Population Data Booklet

GLOBAL STATE OF METROPOLIS 2020

UN-HABITAT
FOR A BETTER URBAN FUTURE

Global State of Metropolis 2020 – Population Data Booklet

First published in Nairobi, 2020 by UN-Habitat
First edition: June 2020
Second edition: July 2020
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HS Number: HS/013/20E

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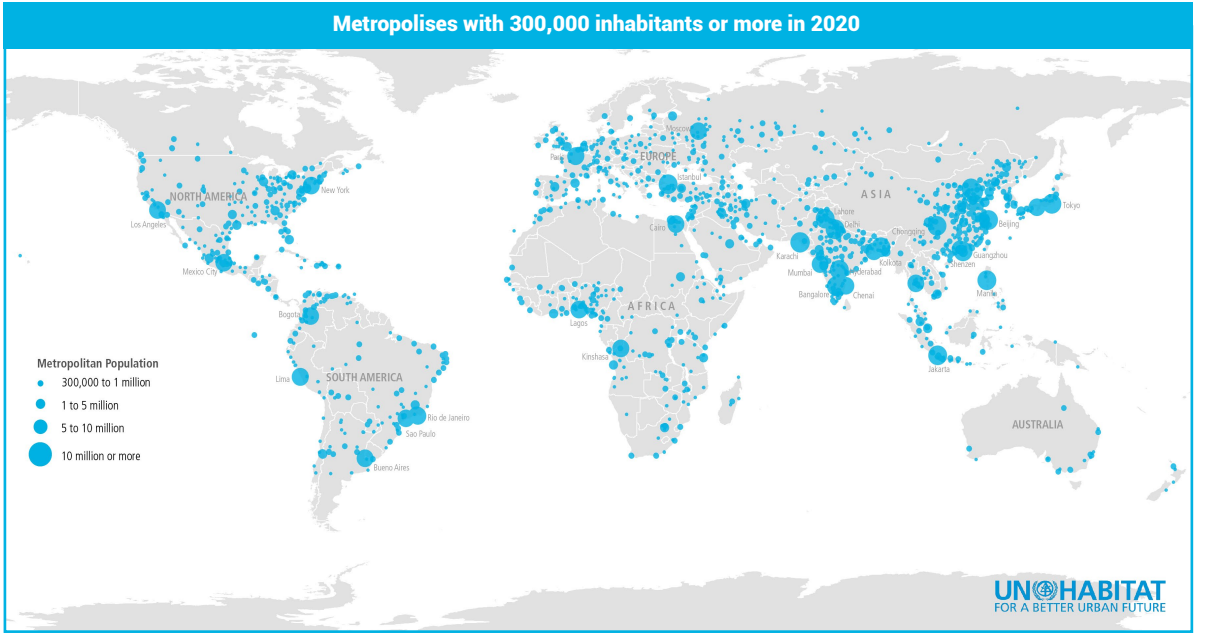
The World's Metropolises in 2020



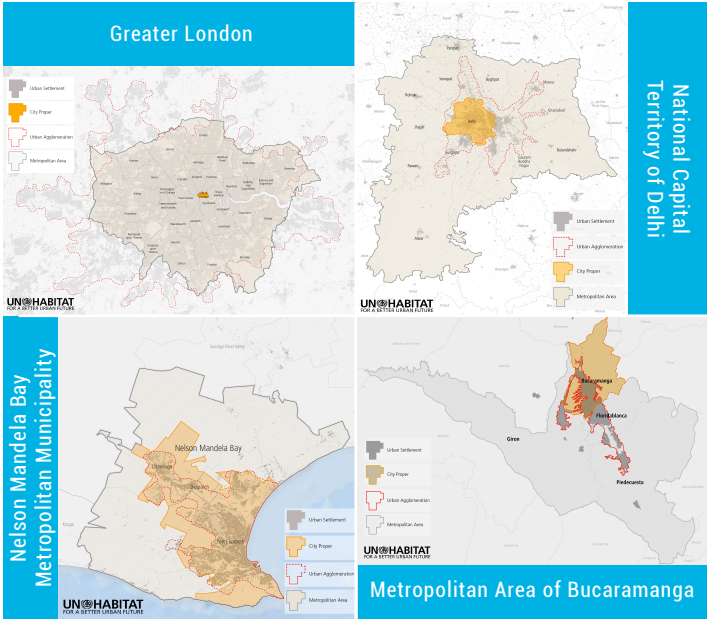
In 2020 there are 1934 metropolises with more than 300,000 inhabitants representing approximately 60% of the world's urban population. At least 2.59 billion people live in metropolises in 2020 which is equivalent to one third of the global population. 34 metropolises have surpassed 10 million inhabitants; while 51 have a population of 5 to 10 million; 494 of 1 to 5 million; and 1355 of 300,000 to 1 million.

The metropolis of the 21st century

As the world continues to urbanize, sustainable development depends increasingly on the successful management of urban growth (UN, 2018). Between 2000 and 2015, cities grew by 1.5% a year in terms of area. Growth in the land covered by cities was higher in low-income countries (2.6%), than in middle-income countries (1.9% in lower middle and 1.5% in upper middle) or high-income countries (1%) (EC OECD, 2020). Due to that expansion, many cities have grown beyond the boundaries of their central municipality.[1]

Rising population and uncontrolled urban land consumption rates have been responsible for the rise of bigger and denser cities and metropolises. **Definitions of cities, urban agglomerations and metropolitan areas vary depending on legal, administrative, political, economic or cultural criteria in the respective countries and regions.** In March 2020, the UN Statistical Commission endorsed a global definition of cities to facilitate international comparison.[2] This definition captures the full extent of a city including the dense areas beyond the municipal boundaries. It defines a metropolitan area as a city and its commuting zone, which consists of suburban, periurban and rural areas economically and socially linked to the city. An approach supported by metropolitan authorities and experts and the World Urbanization Prospects (WUP).

WUP uses the term **urban agglomeration** for cities whose contiguous territory have surpassed the "city proper" or local administrative boundaries and includes the adjacent suburban and peri-urban areas. WUP also uses the term **metropolitan area** to include rural areas socially and economically linked. This Data Booklet uses the datasets from the 2018 revision of WUP to analyse global and regional metropolitan trends among the United Nations Regional Groups.[3] This Booklet is in support of the forthcoming UN-Habitat Global State of Metropolis Report.



