



## The Impact of World Population Trends on UK Immigration [1]

### Summary

1. Britain's immigration policies need to be seen in the wider context of developments in Europe and in the wider world. As migration pressures increase, there will be important implications for the population of the receiving countries.

2. Within Europe there are huge divergences of demographic patterns and trends. In the UK, official projections expect the population to increase to 77 million by mid-century, mostly because of the current very high levels of immigration. But if immigration were to be brought into balance with emigration, the population would increase to 64 million and then return to just over the present level by mid-century. However in Germany, Italy and Spain there would be sharp falls in population by mid century if there were no net immigration, because of their persistently low birth rates. Germany's population is projected to decline even if its current substantial immigration continues. Meanwhile, according to the latest Eurostat projections made in 2008, the population of the ten new East European members is expected to decline by 2060 - by 8% in the case of the Czech Republic ranging to 28% in Bulgaria. These countries have very low birth rates and some also lose population by emigration.

3. In the wider world, the populations of some of the less developed countries are expected to grow extremely fast. By mid century, the growing population of Vietnam is projected to approach the population size of Russia (projected to be 112 and 116 million respectively in 2050), where a high death rate and a low birth rate are driving population downwards, despite some immigration.

4. At the moment, the population of Northern Africa (195 million) is only slightly higher than that of the European Mediterranean countries together (France Italy Spain and Greece; 174 million). In the same period, the population of Northern Africa is expected to increase to 321 million while that of the European Mediterranean countries is projected to increase only slightly to 187 million, mostly as a result of immigration. With persistent economic disparities, the pressures to migrate to Europe are bound to intensify.

### Introduction

5. Population projections are inevitably uncertain. In the Western world improved health care lengthens lives and contraception is widely available. Birth rates have been relatively stable in recent years, though some are currently increasing, and survival improves progressively. The biggest uncertainty is international migration which is influenced by social, economic and political forces that are not well understood.

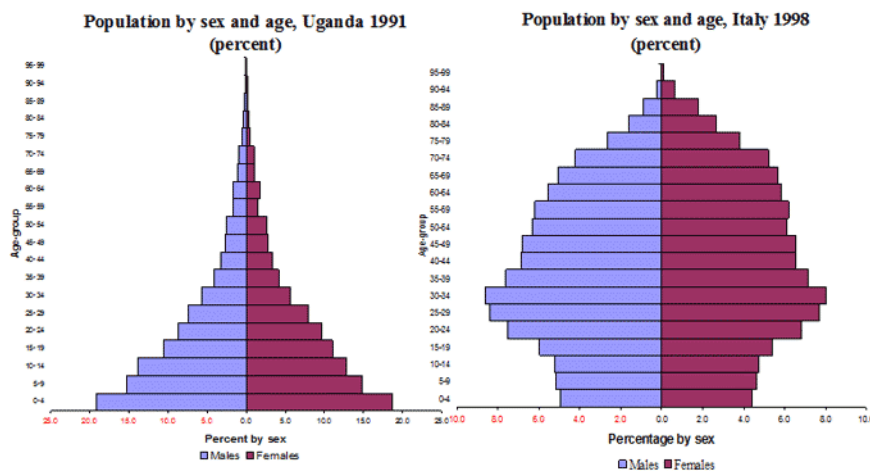
6. Some generalisations can, however, be made. At the broadest level, there is a "demographic

transition" from the high birth rates and high death rates of developing countries to the low birth and death rates of most developed countries. In the middle of this process there is a "demographic bonus", lasting for a few decades while the number of children is declining and the number of older people has not yet increased. Economic growth in this period can be greatly enhanced for countries that have the physical and social means of employing these extra workers. This was the case for Europe in the post-war period. In China and India, where these factors are also present, they will underwrite the strong economic growth forecast for the 21st century. Where they are absent, as in much of sub-Saharan Africa, the extra people are more likely to swell the ranks of the under-employed. As time moves on, there is an inevitable price to be paid for the demographic bonus in the form of population ageing.

### Population Momentum

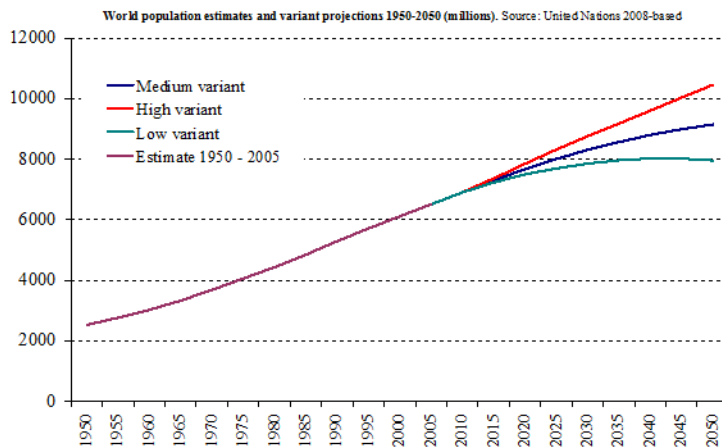
7. Much of the future development of population, at least in the medium term, is built into the current structure of populations. The population pyramids below show the population structure by age and sex of Uganda and Italy in the 1990s. Uganda shows "positive momentum". Even if each woman from now on had no more than the number of children needed to replace the parents (about 2.5, because of high mortality) the population of Uganda would still approximately double over the next 50 years (women in Uganda actually have over six children). By contrast, the Italian population now has "negative momentum" and population decline would continue for some years even if fertility were to return to the replacement level (about 2.1) instead of the present 1.3.

