

Goal

Access by all couples to information and services to prevent pregnancies that are too early, too closely spaced, too late or too many

» Fertility and Family Planning



Result

During the decade, contraceptive prevalence increased from 57 per cent to 67 per cent globally and doubled in the least developed countries. The total fertility rate declined from 3.2 to 2.7.

... but

Only 23 per cent of women in sub-Saharan Africa use contraceptives and the region has the highest levels of fertility.

Issue

Too many births too close together, or at too young or too old an age, are a major cause of illness, disability, poor nutrition and premature death among women and children. Fewer births can significantly improve both the lives of women and children's survival, nutrition, health and education.

In the early 1990s, some 120 million women in developing countries who did not want to become pregnant were not using family planning. As a result, one pregnancy in every five was unwanted.

Births too early

Every year, adolescent girls give birth to 13 million infants. There are higher risks during pregnancy and birth for girls aged 15-19: Births are more likely to be unintended and premature, and adolescent childbirth carries greater risks of dying in pregnancy and complications during delivery. Motherhood also limits girls' opportunities for better education, jobs and income, and increases the likelihood of divorce and separation. Babies born to teenagers also face a higher risk of low birthweight, serious long-term disability and dying during infancy. Moreover, in many countries, children born to adolescent mothers are more likely to be undernourished than those born to older mothers.

The adolescent fertility rate, defined as the annual number of live births per 1,000 girls aged 15-19, is estimated at 50 per 1,000 worldwide for the period 2000-2005. As in total fertility, teenage fertility is highest in sub-Saharan Africa at 127 per 1,000. It is 71 in Latin America and the Caribbean and 18 in East Asia and the Pacific, primarily because of very low adolescent fertility in China.

FERTILITY STILL HIGH

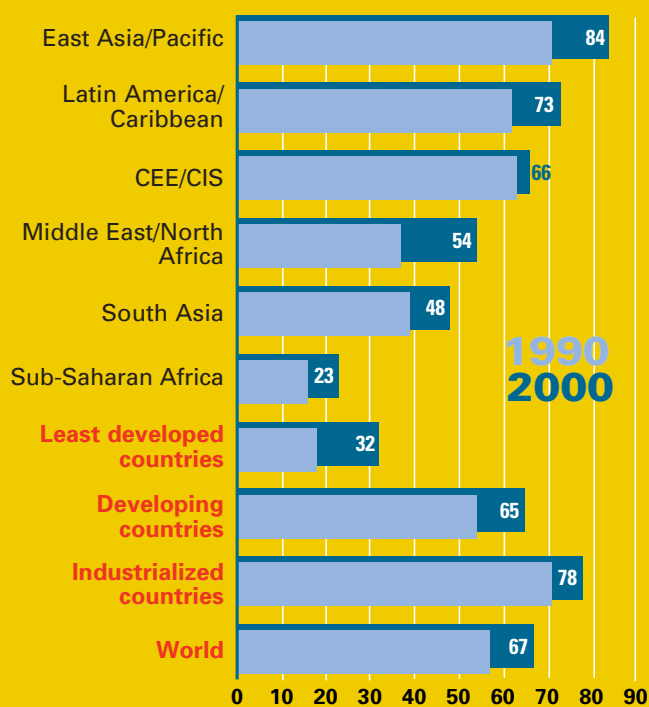
Where fertility rates are the highest – most with no change over the decade.

	1990	2000	Difference
Niger	8.1	8.0	0.1
Yemen	7.6	7.6	0.0
Somalia	7.3	7.3	0.0
Angola	7.2	7.2	0.0
Uganda	7.1	7.1	0.0
Mali	7.0	7.0	0.0
Afghanistan	7.1	6.9	0.2
Burkina Faso	7.3	6.8	0.5
Burundi	6.8	6.8	0.0
Ethiopia	6.9	6.8	0.1
Liberia	6.8	6.8	0.0
Chad	6.7	6.7	0.0
Congo, Dem. Rep.	6.7	6.7	0.0
Malawi	7.3	6.5	0.8
Sierra Leone	6.5	6.5	0.0
Congo	6.3	6.3	0.0
Guinea	6.6	6.1	0.5
Mozambique	6.5	6.1	0.4
Guinea Bissau	6.0	6.0	0.0
Mauritania	6.2	6.0	0.2
Rwanda	6.9	6.0	0.9

Source: UN Population Division, *Population Estimates and Projections, 2000 Revision*.

Contraceptive use

Percentage of women (in union) aged 15-49 currently using contraception

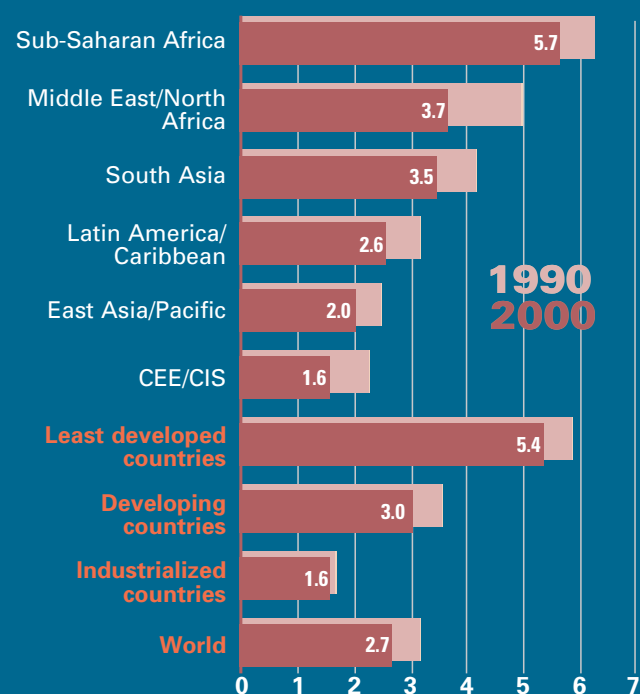


Source: UN Population Division, January 2001.



Fertility rates decline

Average number of births per woman



Source: UN Population Division, *Population Estimates and Projections, 2000 Revision*.