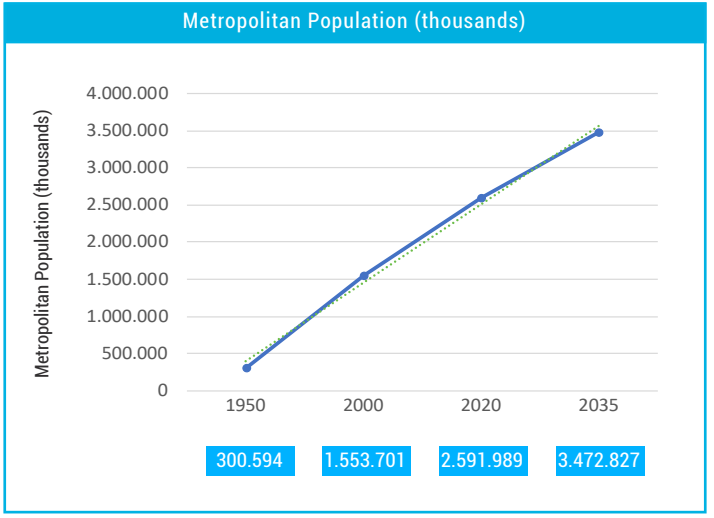
1. *World Urbanization Prospects: The 2018 Revision – Key Facts. UN (2018)*. https://population.un.org/wup/ and *Cities in the World: A New Perspective on Urbanisation*. EC OECD (2020). http://oe.cd/pub/32B

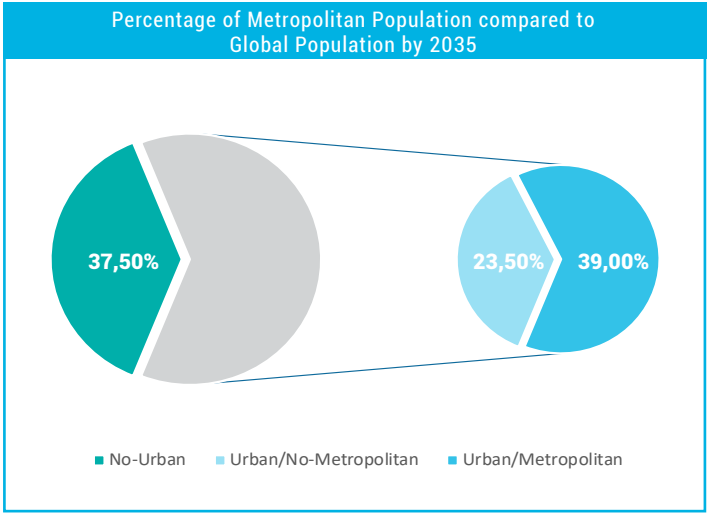
2. A recommendation on the method to delineate cities, urban and rural areas for international statistical comparisons. https://unstats.un.org/unsd/statcom/51st-session/documents/BG-Item3j-Recommendation-E.pdf

3. The numbers in this Data Booklet must be understood as minimum figures which could be larger if new information is reported to and analysed by UN Population Division.

Metropolitan population will grow rapidly

It is projected that the number of **people living in metropolises in 2035 will increase to 3.47 billion** representing 39% of the global population and 62.5% of the world's urban population. Almost 1 billion people will become metropolitan inhabitants in the next fifteen years.

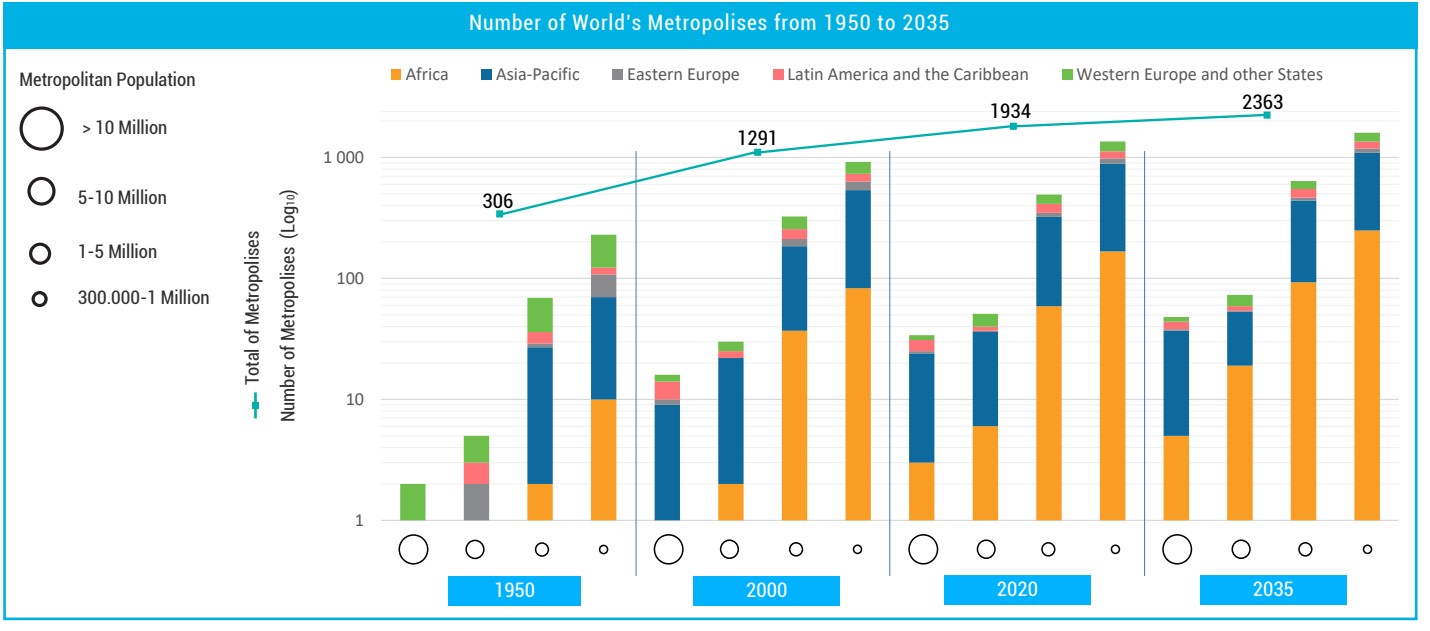




Metropolises will represent the human settlements typology with the largest population worldwide, followed by rural settlements and other urban settlement configurations. On their part, non-agglomerated cities with less than 300,000 inhabitants will represent almost a quarter of the world's population and 23.5% of the urban population, equivalent to 2 billion people.

