



REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

FACTS AND PROSPECTS

Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights 2019



Indicator	Value	Source/Year
Total Population in Millions (% Female)	58.1 (51%)	SWOP 2019
Youth Population (10-24 years)	27%	SWOP 2019
Total Fertility Rate (TFR)	2.4	SWOP 2019
Adolescent Birth Rate (15-19yrs)	71 per 1,000	SWOP 2019
Maternal Mortality Rate (MMR)	119 per 100,000 live births	MMR 2019
Modern Contraceptive Prevalence Rate (CPR)	57%	SWOP 2019
Unmet Need for Family Planning (FP)	14%	SWOP 2019
HIV Prevalence	18.9%	StatsSA 2018
Gender Inequality Index (GII)	0.389 ranked 90th	HDR 2018
Gross Domestic Product (GDP) Growth (%)	0.8%	HDR 2018
Gini Index	63%	HDR 2018
Human Development Index (Inequality HDI)	0.699 ranked 111 (0.422/33.2% loss)	HDR 2018



BACKGROUND

The Republic of South Africa¹ is located in the southern tip of Africa, with a coastline stretching more than 2,850 kilometres along the Indian and Atlantic oceans. South Africa is the largest country in Southern Africa and the 25th largest country in the world by land area. Comprising nine provinces, South Africa is a multi-ethnic society with a wide variety of cultures, languages, and religions. Black South Africans comprise 80 per cent of the population, while white, coloured and Indian groups constitute 8 per cent, 9 per cent and 3 per cent of the population, respectively.



UNITED NATIONS POPULATION FUND MODE OF ENGAGEMENT

Classified as an **Upper Middle-Income Country** (UMIC), South Africa is placed in the **yellow** quadrant mode of engagement of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), underlined by the appreciable economic growth and gaps of inequality requiring concerted actions. In recognition of the country's priorities, UNFPA primarily works with government and other partners on policy dialogue and advice, knowledge management, strategic partnerships and development coordination, including South-to-South and triangular collaboration.

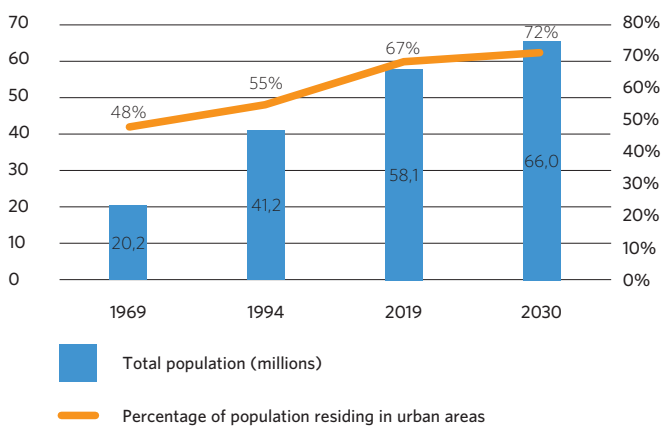
¹ This brief draws from published, global comparative data for countries and regions. Key sources are the 2019 State of the World Population Report (SWOP, UNFPA), United Nation's World Population Prospects 2019, Human Development Report 2018 (HDR, UNDP), World Bank Poverty and Equity Data Portal, World Health Statistics (WHO), Trends in maternal mortality 2000 to 2017: estimates by WHO, UNICEF, UNFPA, World Bank Group and the United Nations Population Division (Maternal Mortality Report [MMR], 2019) and official national data. Recommended citation for this document: United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), Republic of South Africa Facts and Prospects: Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights, 2019.



POPULATION DYNAMICS

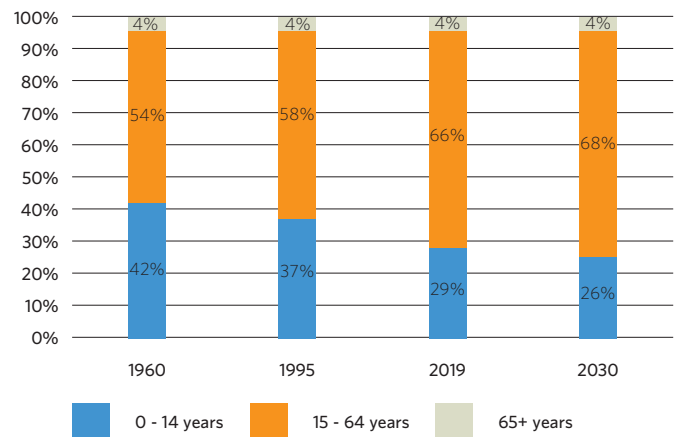
South Africa's total population nearly tripled over the last 50 years over the past 50 years (Figure 1). However, the average annual rate of population change declined from 2.5 per cent from 1960-1965 to 2.4 per cent in 1990-1995, and to 1.4 per cent in 2015-2019. The population growth rate is projected to drop further to 1.0 per cent by 2030. The proportion of the population residing in urban areas has increased by 40 per cent since 1969 while the net migration rate is estimated at -0.9 per 1,000 people. **Total fertility rate (TFR)** per woman declined by 61 per cent from 5.7 children in 1969 to 2.2 children currently.