### Population Momentum - Positive and Negative



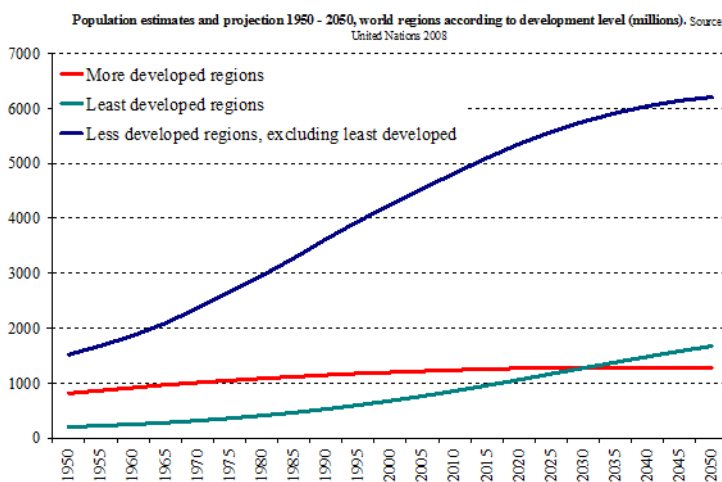
### Global Forecasts

8. The United Nations medium projection of world population is that it will grow from today's 6.7 billion (2008) to reach 9.1 billion by 2050 and stabilise at between 9 and ten billion in the latter half of this century. Much of the projected increase of about 3 billion is inevitable, as a result of population momentum. The rest depends on assumptions about the continued decline of mortality and fertility.



### The balance between regions

9. These UN projections suggest that the balance of population between different regions of the world will change sharply. Almost all the increase in world population will be in the less developed countries - especially among the poorest of the poor.



10. By mid-century countries such as Afghanistan, Angola, Ethiopia, Congo and Somalia are likely to have about three times their present population. It must always be kept in mind that projecting population over 45 years, especially in developing countries where data are poor, is a very uncertain business. To take some extreme examples, the UN 2002-based projections expected the 2050 population of Yemen to be 84 million, not the 54 million of the 2008-based projections. And in 2002 the population of Spain was expected to fall from 43 million in 2005 to 37 million in 2050. Now, following the official recognition of spectacularly high immigration, the UN expects it to grow to 51 million by mid-century.

Some notable projected population increases and declines in population, 2005 - 2050

Countries with incomplete fertility transition				Countries in population decline			
millions				Millions			
	2005	2050	2050/2005		2005	2050	2050/2005
Afghanistan	24.5	73.9	3.0	Belarus	9.8	7.3	0.7
Angola	16.6	42.3	2.5	Bulgaria	7.7	5.4	0.7
Burkina Faso	13.7	40.8	3.0	Estonia	1.3	1.2	0.9
Burundi	7.4	14.8	2.0	Germany	82.4	70.5	0.9
Guinea-Bissau	1.5	3.6	2.4	Hungary	10.1	8.9	0.9
Congo (dem.)	59.1	147.5	2.5	Korea	47.6	44.1	0.9
Ethiopia	74.7	173.8	2.3	Italy	58.7	57.1	1.0
Mali	11.8	28.3	2.4	Japan	127.5	101.7	0.8
Niger	13.1	58.2	4.4	Romania	21.6	17.3	0.8
Somalia	8.4	23.5	2.8	Russia	143.2	116.1	0.8
Uganda	28.7	91.3	3.2	Ukraine	46.9	35	0.7
Yemen	21	53.7	2.6				
Total	280.5	751.7	2.7	Total	556.8	464.6	0.8
Others of Interest							
Bangladesh	153.1	222.5	1.5	Israel	6.7	10.6	1.6
China	1312.3	1417	1.1	Occupied Territories	3.8	10.3	2.7
Nigeria	140.9	289.1	2.1	Iraq	28.2	64	2.3
Pakistan	165.8	335.2	2.0	Saudi Arabia	23.6	43.7	1.9

Source: United Nations 2008-based population projections medium variant.

Note: population ratios are calculated from population data to one place of decimals.

11. On a regional scale, Asia accounts for the major increase, particularly as it includes India, Pakistan and Indonesia. China's population is projected to be in decline by mid-century, substantially overtaken by that of India (1614 million by 2050). The pace of population growth of Asia is slowing. Africa has become the fastest growing region and its rate of increase is moderating only slowly. Its population is expected to overtake that of China by mid-century.

### Implications for the UK

12. Five countries account for about half the visa applications to the UK. In 2006/7 China, India, Nigeria, Pakistan and the Russian Federation were the source of 1.22 million applications of the 2.8 million received world wide. In 2005 their combined population was 2890 million. By mid-century it is projected to total 3728 million, an increase of 29%.

13. Meanwhile, the top ten source countries for asylum seekers are currently Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan, Eritrea, Zimbabwe, China, Somalia, Pakistan, North Korea, and Sri Lanka. This list changes over time as conditions in those and other countries change. However, by way of illustration, the population of these countries now comes to 1662 million. By mid century it is projected to reach 2090 million, an increase of 26%.

10 August, 2009

## NOTES

1. This paper is largely a precis of "The shape of things to come: world population to 2050." The data have been updated. By Professor D.A. Coleman. A contribution to the Engelsberg Seminar 2005. Published by the Axelson Johnson Foundation, Stockholm, 2007, in *Empire and the Future World Order*, pp. 209 - 230.