The number of world's metropolises will continue to increase in the coming years

A new metropolis will arise every two-weeks in the next fifteen years for a total of **429 new metropolises.**

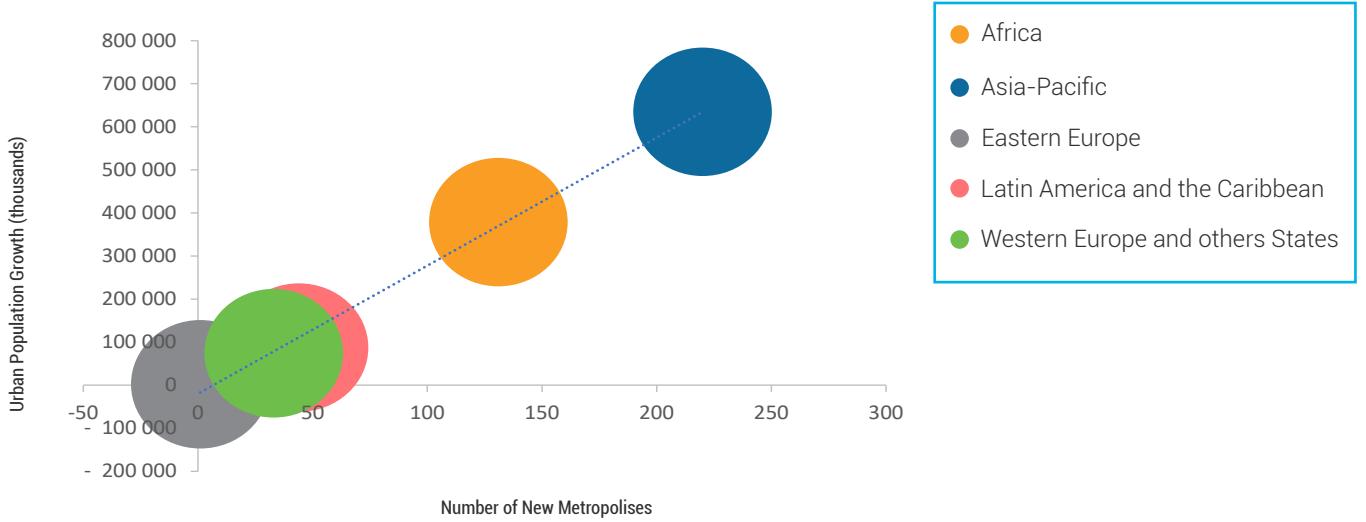


2363 metropolises are projected to exist by 2035. Out of these, there will be 14 new metropolises with more than 10 million inhabitants and 22 new metropolises with a population of between 5 and 10 million.

Urban population growth and the emergence of new metropolises are related

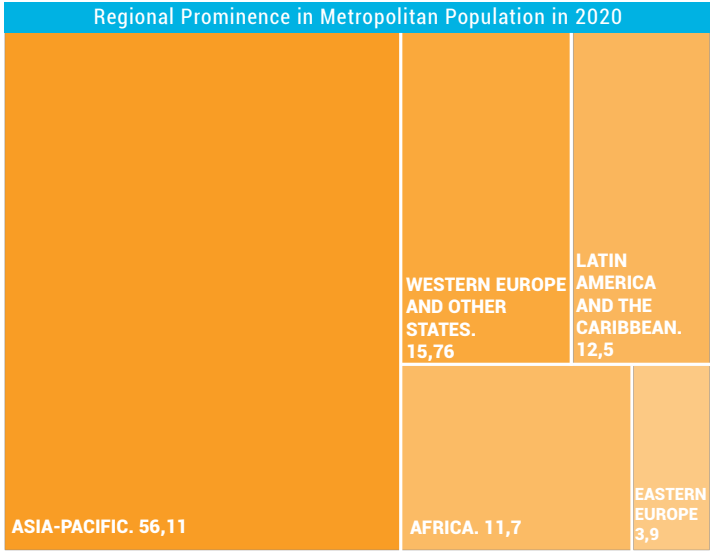
There is a **positive relationship between urban population growth and the emergence of new metropolises** among the Regional Groups. All the regions will exhibit an emergence of new metropolises along with the rise in urban population.

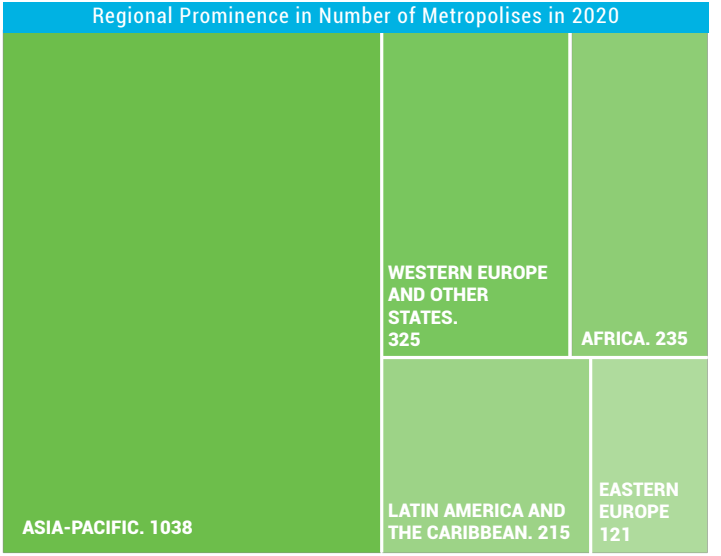
New Metropolises and Urban Population Growth by Regional Group from 2020 to 2035



Asia-Pacific and Africa will lead the growth while Eastern Europe will remain stable. Latin America and the Caribbean as well as Western Europe and other States will show an increase in numbers albeit at slower rates.