Figure 1: Total population and percentage of population residing in urban areas, South Africa, 1969 - 2030



This transition has significantly impacted the population age structure with a 36 per cent reduction in the proportion of the dependent population below 15 years of age, and a 22 per cent increase in the proportion of the working-age population aged 15-64 years from 1960s levels. The older population (above 65 years) as a percentage of the total population is estimated at 6 per cent, with predictions to grow further by 2030 (Figure 2). Life expectancy at birth rose from 55 years in 1969 to 64 years currently and is expected to increase further to 66 years by 2030.

Figure 2: Population composition by age, South Africa, 1960 - 2030



SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND RIGHTS

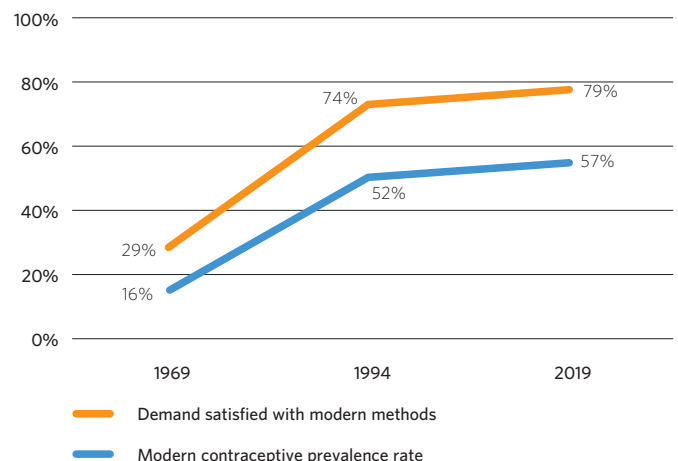
Maternal mortality rate: The maternal mortality rate (MMR) in South Africa is high at 119 per 100,000 live births, nearly double the pre-1994 level of 69, despite the country's high skilled birth attendance coverage (97%) and a strong health system. The high maternal mortality is partly shaped by unsafe abortion practices. Despite the legalization of abortion in 1996, unsafe abortions remain common.

Contraceptive use: Modern contraceptive prevalence rate (CPR) and family planning (FP) satisfied with modern methods rose significantly between 1969 and 2019, with predominant modern methods for all women (married and unmarried) being injectables and male condoms (Figure 3). However, there is still a 14 per cent unmet need for FP among women of reproductive age, underscoring a significant proportion of women who want to use modern contraceptives but are not.

Adolescent birth rate: The total number of births per 1,000 girls aged 15-19 years reduced by 17 per cent from 82 in 1969 to 68 in 2019, but remain higher than the global average of 44, despite progressive laws facilitating access to sexual and reproductive health (SRH) services to adolescents under 18 years of age.

Teenage pregnancy remains a development challenge with 16 per cent of adolescent girls 15-19 years recorded as being pregnant. Early sexual debut contributes to increased teenage pregnancy, unsafe abortions and sexually transmitted infections, including HIV.

Figure 3: CPR and demand satisfied with modern methods, women 15 - 49, South Africa, 1969 - 2019

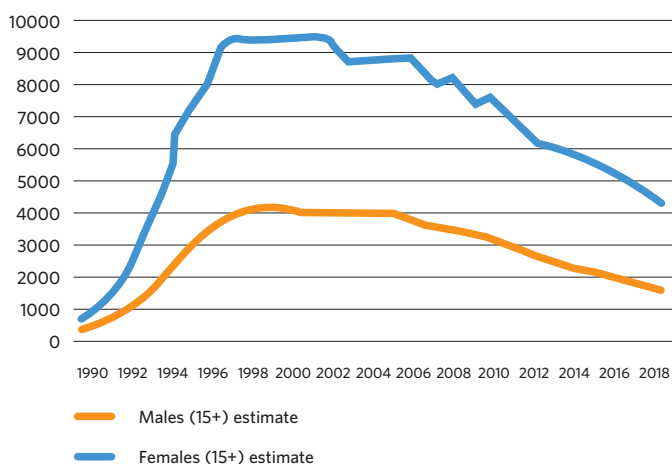


² HIV/AIDS data based on The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) special analysis, 2019.

