

## EGYPT

### Whole country

The demography of this most populated of Arab and Mediterranean countries is not easy to pin down. The abundance of statistical data is deceptive, and there are inconsistencies, not least in the uncertainties about the censused total population. The residence status of Egyptians living abroad is not always specified, for example. But the

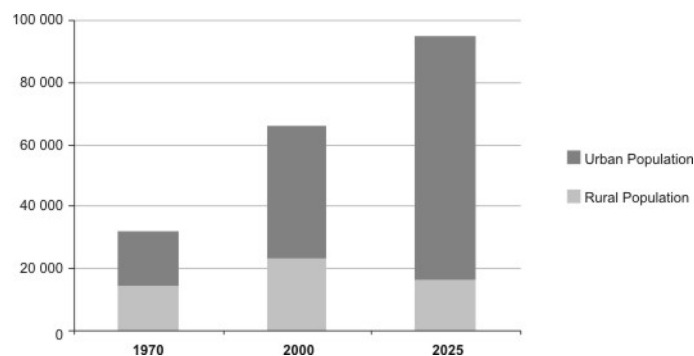


difficulty lies not just with measurement. Egypt has not experienced a smooth demographic transition. An early population policy followed by a rapid fertility decline in the Sixties took a serious knock after 1970, and educational level-specific fertility variances do not always fit the standard patterns. In 1995, illiteracy still affected one in every five females aged 15-19. A rapid rise in female enrolments will reduce illiteracy to residual levels by 2025, however, with a high concentration of women of reproductive age in secondary or higher education. Recent surveys indicate that fertility is decreasing by 3.1% a year among illiterate women, but rising among better-educated women (from 0.4% to 1.0% by educational subgroup). This makes future projection difficult. But this levelling-off of fertility is a blip in the trend that will almost certainly resume its normal course. In 1995, fertility was high (3.62 children per woman) compared to the Maghreb, especially Tunisia, which, along with Egypt, was a standard-bearer of family planning programmes in the Arab world. Egypt's late transition has given it a fertility, which will probably not fall to replacement level before 2020.

One of the big demographic issues with Egypt is the very high population concentration in localities of over 10 000 people lacking the infrastructures and housing types to be classed as urban. For this reason, Egypt's urban population is reckoned at 42.5 million in 2000, i.e., two thirds of the population (64.4%). Very rapid natural and migration-led population increase will take this to 78.8 million (83%) in 2025. This near doubling of the population will result in a significant loss of farmland as it is gradually be turned over to building land.

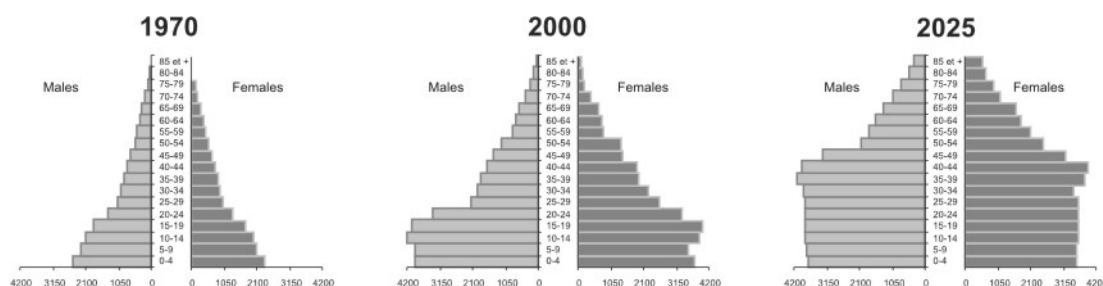
Egypt's population will rise from 66 million in 2000 to 95 million in 2025. An increase in return migration from the Arab peninsula and Libya would be enough to push this up to 100 million by 2025. This is not far off the United Nations projected population of 95.6 million by 2025 and will make Egypt the most populated Mediterranean-rim country.

**Figure 88. Rural population and urban population 1970-2000-2025 (in thousands)**



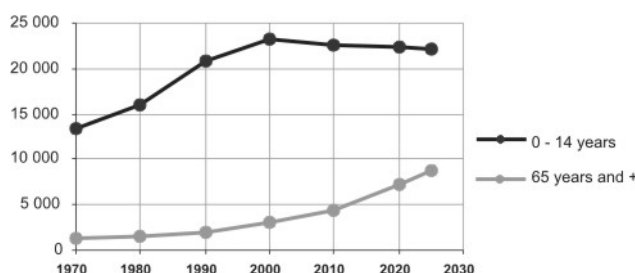
The Blue Plan 1992 projection slightly over-estimated fertility, predicting 97.8 million. Fertility decline will not halt the rapid growth of Egypt's population by 29 million (43.7%) by 2025 within only about 40 000 km<sup>2</sup> net usable area. Growth is still high at 20.3 per thousand and will stay so up to 2020-25 (11.6 per thousand). The population will stabilize only at the end of the next century, at approximately 140 million.

**Figure 89. Population age structure (by 5-year age groups) 1970-2000-2025 (in thousands)**



The population aged under 15 will fall from 35.2% in 2000 to 23.3% in 2025. Ageing will be significant, but later than in most other countries in the region: from 4.6% to 9.3% of people aged 65 and over. The annual number of labour force entries (estimated at 1.352 million) will increase significantly over the next 10 years, to 1.609 million a year between 2010 and 2015, then 1.497 million by 2025. Labour force exits (302 000 in 2000) will have more than doubled by 2025, which should relieve labour market pressures.