Asia-Pacific is the most prominent Regional Group with regards to metropolitan figures while Eastern Europe is the least in 2020





Asia-Pacific accounts for **56% of the world's metropolitan population** living in 1038 metropolises while Eastern Europe accounts for 121 metropolises in which 3.9% of the world's metropolitan population lives. Western Europe and other States and, especially, Africa, and Latin America and the Caribbean have comparable prominence in both metropolitan population and number of metropolises.

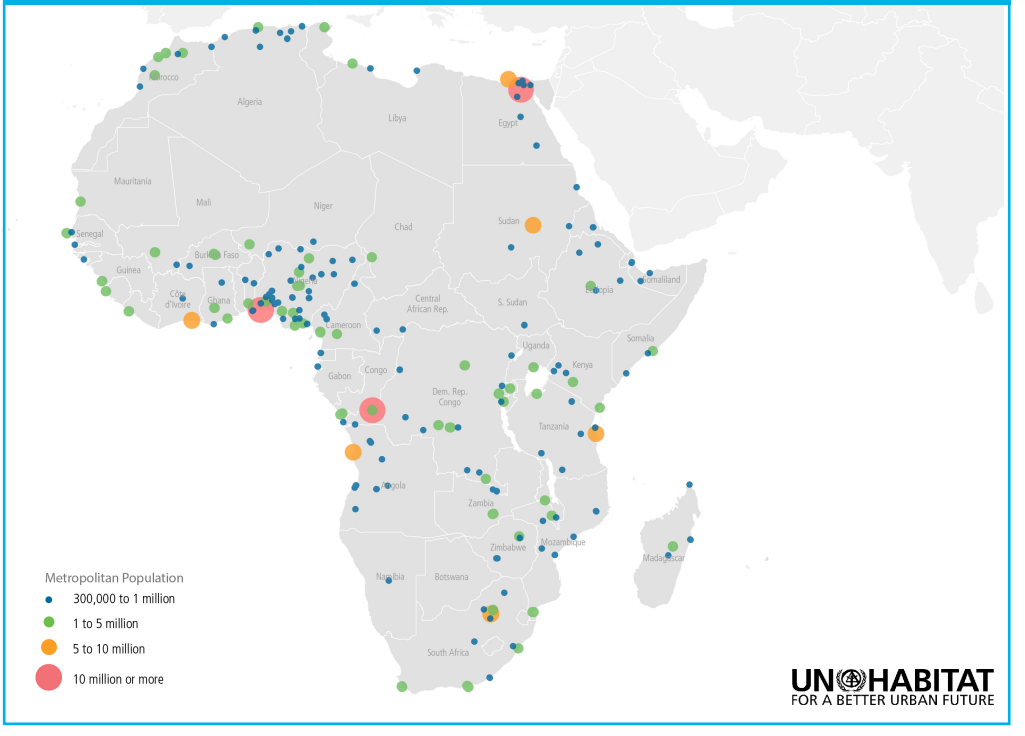
African Metropolises in 2020

The African Region has 235 metropolises distributed as follows:

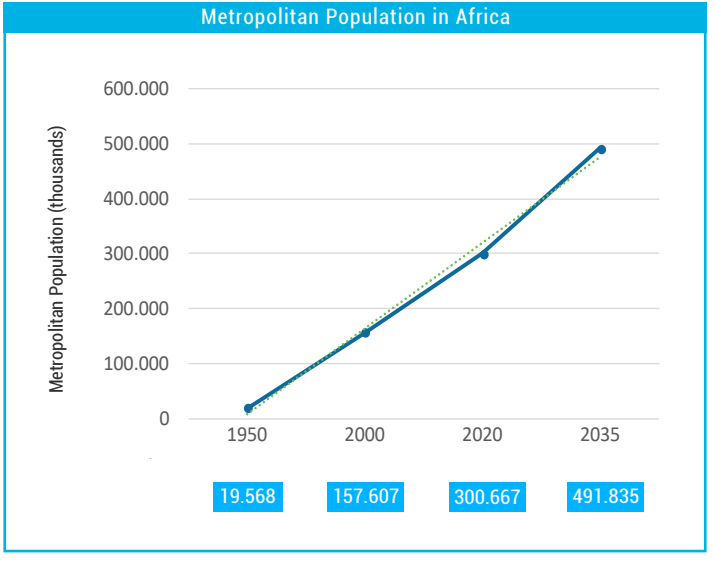
- 3 metropolises have more than 10 million inhabitants;
- 6 metropolises have between 5 and 10 million inhabitants;
- 59 metropolises have between 1 and 5 million inhabitants; and
- 167 metropolises have between 300,000 and 1 million inhabitants.

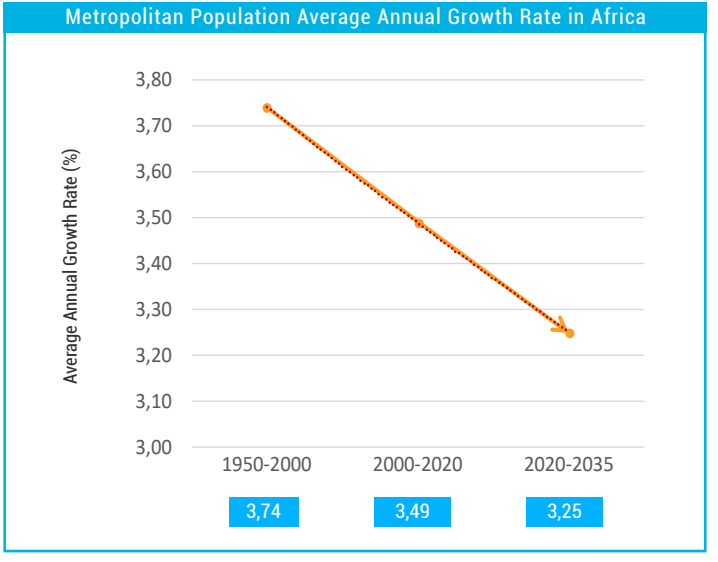
Nigeria (54), Democratic Republic of the Congo (17), South Africa (15), Egypt (14), Morocco (11) and Angola (10) are the countries with the most metropolises in Africa. They have a polycentric system of cities. In contrast, there are 16 countries with only a single metropolis and 8 countries with two metropolises.

