Key Fact: Close to half of current population in Africa is under 18, and steady growth in births and declining mortality rates will bring Africa's child population to 1 billion by 2055

Africa's child population will be the largest among all continents in the latter half of this century, topping 1 billion by 2055

Since 1950, births in Africa have increased almost fourfold, and Africa is projected to have the largest number of births among all continents after 2050

Key Statistics

- Africa’s child population will reach 1 billion by 2055, making it the largest child population among all continents.
- From 2017 onwards, sub-Saharan Africa is the region with the highest number of births, and this trend will persist for the rest of the century.
- Based on continuation of current coverage, more than 300 million of Africa’s 730 million projected births through 2030 will not be attended by skilled health personal.
- In Africa, mortality rates among children under age 5 decreased by 58 per cent between 1990 and 2017, still, over half of the world’s 5.4 million under-five deaths in 2017 occurred in Africa.
- While mortality rates have declined among all age groups in Africa, child deaths tend to be concentrated at the youngest age groups with 85 per cent of all deaths to children under age 15 occurring among children younger than 5.
- In 2016, pneumonia, malaria and diarrhoea accounted for 36 per cent of all under-five deaths in Africa.
- On current trends, 31 million under-five deaths will occur in Africa between 2018 and 2030—if all countries at risk of missing the SDG target on under-five mortality achieved the target, 8 million lives could be saved on the continent.
- Changing demographics and a growing population in Africa will require an additional 4.2 million health workers above current growth to meet WHO minimum standards and an increase of 1.3 million primary school teachers to meet the best sub-regional performers’ pupil-teacher ratio by 2030.
**CHILDREN IN AFRICA**

Key Fact: The under-five mortality rate for Africa declined by 58 per cent from 1990 to 2017, while mortality among older children and young adolescents (aged 5-14) in Africa declined by 54 per cent over the same period.

Countries with the highest child mortality rates are concentrated in sub-Saharan Africa.

Map 1. Under-five mortality rate (deaths per 1,000 live births) by country and number of under-five deaths by African Union sub-region, 2017.

Child mortality declined in all African Union sub-regions between 1990 and 2017 with the largest percentage declines occurring in Northern Africa for under-five mortality and in Eastern Africa for mortality among children aged 5-14.

Fig 3a. Under-five mortality rate by African Union sub-region, 1990 and 2017.


Source for all figures on this page: United Nations Inter-agency Group for Child Mortality Estimation (UN IGME) 2018.
Key statistics on child survival and population

An increasing share of under-five deaths are concentrated among newborns

![Chart showing distribution of under-15 deaths, Africa, 1990-2017](chart)

**Source for figures 4 and 5:** United Nations Inter-agency Group for Child Mortality Estimation (UN IGME) 2018.

Infectious diseases and neonatal complications are among the leading causes of death among children under age 5

![Chart showing distribution of causes of under-five deaths, Africa, 2016](chart)


The risk of dying is highest in the first month of life

![Chart showing age-specific mortality rates (deaths per 1,000), Africa, 2017](chart)

As mortality levels decline with age, injuries become a more prominent cause of death among older children and adolescents

![Chart showing distribution of deaths among children and adolescents, by age group and cause, 2016](chart)

Key Fact: Africa will need to add millions more health workers and primary school teachers by 2030 to meet the demands of shifting demographics.

Africa will need an additional 4.2 million health workers above its current rate of growth to meet the WHO minimum standards for frontline skilled health personnel by 2030.

More than 11 million primary school teachers will be needed in 2030 to meet the best sub-regional performers’ pupil-teacher ratio.

Based on the continuation of current coverage, more than 300 million of Africa’s 730 million projected births through 2030 will not be attended by skilled health personnel.

Note: For missing values of pupil/teacher ratios in Libya, Sudan and Somalia the sub-regional average was used. Best sub-regional performers’ pupil/teacher ratio: Central Africa: 23; Eastern Africa: 19; Northern Africa: 17; Southern Africa: 23; Western Africa: 22.


Note: Most recent skilled birth attendance country values available for the period 2010-2016.