No.E.01.XVII.10, United Nations, New York, 2001, para. 26.

statistics for a country or area illustrates national capacity in the compilation of these statistics from civil registration systems. This report aims to present the most recent data on live births, deaths, and infant deaths reported to the *United Nations Demographic Yearbook*.

Out of 236 countries or areas, the latest available figure for live births refers to year 2006 or later for 152 countries or areas (or 64 per cent); to year 2004 or 2005 for 15 countries or areas (or 6 per cent) and to an earlier year for 33 countries or areas (or 14 per cent). No data for live births are available for 36 countries or areas (or 15 per cent). The situation for data on (total) deaths is similar. However, data on infant deaths are somewhat less recent: 120 figures (or 51 per cent) refer to years 2006 or later, 20 (or 8 per cent) to 2004-2005, 39 (or 17 per cent) date from 2003 or earlier years and 57 countries or areas (or 24 per cent) did not report data on infant deaths.