Metropolises of Africa in 2020



African Metropolises in 2020



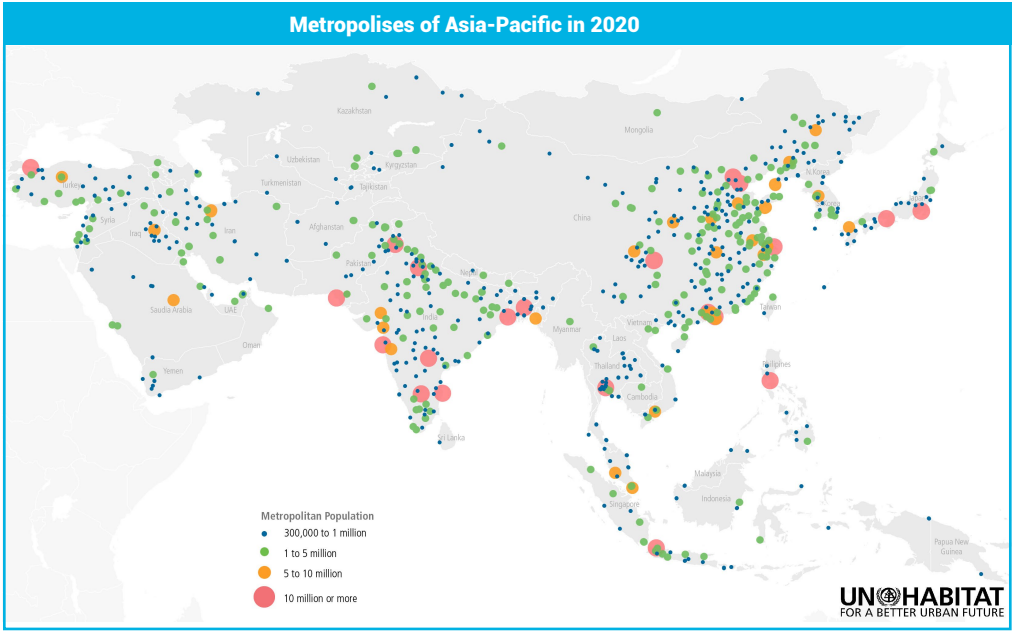


In 2020, over **300.6 million people** lived in African metropolises and between 2020 and 2035, that number is projected to increase by more than 191 million. The metropolitan population in Africa will grow at an **average annual rate of 3.25% between 2020 and 2035** which is only a slight reduction to the average rate of 3,49% in the last twenty years (2000 to 2020). Most of the African metropolises grew at above the regional average (3.49%), however, 82 will grow below the new average (3.25%) during next fifteen years. No metropolises will decrease population in this region by 2035.

Asia-Pacific Metropolises in 2020

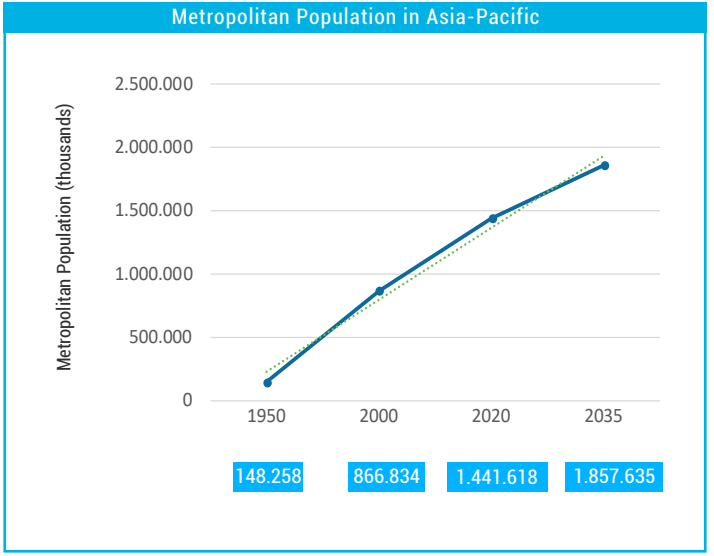
Asia-Pacific Region accounts for 1038 metropolises with the following distribution:

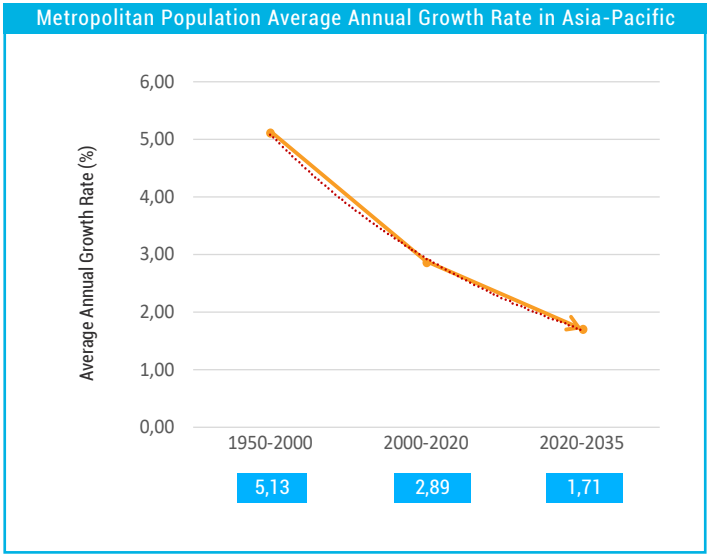
- 21 metropolises have more than 10 million inhabitants;
- 30 metropolises have between 5 and 10 million inhabitants;
- 264 metropolises have between 1 and 5 million inhabitants; and
- 723 metropolises have between 300,000 and 1 million inhabitants.



