

VISION 2100

Young Countries and Future Generations



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INTRODUCTION

This brief is a beginner's guide to understanding how young countries can shape the future. It explores the important role these nations play for the future of people and the planet.

Demographic Shifts and the Road to 2100: As we stand today, half of the global population is under 30 years old, with the majority located in Asia and Africa. These regions are home to "young countries" where young people account for the majority of the population and are the driving force of progress, innovation, and cultural innovation. As we propel into the future, these demographic trends will intensify, and by the year 2100, half of the world's young people will call Africa home. Today's young people are not just statistics; they are the force for change in their countries and worldwide, requiring careful consideration and strategic investment.

Our Obligations to Future Generations: Despite their potential, these young countries' financial and developmental trajectories face significant hurdles. Alarming, these countries are paying five times more on debt repayment than implementing the Agenda 2030 and the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This skewed prioritization jeopardizes the well-being of current and future generations. Moreover, this imbalance reflects slow global progress, with only 15% of the 17 Goals on track. This lack of investment in young people and their future contributes to a growing frustration with current institutions.

If we fail to invest in young people and young countries, we risk losing their potential to shape and sustain the future, leaving a legacy of missed opportunities and unfulfilled promises for generations to come.

The Power of the Youth Vote: This year marks a historic moment: over half the world's population will participate in nationwide elections, with nearly 2 billion young people eligible to cast their votes to reshape the future, both nationally and globally. With such influence, young people have the power to push for reforms that will ensure their voices are heard and their futures are secured. In this context, elections have become an arena where the long-term interests of future generations can be advanced, provided that young voters are engaged, informed, and motivated to participate.



80%

OF THE WORLD'S
YOUNG PEOPLE WILL
CALL AFRICA & ASIA
HOME BY 2100

Recent surveys conducted across six countries reveal a growing public endorsement for establishing Institutions for Future Generations (IFGs). Notably, expert councils and reserved parliamentary seats for younger members under 35 years old received particularly high support. These findings underscore the global community's recognition of the urgent need to incorporate long-term considerations into governance, ensuring that policies today do not compromise the well-being of future generations.

The Future Imperative: These insights bring us to a critical crossroads – a moment in time that demands an assertive and deliberate response to the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead. a moment in time that demands an assertive and deliberate response to the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead. The Summit of the Future in September 2024 offers a unique opportunity to catalyze a global conversation and develop

governance models that serve the current populace while also providing a robust foundation for future generations. The Summit is a global rallying point for change, a platform where nations can collectively redefine governance frameworks to be more inclusive, sustainable, and attuned to the needs of future generations.

The Road to 2100: Backed by the United Nations Foundation and the Unlock the Future coalition, the Roadmap is a strategic plan designed to guide global efforts towards smart investments in the SDGs and beyond, with a strong focus on intergenerational equity, sustainability, and inclusivity. By engaging with the Summit of the Future, there is an onus on every participant—governments, civil society, private sectors, and communities—to not just envision but enact a trajectory that uplifts every nation and honors every generation.

SUMMIT OF THE FUTURE

Responds to a Global Call

Spearheaded by the UN Secretary-General, it is humanity's commitment to building a world that can support current and future generations.

Key Milestone

The Pact for the Future is a global agreement to reimagine the UN to meet 21st-century needs.

What's in the Pact for the Future?

Chapeau



Global Call to Action



SDGs and Financing for Development



Peace & Security



Tech, Innovation and Digital Cooperation



Youth and Future Generations



Transforming Global Governance

5 Chapters

2 Annexes



Global Compact for Digital Cooperation



Declaration for Future Generations

WHY THIS BRIEF?

The brief is a tool for partners to plan for the future and have productive in-country discussions. It is especially important as we prepare for the Summit of the Future and beyond, supporting a unified and impactful approach.

In the pages that follow, readers will find a blend of data and analysis intended to direct the energy and innovation of young people towards creating a sustainable, inclusive future for all. The story woven through this resource underscores our collective duty to future generations—a duty that requires us to lay down the groundwork today for a world where sustainable development, equitable resource sharing, and inclusive governance are not mere ideals, but tangible realities.

This brief aims to extend beyond the halls of global summits to the desks of local policymakers. It is a guide designed for continuous reference, offering:

- **Insights and Analysis:** To understand the challenges and opportunities young countries face in a changing world.
- **Case Studies:** Offering real-world examples of successes and lessons learned in managing young populations.
- **Strategic Frameworks:** For embedding long-term sustainability into policy decisions.

