



POPULATION AGEING 2002



Number of persons aged 60 years or older

The number of persons aged 60 years or older is estimated to be 629 million in 2002 and is projected to grow to almost 2 billion by 2050, at which time the population of older persons will be larger than the population of children (0-14 years) for the first time in human history.

Percentage of population aged 60 years or older

One of every 10 persons is now aged 60 years or older; by 2050, the United Nations projects that 1 person of every 5 and, by 2150, 1 of every 3 will be aged 60 years or older.

developed regions, but the pace of ageing in developing countries is more rapid, and their transition from a young to an old age structure will be more compressed in time.

The oldest old

The older population is itself ageing. Currently, the oldest old (80 years or older) make up 12 per cent of the population aged 60 years or older.

Life expectancy at age 60

The world has experienced dramatic improvements in longevity. Life expectancy at birth has climbed about

20 years since 1950, to its current level of 66 years. Of those surviving to age 60, men can expect to live another 17 years and women an additional 20 years. However, there are still large differences in mortality levels between countries.

Sex ratio

The majority of older persons are women. Because female life expectancy is greater than male life expectancy, among older persons there are 81 men per 100 women in 2002.

since there are larger differences in life expectancy between the sexes in the more developed regions.

Percentage of older population currently married

Older men are much more likely than older women to be married. While 78 per cent of older men are currently married, the corresponding figure for older women is 64 per cent.

Potential support ratio

The potential support ratio, or PSR (the number of persons aged 15 to 64 years per one older person aged 65 years or older), indicates the dependency burden on potential workers.

fall and will continue to fall. Between 1950 and 2002, the PSR fell from 12 to 9 people in the working ages per each person aged 65 years or older.

Statutory retirement age

In more developed regions, men become eligible for full pension benefits at age 65 or older in more than one half of countries, while the most common standard retirement age for women is between 55 and 59 years.

lower in less developed countries. The differential between more and less developed regions probably reflects differences in life expectancy, which is lower in less developed regions.

Percentage of older population in the labour force

Countries with high per capita incomes tend to have lower participation rates of older workers. In more developed regions, 21 per cent of men aged 60 years or older are economically active, compared with 50 per cent of men in less developed regions.

Table with 14 columns: Country or area, Number (thousands) 2002, Number (thousands) 2050, Percentage of total population 2002, Percentage of total population 2050, Sex ratio (men per 100 women) 2002, Sex ratio (men per 100 women) 2050, Potential support ratio 2002, Potential support ratio 2050, Statutory retirement age 2002, Statutory retirement age 2050, Percentage of older population currently married 2002, Percentage of older population currently married 2050, Life expectancy at age 60 2002, Life expectancy at age 60 2050.

Percentage of total population aged 60 years or older 2002 and 2050. World map showing population distribution by age group and region. Includes notes on data sources and projections.