HIV: South Africa has recorded a 40 per cent decline in new HIV infections since 2010. However, among young people, women are nearly three times more likely to be newly infected with HIV than men (Figure 4). The country is on target to achieve the 90-90-90 HIV treatment cascade by 2020 (Figure 5)².

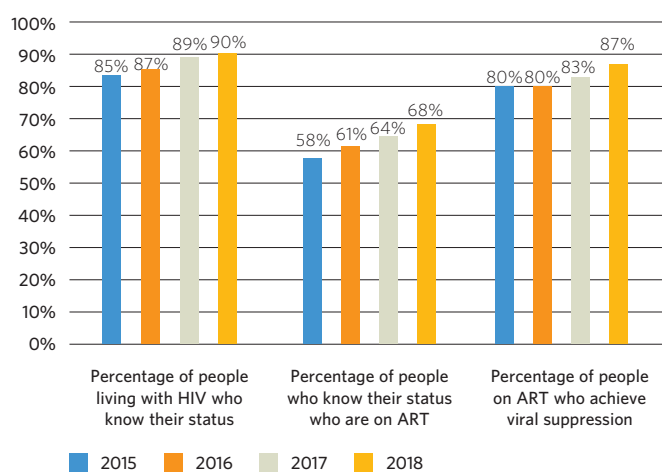
Gender equality: The country has ratified or signed many international and regional conventions or protocols regarding women's rights and gender equality such as the 1979 Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the Beijing Declaration, and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Protocol on Gender and Development.

Figure 4: New HIV infections among young people (15 - 24), by sex, South Africa, 1990 - 2018



The National Policy Framework for Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality provides a roadmap through which gender should be mainstreamed within government and other sectors to achieve the goal of gender equality. However, gender equality gaps remain in the country with less than half (41%) of **political appointments** being held by women, and women and girls still facing high levels of **gender-based violence** (GBV). About a third of women in South Africa aged 15 years and above have experienced sexual GBV³ in their lifetime, with a predominance of assault (62%). Child marriage is estimated at 6 per cent among girls aged 20-24 years who were married by age 18 years, which is lower than the east and southern Africa regions' average of 35 per cent.

Figure 5: Progress towards 90-90-90 target (all ages), South Africa, 2015 - 2018



ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE AND EQUITY

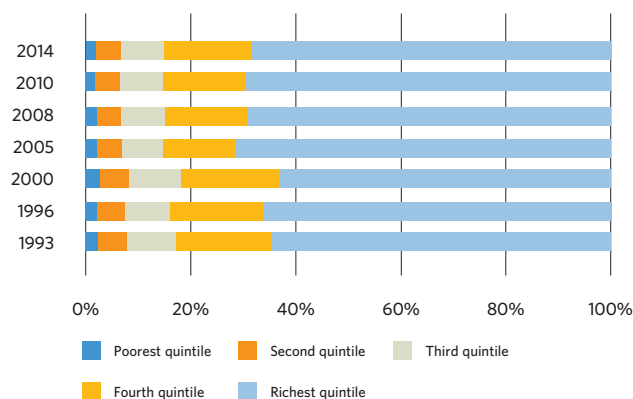
The International Monetary Fund lowered South Africa's projected **gross domestic product** (GDP) growth rate for 2019 from 1.4 per cent to 1.2 per cent. This comes after the decline in GDP from 3.2 per cent in 1994 to 0.8 per cent in 2018. **Unemployment** remains high at 28 per cent. The overall labour force participation rate is 59 per cent, with significant differences between women (53%) and men (66%). The high unemployment rate among young people (52 per cent among those aged 15-24 years and 33 per cent among adolescents aged 25-34 years) poses a serious development challenge.

The **Gini index**, a measure of wealth or income distribution, is 0.70 for South Africa, making it one of the most unequal countries in the world. The **richest quintile** account for more than two thirds of the income and consumption distribution (Figure 6)⁴.

The Living Conditions Survey 2014/15 estimated that about half (49,2%) of the adult population in South Africa was living below the upper bound poverty line (R992 per person per month).