How to Use This Handbook:

- **For Education:** Draw on the data and projections to build a compelling case for investing in young people and their future.
- **For Engagement:** Use the discussion points to facilitate dialogues that bridge the gap between decision-makers and young people.
- **For Empowerment:** Implement the strategies and best practices as tools to shape policies that stand the test of time and serve as benchmarks for sustainable development.

Whether it's influencing policy debates, shaping advocacy material, or inspiring country initiatives, this brief is tailored to support those who are ready to take a stand for the future, today. It serves as a testament to the power of informed, proactive engagement in forging a future that honors the potential of young countries and safeguards the wellbeing of generations yet to come.

“It is humanity’s greatest responsibility. That responsibility belongs to us all. In this difficult and divided moment, let’s meet that obligation for today and future generations.”

ANTÓNIO GUTERRES
UNITED NATIONS SECRETARY-GENERAL

KEY MESSAGES

The messages urge us to prioritize young people, be courageous, and leave a legacy that honors all generations.

The words we use are not just empty phrases, but should inspire us to take action and create a better future for all. We have the power to leave a lasting legacy that will benefit generations to come.

1 Let young people lead the way

Half of the world's population is under 30, and they are not just waiting around. They are ready to lead and come up with solutions to the challenges we face in the 21st century. The UN is the best platform for this generation to turn their ideas into collective action for our shared future.

2 Political champions must fight for every generation

This is humanity's moment to rise and redefine what is possible. With the Summit on the horizon, our world needs its heroes to fight for every generation, armed with the political ambition to champion real change and renew faith in what we can achieve together.

3 Act now for the future

We need to fight for every generation and bring about real change, especially as we approach the Summit. This is our moment to redefine what is possible and renew our faith in achieving great things together.

4 Ditch the pessimism, Embrace the courage.

It is a race against time to prove that our global efforts are making a real difference in people's lives. By working to achieve the SDGs, we can transform people's skepticism and frustration into hope and trust in a better future.

5 Securing the Future for All Generations

Our choices today shape tomorrow. This Summit is our opportunity to set a new standard for uplifting every voice, young and old, crafting a thriving future for everyone who comes after us.

YOUNG COUNTRIES AND Future Generations

Navigating the dynamics of young countries, where 50-80% of their population is under 30, presents complex challenges and opportunities.

Africa and Asia are home to many young countries that hold the key to our future. These nations are not only the future workforce but will also shape our planet. Their youthful demographic profile requires creative, inclusive, and long-term solutions to unleash their full potential. This section explores how the youthful demographics of these countries can be leveraged to foster global economic growth and societal development.

Demographic Potential: In the year 2100, nine of the ten largest countries in the world will also be the youngest ones, with Africa having the highest number of young people. This is a significant shift from today

when India and China are now at the top. Nigeria is expected to have the third largest population, at 791 million, following India and China.

Sub-Saharan Africa, in particular, is projected to experience a profound increase in population, with most future generations living in the region compared to Asia and Europe. This surge in countries like Nigeria, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, and Tanzania highlights the potential of their young populations. With strong SDG investments this demographic potential could lead to economic growth and innovation vital to tackling humanity's greatest challenges.

Moreover, certain young countries are expected to have a major increase in population. Niger, for instance, is projected to see a 765% increase, while Chad could see a 710% rise by 2100. This growth represents a young population that could be used to fuel progress and development.

1950		2020		2100	
China	554	China	1,439	India	1,450
India	376	India	1,380	China	1,065
U.S.	159	U.S.	331	Nigeria	733
Russia	103	Indonesia	274	U.S.	434
Japan	83	Pakistan	221	Pakistan	403
Germany	70	Brazil	213	D.R. Congo	362
Indonesia	70	Nigeria	206	Indonesia	321
Brazil	54	Bangladesh	165	Ethiopia	294
UK	51	Russia	146	Tanzania	286
Italy	47	Mexico	129	Egypt	225

Asia
Europe
Latin America and the Caribbean
Africa
Northern America

In the year 2100, nine of the ten largest countries in the world will also be the youngest ones.

Countries with largest population, in millions

Source: United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division.

However, the stark reality of these projections is twofold: the remarkable demographic potential also brings forth the global challenge of supporting young countries where most future generations will reside.

Investments in sustainable development are essential to ensure that these young countries are not just surviving but thriving. Without such investments, there is a risk of losing a generation to inadequate education, health issues, and unemployment, which would affect all countries globally.

