



## The demographic profile of Saudi Arabia

### 1. Population Trends:

#### a. Population Size of Saudi Arabia

The population size of Saudi Arabia increased from 9.8 million in 1980 to approximately 27.3 million in 2010. It is expected that the population will keep on increasing to reach approximately 40.4 million in 2050.

Table 1: Population Size of Saudi Arabia by Sex, 1980-2050

Year	Population Size (thousands)		
	Males	Females	Total
1980	5,274	4,569	9,843
1985	7,281	5,993	13,274
1990	9,073	7,133	16,206
1995	10,377	8,191	18,567
2000	10,834	9,311	20,145
2005	13,762	10,928	24,690
2010	15,392	11,866	27,258
2015*	17,407	12,490	29,898
2020*	19,326	13,015	32,341
2025*	20,657	13,550	34,207
2030*	21,349	14,286	35,634
2035*	21,952	14,972	36,924
2040*	22,527	15,666	38,193
2045*	23,049	16,345	39,394
2050*	23,445	16,942	40,388

Source: United Nations, World Population Prospects: The 2012 Revision, Available on: [http://esa.un.org/unpd/wpp/unpp/panel\\_indicators.htm](http://esa.un.org/unpd/wpp/unpp/panel_indicators.htm)

\* Projections (medium variant)

#### b. Population Growth in Saudi Arabia

The growth rate of the population in Saudi Arabia dropped from 5.98 per cent for the period 1980-1985 to 1.63 per cent for the period 1995-2000. It then increased to 4.07 per cent for the period 2000-2005 only to decrease again to 1.98 per cent by 2010. It is projected that the growth rate of the Saudi population will continue to decrease and will reach 0.50 per cent in the period 2045-2050.

Table 2: Population Growth in Saudi Arabia, 1980-2050

Period	Population Growth Rate (%)
1980-1985	5.98
1985-1990	3.99
1990-1995	2.72
1995-2000	1.63
2000-2005	4.07
2005-2010	1.98
2010-2015*	1.85
2015-2020*	1.57
2020-2025*	1.12
2025-2030*	0.82
2030-2035*	0.71
2035-2040*	0.68
2040-2045*	0.62
2045-2050*	0.50

Source: United Nations, World Population Prospects: The 2012 Revision, Available on: [http://esa.un.org/unpd/wpp/unpp/panel\\_indicators.htm](http://esa.un.org/unpd/wpp/unpp/panel_indicators.htm)

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### 2. Indicators of Demographic Transition:

#### a. Mortality Transition in Saudi Arabia

##### i. Life Expectancy

Life Expectancy at Birth in Saudi Arabia gained 9.4 years from the period 1980-1985 to the period 2005-2010, increasing from 64.9 years to 74.3 years. It is projected to reach 81.8 years for the period 2045-2050.

Table 3: Life Expectancy at Birth in Saudi Arabia, 1980-2050

Year	Life Expectancy at Birth (years)		
	Male	Female	Total
1980-1985	63.3	66.8	64.9
1985-1990	66.4	69.6	67.9
1990-1995	68.3	72.0	69.9
1995-2000	70.1	73.7	71.6
2000-2005	71.6	75.1	73.1
2005-2010	72.8	76.4	74.3
2010-2015*	73.8	77.5	75.4
2015-2020*	74.8	78.5	76.4
2020-2025*	75.9	79.4	77.4
2025-2030*	76.9	80.2	78.3
2030-2035*	77.9	81.0	79.3
2035-2040*	79.0	81.7	80.2
2040-2045*	80.0	82.4	81.0
2045-2050*	80.9	83.0	81.8

Source: United Nations, World Population Prospects: The 2012 Revision, Available on: [http://esa.un.org/unpd/wpp/unpp/panel\\_indicators.htm](http://esa.un.org/unpd/wpp/unpp/panel_indicators.htm)

\* Projections (medium variant)

##### ii. Infant Mortality

The Infant Mortality Rate of the Population of Saudi Arabia was estimated at 56.2 infant deaths per 1,000 live births in 1980-1985 and decreased to 14.0 infant deaths per 1,000 live births in 2005-2010. It is projected to continue this downward trend to reach 3.8 infant deaths per 1,000 live births in 2045-2050.

