

# Ageing Population: An Old-Age Planet [B2]

L'aumento dell'aspettativa di vita a livello mondiale è un'ottima notizia. Tuttavia, l'invecchiamento della popolazione pone sfide significative per la società.

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The world is getting older, fast. According to the World Health Organization, within the next five years, one in six people will be more than sixty years old. By 2050, their number will reach 2.1 billion. A **staggering** 426 million people will be over eighty. We are not only growing in age, but also in number. Right now, more than eight billion people live on the planet and the number continues to rise. In wealthy countries, this growth may be **driven** by immigration, while in poorer countries, it may come from having a lot of children. However, the real problem may not be population at all, but the distribution of resources and wealth.

## IN SEARCH OF A NEW LIFE

So, what are the implications of our ageing, growing population? With improvements in medical care, we are living longer. Today's average life expectancy is around seventy-four years. The number **ranges from** seventy-one in less developed countries, to seventy-eight in more developed countries. We are spending more of our lives in **retirement**. These extra years allow more time to **pursue** interests and hobbies, to spend time with grandchildren or just to enjoy some **well-deserved** rest after a lifetime of work — **provided**, of course, we have reasonably good health and the money to support a life of **leisure**.

## WEALTH AND AGEING

In the developed world, that is generally the case. The demographic **shift** started in wealthy countries like Japan, where a third of the population is already over sixty years of age. Within the next twenty-five years, however, the trend will move to **low- and middle-income** countries. With most of the

over-sixties on lower incomes, the economic consequences could be great. Retirement ages are already going up to compensate — a necessary measure, no doubt, but not a popular one!

## THE RISE OF AGEISM

Countries face the challenge of supporting an ageing population. Health and social security systems need to be prepared to handle increased demands. After all, older people often need more care. In addition, if the elderly are seen as a burden, an increase in ageism is likely. To deal with these issues, the United Nations has declared this the Decade of Healthy Ageing, offering resources to create an age-friendly future. The goal is one we all hope to appreciate in time: “To transform the world to be a better place to grow older.” [www.decadeofhealthyageing.org](http://www.decadeofhealthyageing.org)

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# Glossary

- **driven** = incentivare
- **shift** = cambiamento
- **low- and middle-income** = a basso e medio reddito
- **burden** = carico, peso
- **issues** = questioni, problemi
- **Ageing** = invecchiamento
- **staggering** = impattante
- **ranges from** = oscillare tra... e...
- **retirement** = pensione
- **provided** = ammesso che
- **leisure** = ozio
- **pursue** = dedicarsi a
- **well-deserved** = ben meritato
- **handle** = gestire
- **ageism** = discriminazione legata all'età