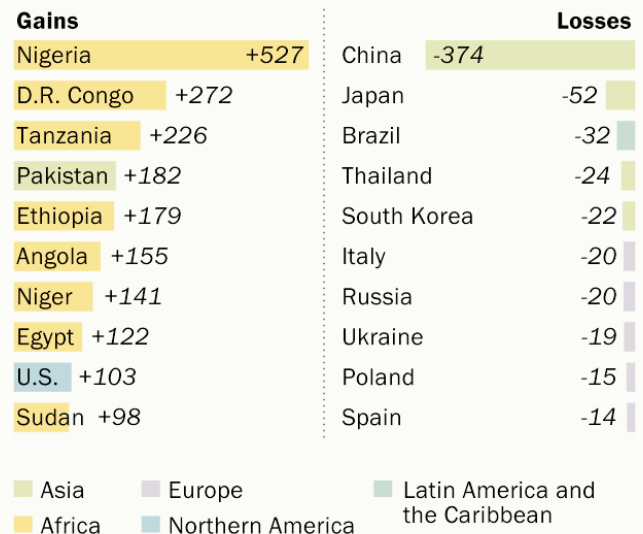
As countries like China, Japan, and many within Europe face a substantial decrease in population, it ushers in an era where the demographic profile of the world sees a tilt towards a more aged society in these regions.

This shift carries a multitude of implications for the societies in question and for future global dynamics. Economically, it could mean a higher burden on the working-age population to support the welfare and healthcare systems due to a larger retired population. There could be increased opportunities for leadership as younger individuals might need to step into roles traditionally held by older persons, which could reshape professional landscapes and accelerate innovation.

Globally, the comparative youthfulness of populations in other parts of the world, especially in African countries, could result in shifts in economic and geopolitical power. Nations with younger demographics could become new hubs for people power, innovation, manufacturing, and cultural influence, as their young populations drive demand and create new markets.

Africa will have the most future generations by 2100 while Europe will have the least.

Top 10 countries in projected population gain/loss by 2100, in millions



Source: United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division.

This dichotomy between aging and young countries suggests that future generations will navigate a world where intergenerational equity, both within and between countries, will become increasingly important.

It highlights the imperative for sustainable development that meets the needs of both the present and the future without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs, as defined in the 1987 Brundtland Report. In essence, this demographic shift calls for a global reimagining of social policies, economic strategies, and international relations to foster a world that can sustain and empower its entire population across generations.

Rise of Megacities: Rapid urbanization within young countries is leading to the growth of megacities like Kinshasa, which is expected to have 22 million people by 2030. However, this also brings challenges such as housing, healthcare, education, and exposure to natural disasters like floods and landslides. Recent floods affected 256,000 and 250,000 people and damaged or destroyed 41,000 and 21,000 houses in Chad and Niger ([UNDP](#)). This rise of future generations in cities highlights the need for comprehensive urban planning that integrates disaster risk management and sustainable development to safeguard the future well-being of increasingly young, urban populations.

Fueling Creativity and Innovation: Young countries across Africa and Asia bring energy, innovation, and a desire for social change. For example, Kenya's M-Pesa mobile money service has over 30 million active users in 10 countries, demonstrating the impact of fintech in young countries ([IMF](#)). Indonesia's young digital talent contributes to 16% of the country's GDP ([CSIS](#)). As new technologies emerge, these young people can become job creators and position their countries as hubs for creativity and innovation.

Climate Vulnerability: Young countries across Asia and Africa are highly vulnerable to climate change. For instance, capping global warming at 1.5°C instead of 2°C could increase GDP per capita in African countries by 5% by 2050 and 10-20% by 2100 ([UNDP](#)). It is urgent to invest in climate resilience to ensure growth and stability in the future. The Pacific Islands are at risk of losing 25% of their population due to climate change by 2050 ([UNFCCC](#)). India is experiencing longer heatwaves with temperatures 8°C higher than the national average ([Phys News](#)). It is important for

these young countries to implement sustainable practices such as water resource management, sustainable agriculture, and renewable energy adoption to secure their future sustainability, while richer countries mitigate emissions as fast as possible.

Health Challenges: Healthcare is a big problem in young countries like Nigeria and India. Nigeria has a high maternal mortality rate, while air pollution in New Delhi caused over 1.67 million deaths in 2019 ([NIH](#), [BC](#)). Growing urban populations make it harder to develop healthcare infrastructure. We need to invest in healthcare and work together to make sure future generations have a healthy future.