Table 4: Infant Mortality Rate in Saudi Arabia, 1980-2050

Year	Infant Mortality Rate (per 1,000 live births)		
	Male	Female	Total
1980-1985	60.3	52.0	56.2
1985-1990	44.1	38.1	41.1
1990-1995	32.5	28.2	30.4
1995-2000	24.7	21.5	23.2
2000-2005	19.2	16.8	18.0
2005-2010	14.9	13.0	14.0
2010-2015*	11.9	10.4	11.2
2015-2020*	9.6	8.4	9.0
2020-2025*	8.1	7.0	7.6
2025-2030*	6.9	6.2	6.5
2030-2035*	5.8	5.5	5.6
2035-2040*	4.8	4.9	4.9
2040-2045*	4.1	4.5	4.3
2045-2050*	3.5	4.1	3.8

Source: United Nations, World Population Prospects: The 2012 Revision, Available on: [http://esa.un.org/unpd/wpp/unpp/panel\\_indicators.htm](http://esa.un.org/unpd/wpp/unpp/panel_indicators.htm)

\* Projections (medium variant)



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### iii. Under-Five Mortality

The under-five mortality rate was estimated at 77 deaths under age five per 1,000 live births in 198-1985, and decreased to 15 deaths per 1,000 live births by 2010. It is projected to continue decreasing to reach 4 deaths per 1,000 live births by 2050.

Table 5: Under-Five Mortality Rate in Saudi Arabia, 1980-2050

Year	Under-Five Mortality Rate (per 1,000 live births)		
	Male	Female	Total
1980-1985	82	73	77
1985-1990	57	51	54
1990-1995	41	36	39
1995-2000	30	27	28
2000-2005	22	20	21
2005-2010	16	14	15
2010-2015*	13	12	12
2015-2020*	10	9	10
2020-2025*	9	8	8
2025-2030*	8	7	7
2030-2035*	6	6	6
2035-2040*	5	6	5
2040-2045*	4	5	5
2045-2050*	4	5	4

Source: United Nations, World Population Prospects: The 2012 Revision, Available on: [http://esa.un.org/unpd/wpp/unpp/panel\\_indicators.htm](http://esa.un.org/unpd/wpp/unpp/panel_indicators.htm)

\* Projections (medium variant)

### iv. Maternal Mortality

The maternal mortality ratio in Saudi Arabia was estimated at 44 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births in 1990. It decreased to reach 24 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births in 2010.

Source: World Health Statistics 2012.

Available on: [http://www.who.int/gho/maternal\\_health/countries/en/#S](http://www.who.int/gho/maternal_health/countries/en/#S)

## b. Fertility Transition in Saudi Arabia

### i. Fertility Rate

The total Fertility Rate in Saudi Arabia dropped from 7.02 children per woman in 1980-1985 to 3.03 children per woman in 2005-2010. Projections show that total fertility will decline further to reach 2.10 (Replacement level) children per woman in 2025-2030 and 1.78 children per woman in 2045-2050.

Table 6: Total Fertility Rate in Saudi Arabia, 1980-2050

Year	Total Fertility Rate (children per woman)
1980-1985	7.02
1985-1990	6.22
1990-1995	5.45
1995-2000	4.51
2000-2005	3.54
2005-2010	3.03
2010-2015*	2.68
2015-2020*	2.43
2020-2025*	2.24
2025-2030*	2.10
2030-2035*	1.98
2035-2040*	1.89



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Year	Total Fertility Rate (children per woman)
2040-2045*	1.82
2045-2050*	1.78

Source: United Nations, World Population Prospects: The 2012 Revision,  
Available on: [http://esa.un.org/unpd/wpp/unpp/panel\\_indicators.htm](http://esa.un.org/unpd/wpp/unpp/panel_indicators.htm)  
\* Projections (medium variant)

### ii. Contraceptive Prevalence

The prevalence of contraceptive use among married or in-union women aged 15 to 49 was estimated at 34.9 per cent in 2010 and increased to 37.1 per cent in 2012. Contraceptive use among women aged 15 to 49 is projected to increase to 40.1 per cent in 2015.

Source: United Nations, World Contraceptive Use 2012  
Available on: <http://www.un.org/esa/population/publications/WCU2012/MainFrame.html>

## c. Migration Transition in Saudi Arabia

### i. Internal Migration

The percentage of urban dwellers increased from 65.9 per cent in 1980 to 82.1 per cent in 2010. Population projections show that this percentage will continue to increase to reach 88.4 per cent in 2050.

