

Overview 1

Population Decline and the Environment

Introduction

(1) Advent of the Era of Declining Population

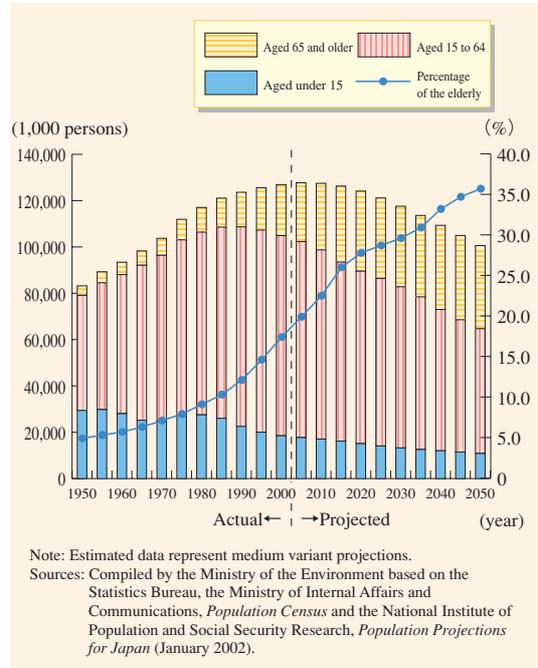
Japan has been pushing ahead with education, labor and social security policy initiatives, aimed at making it easier to have and raise children, but the nation will start seeing a significant population decrease in 2006. Japan's population is estimated to decrease by approximately 10 million by the year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

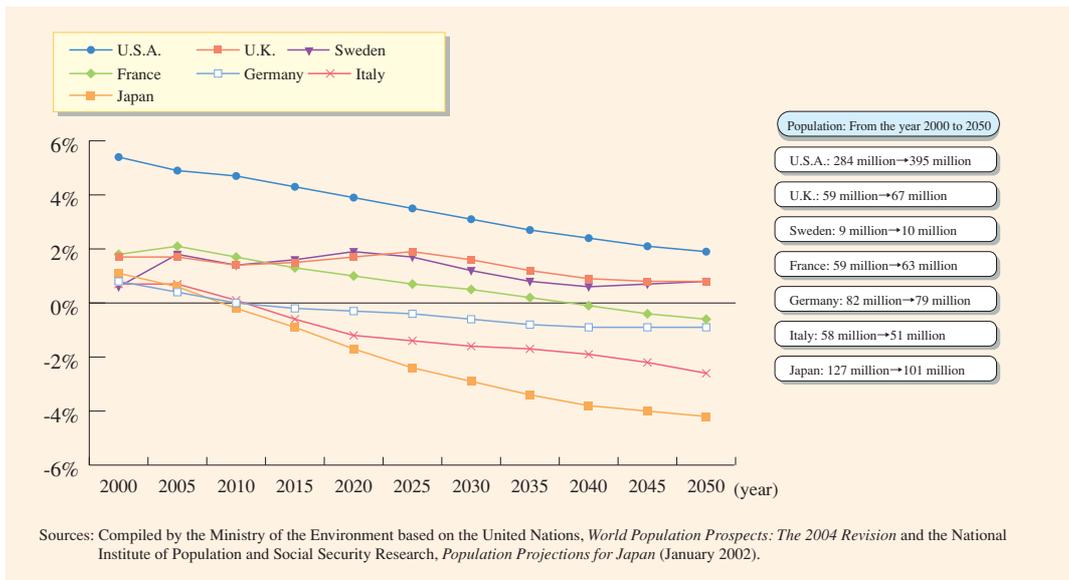
This section describes what kind of positive and negative impacts the falling population will have on the environment.

Except for the U.S. and some other nations, the total population is estimated to remain the same or decrease in most developed nations. However, Japan will see its population decrease at the fastest rate.

Trends in the number of the major age composition



Population Growth Rate in Major Nations



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.