**Figure 90. Populations aged 15-and-under and 65-and-over, 1970-2025 (in thousands)**

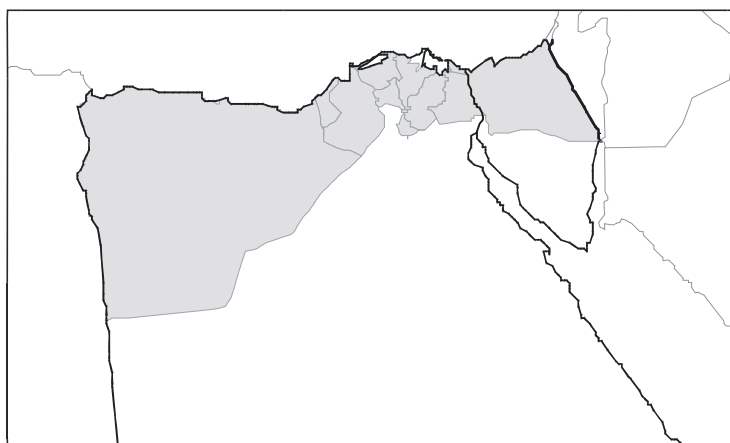


Egypt's geopolitical importance in the region is likely to be reinforced by its sheer population size. Also, ageing will be commensurately delayed by its late-onset fertility transition. But pressure on resources (water, farmland and habitable land, over-urbanization, waste) and even reclaimed desert-land may be a source of serious concern.

### Mediterranean coastal regions

Egypt has ten Mediterranean coastal regions (governorates) accounting for just over a third of its population - 22.9 million of a total 66 million in 2000. In recent decades, the Mediterranean coastal population has increased at the mean annual rate of 2.4%, almost level-pegging with the non-Mediterranean zones.

The population of the different governorates has also grown at

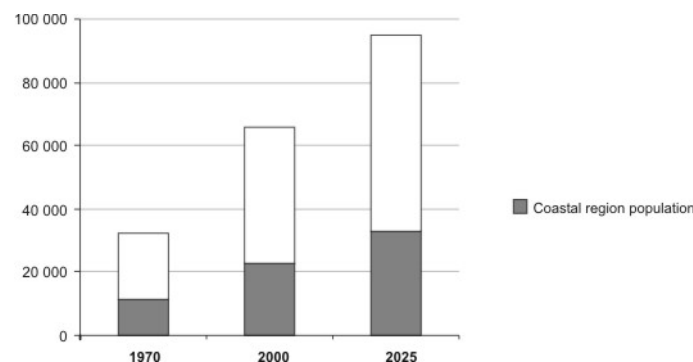


similar rates, ranging from 2.1% a year in more highly-urbanized and so lower-fertility Alexandria, to 2.7% in Ismailiya. The only exceptions are the sparsely-populated governorates of North Sinai (243 000 people in 1995) and Marsa Matruh (204 000) whose much stronger growth is due to a combination of demographic (both governorates populated by comparatively high-fertility nomadic populations) and historical factors, with intensive tourism development, and in the case of Sinai, a reversal of population loss by the return of refugees driven out after the 1967 war.

Over the next 25 years, Egypt's Mediterranean population will add nearly ten million people (9.704 million to be precise), rising from 22.9 to 32.6 million. Its mean annual rate of growth of 1.42% will be much lower than preceding decades, and almost identical to that of the non-Mediterranean regions (1.48%). As a result, the ratio of the Mediterranean-to-non-Mediterranean population will remain at about 1:2.

The Mediterranean coast - chiefly desert and coastal basins - is less urbanized than the rest of Egypt: 55% of the population live in urban areas of over 10 000 people, against 69% in the rest of the country. At 2.4% a year, coastal urban growth is close to aggregate rest-of-country growth of urban areas of over 10 000 people. The entire Mediterranean urban zone is dominated by the city of Alexandria whose 3 million-plus population (3.069 million in 1995) accounts for just over a quarter of the total. Alexandria's population growth has been slow at a mean annual rate of growth of 1.9% between 1970 to 1995, against 2.4% for Cairo which has four times the population, but is not in the Mediterranean region as defined here.

**Figure 91. Mediterranean coastal regions population as a share of total population 1970-2000-2025 (in thousands)**



The other major coastal urban settlements (Egypt has only 10 of over 100 000 people) are much smaller: Mansura has under half a million people (470 000), Port-Saïd, 427 000, Zaqazik, 403 000, Ismailiya 310 000, Damietta, 260 000, etc. These urban areas have generally had little pull factor, with rates of increase ranging from 1.4 to 2.5% between 1970 and 1995. The one exception is Kafr el Sheik, (2.8%) which admittedly had only 132 000 people in 1995. The 263 Mediterranean urban areas of over 10 000 people have experienced significantly higher aggregate growth at the rate of 2.5% versus 2.0% for those of over 100 000 people. Fertility differentials may well be part of the reason for these variances, but so too is the almost certainly greater pull factor exerted by smaller towns.

Over the next 25 years, the Mediterranean population of urban areas of over 10 000 people will nearly double from 12.7 million in 2000 to 23.1 million in 2025, i.e., a growth rate of 2.4%, nearly identical to that of the urban areas in the non-Mediterranean governorates. Needless to say, sharply rising urbanization in the Mediterranean regions (71% in 2025 against 55% in 2000) will not alter the fact that many urban areas of over 10 000 people in the Nile delta and irrigated desert zones will remain markedly rural in character.

**Figure 92. Rural and urban population of the Mediterranean coastal regions 1970-2000-2025 (in thousands)**

