



Demographics

Size of the world and Africa's population in different scenarios

Jakkie Cilliers

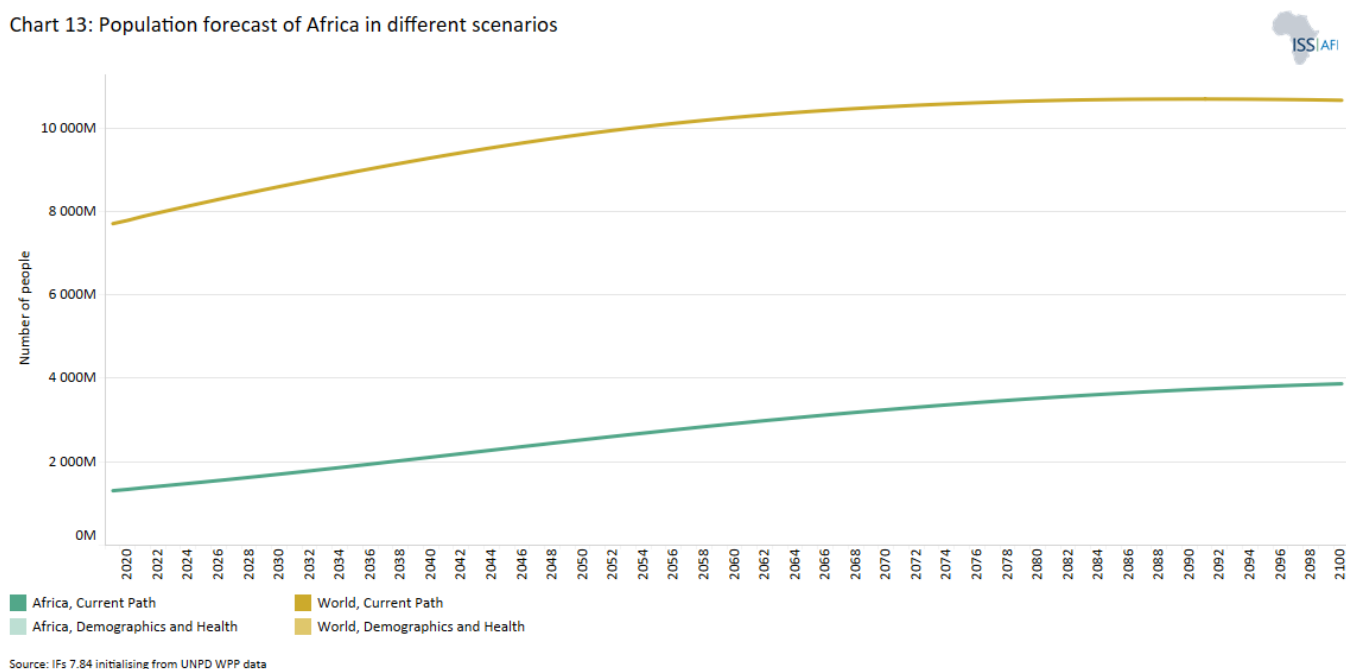
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Size of the world and Africa's population in different scenarios

Chart 13 presents the world and Africa's total populations to 2100 in the Current Path forecast and Demographics and Health scenario. Individual African countries can be selected in the drop-down menu. In 2043, Africa's population in the Demographics and Health scenario compared to the Current Path would be 93 million fewer people; it would be 305 million fewer people in 2063 and at the end of the century, the difference would be a massive 630 million fewer Africans.

Because of its smaller population, Africa would emit a million tons less carbon from fossil fuels compared to the Current Path forecast in 2043 and 59 million tons less in 2063. Coming from its current low base, carbon emissions in Africa will, however, accelerate rapidly at this point given rapid population growth.

Chart 13: Population forecast of Africa in different scenarios



Given the momentum behind Africa's youthful population, the impact of the combined Demographics and Health scenario on the size of the world's population would be substantial. In the Current Path forecast, the global population is expected to peak at 10.7 billion by around 2090. In the Demographics and Health scenario, the peak is expected to more than a decade earlier, at roughly 10.2 billion people, which has considerable positive implications for global sustainability.

By the end of the century, Africa's population is expected to have grown to 3.2 billion people in the Demographics and Health scenario (constituting 32% of the global population) and be close to its peak. In contrast, the Current Path forecasts the population to be approximately 3.9 billion people by this time (constituting 36% of the global population) and still be several decades away from its peak.^[1]

Endnotes

1. Forecasts over extended time horizons are very uncertain. Forecasting to 2043 is already stretching our understanding of how human and natural systems interact, and things will certainly be very different by 2063 and even more so by 2100.

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About the authors

Dr Jakkie Cilliers is the ISS's founder and former executive director. He currently serves as chair of the ISS Board of Trustees, head of the African Futures and Innovation (AFI) programme at the Pretoria office of the Institute, and is an extraordinary professor at the University of Pretoria. His 2017 best-seller *Fate of the Nation* addresses South Africa's futures from political, economic and social perspectives. His three most recent books, *Africa First! Igniting a Growth Revolution* (March 2020), *The Future of Africa: Challenges and Opportunities* (April 2021), and *Africa Tomorrow: Pathways to Prosperity* (June 2022) take a rigorous look at the continent as a whole.

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