KEY FINDINGS

The long-range projections prepared by the United Nations Population Division include several scenarios for population growth for the world and its major areas over the period 1995-2150. The medium scenario assumes that fertility in all major areas stabilizes at replacement level around 2050; the low scenario assumes that fertility is half a child lower than in the medium scenario; and the high scenario assumes that fertility is half a child higher than in the medium scenario. The constant scenario maintains fertility constant during 1995-2150 at the level estimated for 1990-1995, and the instant-replacement scenario makes fertility drop instantly to replacement level in 1995 and remain at that level thereafter. The key findings yielded by these projection scenarios are the following:

- 1. World population rises from 5.7 billion persons in 1995 to 9.7 billion persons in 2150 according to the medium scenario and, assuming that fertility remains at replacement level thereafter, world population nearly stabilizes at a level just above 10 billion after 2200.
- 2. Future population size is sensitive to small but sustained deviations of fertility from replacement level. Thus, the low scenario results in a declining population that reaches 3.2 billion in 2150 and the high scenario leads to a growing population that rises to 24.8 billion by 2150.
- 3. If the fertility of major areas is kept constant at 1995 levels, the world population soars to 256 billion by 2150, 169 billion of whom live in Africa.
- 4. If fertility remains at replacement level starting in 1995, the world population rises from 5.7 billion persons in 1995 to 9.3 billion persons

in 2150, 400 million less than the population projected by the medium scenario.

- 5. All scenarios result in significant shifts in the geographical distribution of the world population. According to the medium scenario, the share of Africa doubles (passing from 12 per cent of the world population in 1995 to 24 per cent in 2150), whereas that of China is reduced by a third (from 22 per cent in 1995 to 14 per cent in 2150) and that of Europe by more than half (from 13 per cent to 5 per cent).
- 6. By 2150 in the medium scenario about a third of the world population lives in China and India; about a quarter in the rest of Asia; another quarter in Africa; fewer than one in ten persons lives in Europe and Northern America; and about the same proportion lives in Latin America and the Caribbean.
- 7. The low, medium and high scenarios all result in significant shifts of the age distribution towards older ages. According to the medium scenario, the share of persons aged 0-14 declines from 30 per cent in 1995 to 18 per cent in 2150, whereas the share of persons aged 60 or over rises from 10 per cent to 30 per cent over the same period.
- 8. Increasing longevity is expected to have a moderate impact on population increase over the long term. If longevity does not increase after 2050, the world population reaches 8.6 billion by 2150 instead of the 9.7 billion reached under the assumption of declining mortality in the medium scenario.