## Overview 1

## Population Decline and the Environment

## Introduction

## (1) Advent of the Era of Declining Population

Japan has been pushing ahead with education, labor and social security policy initiatives, aimed at making it easier to have and raise children, but the nation will start seeing a significant population decrease in 2006. Japan's population is estimated to decrease by approximately 10 million by the year 2030 .

The advent of the declining population era will have significant impacts on Japan's socioeconomic structure and citizens' daily lives, such as slowing economic growth, raising the level of the social security burden, and increasing the pressure on fiscal resources. These factors will, in turn, have various impacts on the environment. However, it might provide a good opportunity to improve the environment and achieve more affluent lifestyles.

This section describes what kind of positive and negative impacts the falling population will have on the environment.

Except for the U.S. and some other nations, the total population is

Trends in the number of the major age composition


Note: Estimated data represent medium variant projections.
Sources: Compiled by the Ministry of the Environment based on the Statistics Bureau, the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, Population Census and the National Institute of Population and Social Security Research, Population Projections for Japan (January 2002). estimated to remain the same or decrease in most developed nations. However, Japan will see its population decrease at the fastest rate.

Population Growth Rate in Major Nations

$$
\begin{aligned}
& \begin{array}{ll|}
\square \text { U.S.A. } & \square \text { U.K. } \multimap-\text { Sweden } \\
\square \text { France } & \square-\text { Germany } \longrightarrow \text { Italy } \\
\square \text { Japan } & \\
\hline
\end{array} \\
& \text { Sources: Compiled by the Ministry of the Environment based on the United Nations, World Population Prospects: The } 2004 \text { Revision and the National } \\
& \text { Institute of Population and Social Security Research, Population Projections for Japan (January 2002). }
\end{aligned}
$$

Population decline has already begun in some rural areas in Japan. Japan will see a rapid population decrease in the future. The percentage of the elderly is higher in rural areas, but it will also increase rapidly in urban areas in the future.

## (2) Impacts of World Demographic Trends on Japan

The global community is expected to undergo a population explosion. According to the UN's medium variant prospects, the total world population will reach 9.3 billion in 2050.

Such a population explosion will bring about a stronger global demand for natural resources, energy, food and water, and increase environmental burdens. It will also have significant impacts on the socioeconomic structure and environment in Japan.

World Population Prospects

| (100 million persons) | - Estimated world primary | ergy demands | (Mtoe) |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| ${ }^{100}{ }_{80}-$ |  |  | 18,000 |
|  |  |  | 16,000 |
| $80-$ |  | Developed | 14,000 |
|  |  |  | 12,000 |
| $60-$$40-$ |  |  | 10,000 |
|  |  | Africa | 8,000 |
|  |  |  | 6,000 |
| 20 | Asia |  | 4,000 |
|  | except for Japan | India | 2,000 |
|  |  | China |  |
|  |  |  |  |

Notes:

1. Developed nations include Europe, North America,

Australia, New Zealand, and Japan.
2. Population prospects. represent medium variant prospects.
3. Mtoe: Million tonnes of oil equivalent

Sources: Compiled by the Ministry of the Environment based on the United Nations, World Population Prospects: The 2004 Revision.