China (444), India (191), Indonesia (34), Japan (33) and Philippines (32) are the countries with most metropolises in Asia-Pacific. There is an additional of 11 countries with polycentric systems of cities that have between 10 and 30 metropolises. In contrast, there are 12 countries with only a single metropolis and 4 countries with two metropolises.

Asia-Pacific Metropolises in 2020





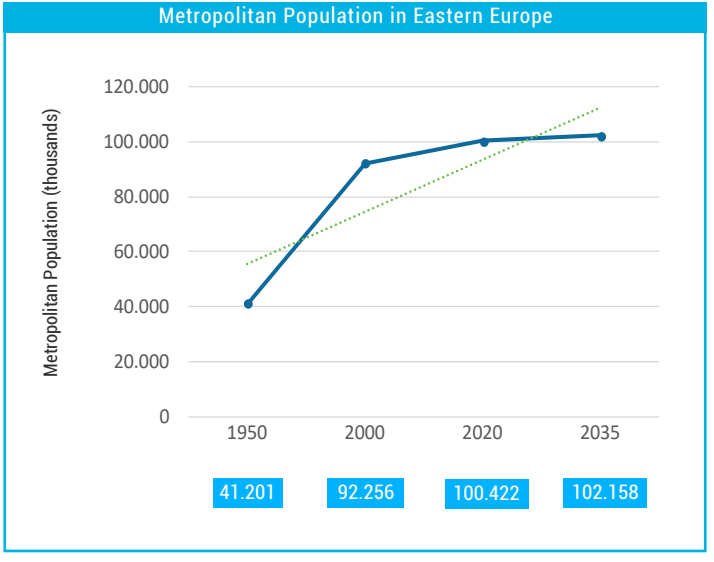
In 2020, **1.44 billion people** lived in Asia-Pacific Metropolises and between 2020 and 2035, that number is projected to increase by more than 416 million. Metropolitan population in Asia-Pacific will grow at an **average annual rate of 1.71% between 2020-2035** with a significant reduction from the average of 2.89% in the last twenty years. From 2000 to 2020, most of Asia-Pacific metropolises grew at a rate above the regional average (2.89%). However, 454 will grow below the new average (1.71%) in the next fifteen years. 33 metropolises in Japan and 1 metropolis in Lebanon will decrease in population by 2035.

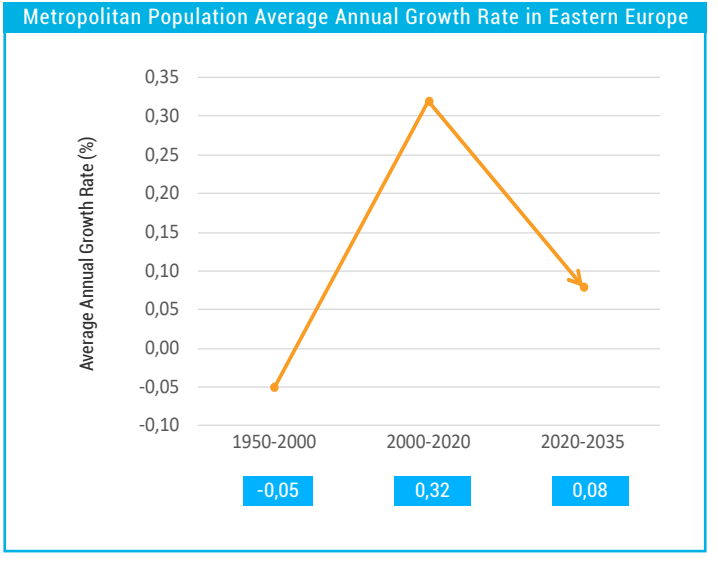
Eastern European Metropolises in 2020

Metropolises of Eastern Europe in 2020

The Eastern European Region has 121 metropolises with the following distribution: 1 metropolis has more than 10 million inhabitants; 1 metropolis has between 5 and 10 million inhabitants; 26 metropolises have between 1 and 5 million inhabitants; and 93 metropolises have between 300,000 and 1 million inhabitants. Russia (67), Ukraine (15), Poland (9) and Belarus (6) are the countries with most metropolises in Eastern Europe. They are also the countries with a polycentric system of cities. In contrast, there are 12 countries with only a single metropolis and 1 country with two metropolises.

Eastern European Metropolises in 2020





In 2020, **100.42 million people** lived in Eastern European metropolises and between 2020 and 2035 that number is projected to increase only by 2 million. Metropolitan population growth in Eastern Europe will remain stable between 2020 and 2035 with a projected **average annual rate of 0.08%**. From 2000 to 2020, 43% of Eastern European metropolises grew above the regional average (0.32%), while 27 metropolises will grow below the new average (0.08%) in the next fifteen years. 18 metropolises in Russia and 25 metropolises in other 6 Eastern European countries will decrease population by 2035.

Latin American and the Caribbean Metropolises in 2020

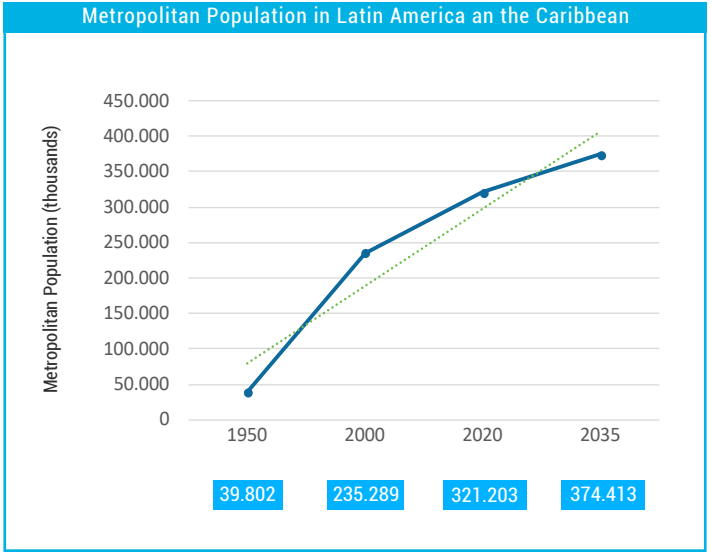
Latin American and the Caribbean Region accounts for 215 metropolises distributed as follows:

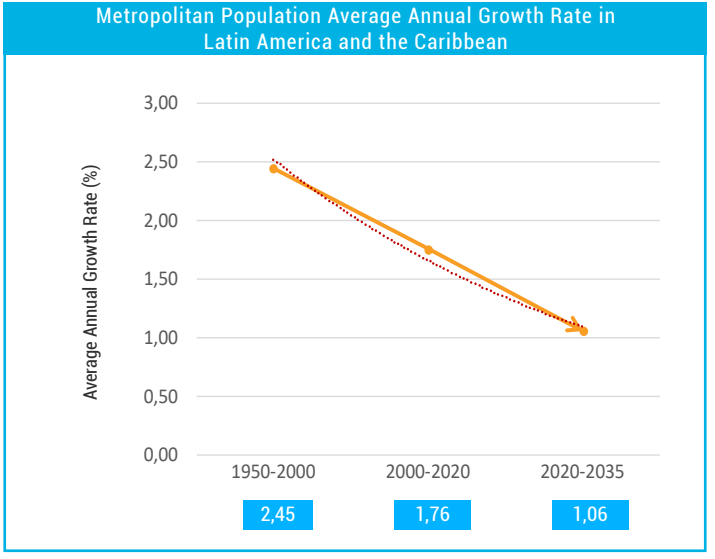
- 6 metropolises have more than 10 million inhabitants;
- 3 metropolises have between 5 and 10 million inhabitants;
- 65 metropolises have between 1 and 5 million inhabitants; and
- 141 metropolises have between 300,000 and 1 million inhabitants

Brazil (61), Mexico (54), Colombia (18), Argentina (17), Venezuela (17) and Peru (11) are the countries with the most metropolises in Latin America and the Caribbean. They are all countries with a polycentric system of cities. In contrast, there are 8 countries with only a single metropolis and 3 countries with two metropolises.

Metropolises of Latin America and the Caribbean in 2020

Latin American and the Caribbean Metropolises in 2020





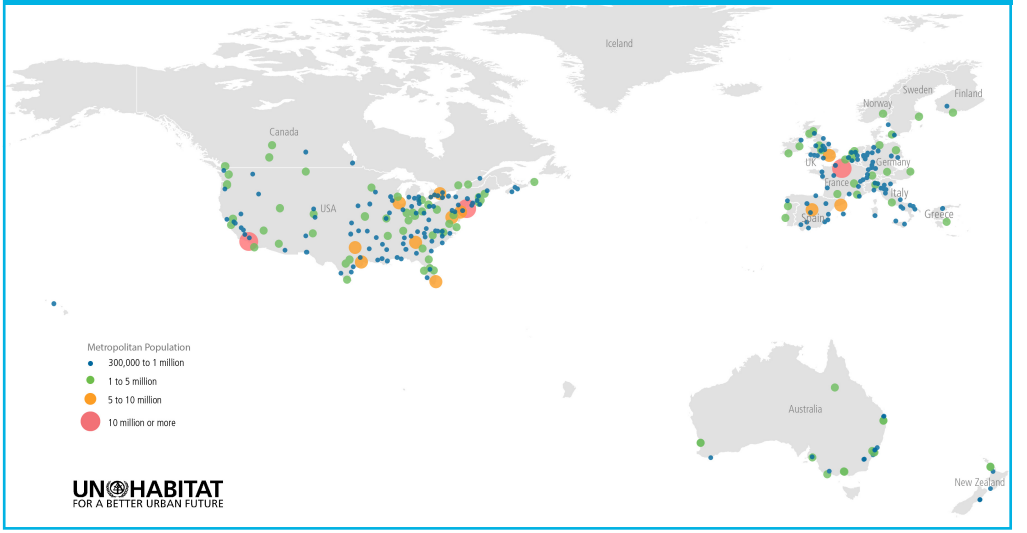
In 2020, **321.2 million people** lived in Latin American and the Caribbean metropolises and between 2020 and 2035, that number is projected to increase by 53 million. Metropolitan population in the Region will grow with an **average annual rate of 1.06% between 2020-2035** exhibiting a reduction of 0.7% from the last twenty years growth average. From 2000 to 2020, 47% of Latin America and the Caribbean metropolises grew above the regional average (1.76%), while 110 metropolises will grow below the new average (1.06%) in the next fifteen years. 2 metropolises in Puerto Rico will see a decrease in population by 2035.

Western European and other States Metropolises in 2020

Western European and other States Group accounts for 325 metropolises with the following distribution:

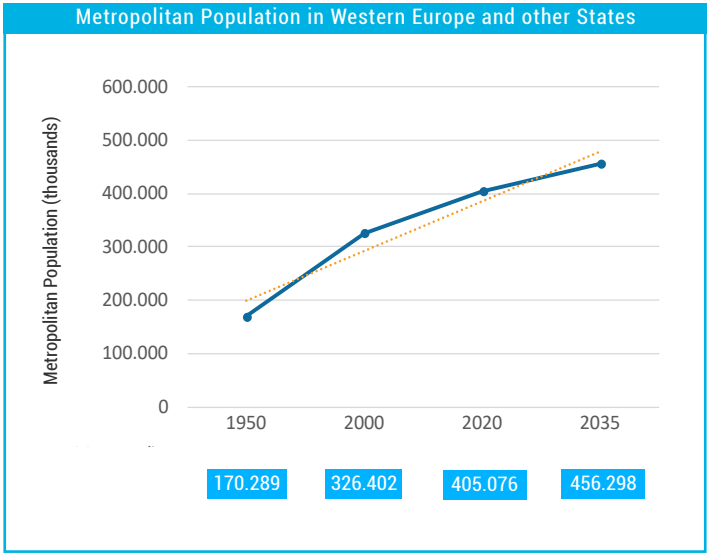
- 3 metropolises have more than 10 million inhabitants;
- 11 metropolises have between 5 and 10 million inhabitants;
- 80 metropolises have between 1 and 5 million inhabitants; and
- 231 metropolises have between 300.000 and 1 million inhabitants.