“It’s as simple as **saving our homes — saving mine, so we can save yours. Pacific Islanders are the **canaries in the coal mine**, warning the world of this climate reality. To save the Pacific is to **save the world.**”**

**BRIANNA FRUEAN,
SAMOAN ENVIRONMENTAL ADVOCATE**

Gender and Inclusion: Ending gender inequality and enhancing social inclusion is essential for harnessing the full potential of young people. In Afghanistan, 60% of the 3.7 million out-of-school children are girls, while in Jordan, water stress is impacting the health and education of girls ([UNICEF](#)). In Jordan, the lack of water has become more severe in the past 20 years and is negatively affecting the wellbeing and education of young girls ([UNICEF](#)). These examples underline the critical need for policies that not only address the immediate inequalities but also ensure that girls and young women have equal opportunities to thrive in the future.

SDGs and Beyond: Integrating the SDGs into future national planning processes is crucial as young countries expand and grow in the coming years. For example, Morocco's Noor Ouarzazate Solar Complex, one of the world's largest solar farms, is expected to reduce carbon emissions by 760,000 tons per year ([World Bank](#)). This initiative underscores the significance of integrating SDGs into long-term strategic planning that ensures today's growth benefits the ecological stability and resource availability for future generations.

The demographic profiles of young countries require urgent, strategic actions in policymaking, particularly in education, healthcare, infrastructure, and technology.

By 2100, the decisions made today will determine the future of these young countries, significantly impacting their ability to leverage their demographic dividends for sustainable growth.

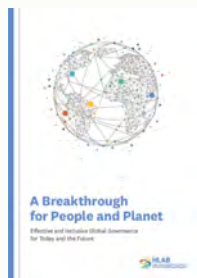
It is crucial for policymakers to implement youth-focused, long-term strategies that address both immediate needs and future priorities.

**“One child, one teacher,
one book, and one pen
can change the world.”**

**MALALA YOUSAFZAI,
EDUCATION ACTIVIST**

Key Resources

The brief was created using various sources, including research, policy papers, and contributions from organizations around the world. It includes case studies and examples from countries that have successfully integrated future generations into their governance frameworks.



FUTURE BEYOND 2024

The journey to the Summit of the Future captures a collective global effort to think, plan, and act for the future, with young people at the forefront.

Despite unforeseen crises like the COVID-19 pandemic, governments worldwide reaffirmed their commitment to this cause. This was further bolstered by the Secretary-General's "[Our Common Agenda](#)" and companion youth "[Our Future Agenda](#)" reports, which called for an accelerated push towards the SDGs and improved intergenerational cooperation for a better future for all.

This Summit of the Future aims to rejuvenate the multilateral system and align it more closely with 21st-century needs. The anticipated Pact for the Future will also prepare for future collaborative efforts, notably leveraging significant upcoming events like Beijing+30 and the World Summit for Social Development.

Most notably, it will set the foundation for the final SDG Summit in 2027, the last checkpoint to assess the SDG progress made. It will also launch the [2100 Roadmap](#) supported by the [Unlock the Future Coalition](#), a youth-led intergenerational framework to design the succession agenda for the generations to come.

2015

Adoption of the 2030 Agenda, introducing 17 Global Goals to guide global efforts for a better future.

2020

UN75 Declaration featuring 12 overarching commitments and a directive to tackle global challenges.

2021

Our Common Agenda by the Secretary-General a report set in motion for reimagining the UN, proposing the Summit of the Future.

2023

SDG Summit marking the midpoint of the 2030 Agenda's timeline.

2024

Summit of the Future aimed at reinvigorating the multilateral system

Beijing+30

Review and appraisal of the Beijing Declaration

World Social Summit

Review and appraisal of the Beijing Declaration

COP30

second presentation of Nationally Determined Contributions

2027 SDG Summit

global progress review and preparation for 2100

TO WRAP IT UP

The Summit of the Future is a significant moment in our journey towards a sustainable future, showing what can be accomplished when the global community comes together with a common vision.

As we look beyond the Summit, we have the power to shape a legacy of sustainable, inclusive, and equitable development, forging a future that will be remembered with gratitude by generations to come.

This brief draws on the diverse insights and contributions of over 170 child, youth, and future-focused organizations that have actively participated in shaping the draft Pact for the Future. These briefs also reflect the collaborative efforts of the Unlock the Future coalition, Next Generation Fellows, and a broad network of global partners dedicated to advocating for young people and future generations.

United Nations Foundation

– Our Future Agenda

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