Furthermore, the survey indicated the significant differences by sex: 46 per cent males and 52 per cent females, and by household type: 50 per cent among female-headed households versus 33 per cent among male-headed households. These statistics highlight the paradox of economic growth and inequality in the country.

Figure 7: Distribution of income or consumption by quintile, South Africa, 1993 - 2015



³ 2018 In-depth Analysis Report 03-40-05 on Crime Against Women in South Africa, StatsSA.

⁴ World Bank Poverty and Equity Data Portal.



OTHER DEVELOPMENT COMPLEXITIES

Climate change: There is ample evidence of national and local changes in the temperature and rainfall climatology of South Africa over at least the past five decades, based on several analyses of the weather station data of the South African Weather Service (SAWS) and the Agricultural Research Council (ARC), alongside other international data. Temperature trends show that South Africa has experienced an increase in average temperatures since 1931. The highest temperature changes have been observed in the drier western parts of the country (Northern and Western Cape) and in the northeast (Limpopo and Mpumalanga) extending southwards to the east coast of KwaZulu-Natal, where up to a 2°C temperature change per century have been recorded, more than twice the global rate of temperature increase. A mix of positive and negative rainfall patterns exists across the country. The changes in the climatological regime and the incidence of extreme climatic events have a direct social, economic and biophysical impact. The South African National Climate Change Adaptation Strategy, published for public comments this year, puts forward a common vision of climate change adaptation and resilience.

Education: Universal primary education is a key priority for the government of South Africa. The country has near universal enrolment and gender parity at primary schools, with 91 per cent boys and 92 per cent girls, and high transition rates to secondary level (above 80% for both boys and girls). Among the factors explaining the country's achievements in the education sector include the Prevention and Management of Learner Pregnancy Policy, which ensures access to education for pregnant adolescents and young mothers. **Comprehensive sexuality education (CSE)** is also incorporated in the South African education curricula.

Disease burden linked to lifestyle changes: Partly because of the growth in the older population and urbanization, South Africa is faced with the challenge of lifestyle diseases. Non-communicable diseases (NCDs) are estimated to account for 51 per cent of all deaths and more than 80 per cent of morbidity in the country. The probability of dying from any of cardiovascular disease, cancer, diabetes, and chronic respiratory diseases between age 30 years and exact age 70 years is estimated at 26 per cent against the global average of 18 per cent, with higher estimates among males (32%) than females (21%).



ACCELERATING THE PROMISE IN 2019 AND BEYOND

Demographic dividend: Given the shifts in its population age structure, with more than two thirds of the population in the productive ages, the window of opportunity for demographic dividend is still open for South Africa. Targeted policy actions and investments are required to realize a youthful population who is healthy, educated and productive, with requisite skills for the 21st century economy. To achieve this, the country will need to reverse the high unemployment rates by promoting innovative entrepreneurship and economic opportunities, and by closing equity gaps in access to quality healthcare and education, while also addressing the high HIV prevalence, violence, and alcohol and substance abuse.

Long-term strengthening of socioeconomic systems to address persistent inequalities: Deliberate efforts are required to strengthen national and subnational systems in response to diverse needs. These include:

- Strengthening the health system to adequately respond to the mixed burden of communicable diseases and NCDs, health needs of the youthful and ageing population, high rates of injuries from road accidents, and the problem of crime and violence, including GBV.
- Ensuring sustainability of the social protection and constituent pension system, guided by evidence on the current and projected burden of the ageing population on the fiscal space.
- Strengthening public and private sector institutions to implement the Employment Tax Incentives Act and the Employment Services Act for inclusive job creation, and to address high levels of poverty.
- Addressing high levels of GBV through prevention, reporting and management systems, as well as closing other gender inequality gaps in the labour force, and in political and other development processes.

Climate change: Fast-tracking the launch and implementation of the National Climate Change Adaptation Strategy, with its elaborate multi-sectoral and multidimensional actions aimed at preventing and mitigating adverse effects of climate change, is a priority.

Strengthening availability and use of data to guide development:

There is a potential to leverage on South Africa's strong statistical systems to strengthen South-to-South collaboration on population and development matters. Specific attention is required to improve availability of disaggregated data for specific sectors of the economy, including:

- Migration, its drivers and related remittances
- Effective health coverage across the continuum of care, including adolescent SRH services
- Quality education with age-appropriate, gender-sensitive and labour market responsive curricular
- A social protection system to improve targeting of welfare services, social grants and sustainability strategies



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