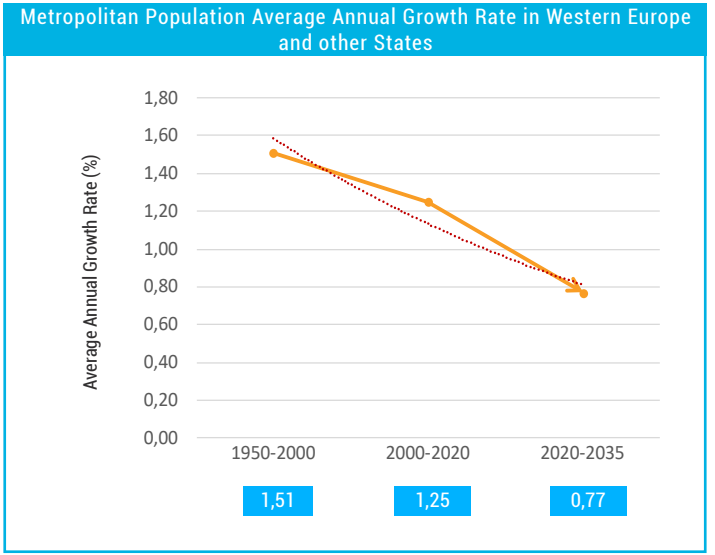
Metropolises of Western European and other States Metropolises in 2020



United States of America (144) and Canada (17) in North America; Italy (32), United Kingdom (28), Germany (23), France (20) and Spain (14) in Western Europe; and Australia (11) in Oceania are the countries with more metropolises in this group. They are all countries with a polycentric system of cities. Contrary, there are 5 countries with a single metropolis and 3 countries with two metropolises in Western Europe.

Western European and other States Metropolises in 2020





In 2020, **405.07 million people** lived in Western European and other States' metropolises. Between 2020 and 2035, that number is projected to increase by 51 million. Metropolitan population in this group will grow at an **average annual rate of 0.77% between 2020-2035** being the group with the second least growth rate after Eastern Europe. From 2000 to 2020, the 37% of Western European and other States metropolises grew above the group average (1.25%), while 161 metropolises will grow below the new average (0.77%) in the next fifteen years. No metropolises in this group will decrease in population by 2035.

Global Aggregates

Size class of urban agglomeration	Type of data	Urban Agglomerations Aggregates			
		1950	2000	2020	2035
10 million or more	Number of Agglomerations	2	16	34	48
10 million or more	% of the Urban Population Residing in Agglomerations	3	9	13	16
10 million or more	Population Residing in Agglomerations (thousands)	23 613	245 386	556 770	862 082
5 to 10 million	Number of Agglomerations	5	30	51	73
5 to 10 million	% of the Urban Population Residing in Agglomerations	4	7	8	9
5 to 10 million	Population Residing in Agglomerations (thousands)	32 172	213 794	348 132	492 677
1 to 5 million	Number of Agglomerations	69	325	494	639
1 to 5 million	% of the Urban Population Residing in Agglomerations	17	22	22	23
1 to 5 million	Population Residing in Agglomerations (thousands)	127 484	625 857	976 786	1 262 974
300 000 to 1 million	Number of Agglomerations	230	920	1 355	1 603
300 000 to 1 million	% of the Urban Population Residing in Agglomerations	16	16	16	15
300 000 to 1 million	Population Residing in Agglomerations (thousands)	117 325	468 664	710 300	855 094

Number of Agglomerations			
1950	2000	2020	2035
306	1 291	1 934	2 363

% of the Urban Population Residing in Agglomerations			
1950	2000	2020	2035
40	54	59	63

Population Residing in Agglomerations (thousands)			
1950	2000	2020	2035
300 594	1 553 701	2 591 989	3 472 827

Urban Population at Mid-Year (thousands)			
1950	2000	2020	2035
750 903	2 868 308	4 378 994	5 555 833

Methodological Notes

This Data Booklet was drafted from information included in the **UN-Habitat Global Database of Metropolises 2020** available in https://qrco.de/UN-Habitat_GlobalDatabaseOfMetropolis2020

The UN-Habitat Global Database of Metropolises 2020 compiles several micro-data sheets from the **UN DESA World Urbanization Prospects: The 2018 Revision**. Specifically, following datasets were used:

– *Files 3, 12, 14, 15, 16, 17a, 18.*
– *Sources for Urban Agglomerations and Capital Cities.*

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Database

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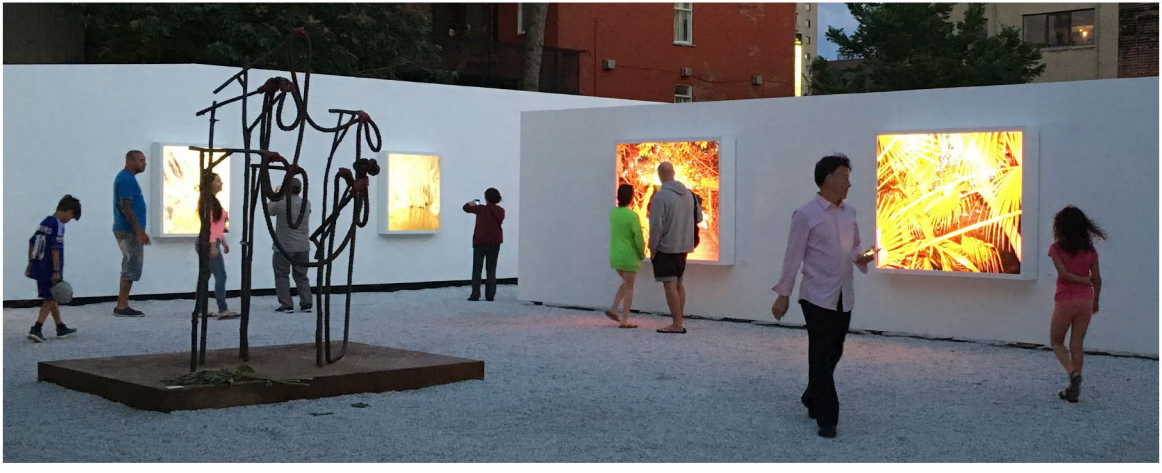

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