Table 7: Urban and Rural Population in Saudi Arabia, 1980-2050

Year	Urban (thousands)	Rural (thousands)	Total (thousands)	Percentage Urban (%)	Percentage Rural (%)	Year	Annual Rate of Change of Percentage Urban (%)	Annual Rate of Change of Percentage Rural (%)
1980	6,455	3,346	9,801	65.9	34.1	1980-1985	1.96	-4.43
1985	9,604	3,616	13,220	72.6	27.4	1985-1990	1.06	-3.11
1990	12,360	3,779	16,139	76.6	23.4	1990-1995	0.54	-1.87
1995	14,548	3,944	18,492	78.7	21.3	1995-2000	0.3	-1.14
2000	16,006	4,040	20,045	79.8	20.2	2000-2005	0.28	-1.16
2005	19,468	4,573	24,041	81.0	19.0	2005-2010	0.27	-1.2
2010	22,530	4,918	27,448	82.1	17.9	2010-2015*	0.25	-1.18
2015*	25,381	5,157	30,538	83.1	16.9	2015-2020*	0.23	-1.15
2020*	28,189	5,346	33,535	84.1	15.9	2020-2025*	0.20	-1.11
2025*	30,763	5,462	36,226	84.9	15.1	2025-2030*	0.19	-1.08
2030*	32,983	5,498	38,481	85.7	14.3	2030-2035*	0.17	-1.04
2035*	34,958	5,486	40,444	86.4	13.6	2035-2040*	0.16	-1.03
2040*	36,750	5,434	42,183	87.1	12.9	2040-2045*	0.15	-1.04
2045*	38,354	5,343	43,697	87.8	12.2	2045-2050*	0.14	-1.05
2050*	39,725	5,213	44,938	88.4	11.6			

Source: United Nations, World Urbanization Prospects: the 2011 Revision  
Available on: [http://esa.un.org/unup/unup/index\\_panel1.html](http://esa.un.org/unup/unup/index_panel1.html)  
\* Projections (medium variant)

### ii. International Migration

Around 9,060,433 international migrants are expected to live in Saudi Arabia in 2013, representing 31.43 per cent of the total Saudi population. Female migrants would represent 28.95 per cent of all migrants for that year.

The annual rate of change of the migrant stock is projected to stand at 2.40 per cent in 2010-2013.

The annual net migration rate in Saudi Arabia for 1995-2000 was negative at -9.1 migrants per 1,000 population. The trend was then reversed and the annual net migration rate for 2000-2005 stood at 19.6 migrants per 1,000 population and decreased to reach 1.2 migrants per 1,000 population in 2005-2010.



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Projections show that the annual net migration rate will increase slightly to reach 2.1 migrants per 1,000 population in 2010-2015 and is expected to decrease again afterwards to reach 0.9 migrants per 1,000 populations in 2045.

Table 8a: International Migrant (IM) Stock for Saudi Arabia, 1990-2013

Indicator	1990	2000	2010	2013*
Estimated Number of IM at Mid-Year (total)	4,998,445	5,263,388	8,429,983	9,060,433
Estimated Number of IM at Mid-Year (male)	3,324,873	3,517,729	5,933,295	6,437,270
Estimated Number of IM at Mid-Year (female)	1,673,572	1,745,659	2,496,688	2,623,163
Estimated Number of Refugees at Mid-Year	33,261	53,09	582	599
IM as Percentage of the Population (%)	30.84	26.13	30.93	31.43
Female Migrants as a Percentage of all IM (%)	33.48	33.17	29.62	28.95
Refugees as a Percentage of IM (%)	0.67	0.10	0.01	0.01

Source: United Nations, World Migration Stock: The 2013 Revision,  
Available on: <http://esa.un.org/unmigration/migrantstocks2013.htm?mtotals>  
\* Projections

Table 8b: Annual Rate of Change of the Migrant Stock in Saudi Arabia, 1990-2013

Year	Annual Rate of Change of the Migrant Stock (%)
1990-2000	0.52
2000-2010	4.71
2010-2013*	2.40

Source: United Nations, World Migration Stock: The 2013 Revision,  
Available on: <http://esa.un.org/unmigration/migrantstocks2013.htm?mtotals>  
\* Projections

Table 9: Net Migration in Saudi Arabia, 1980-2050

Year	Net Migration (average annual)	
	Rate (per 1,000 population)	Number (thousands)
1980-1985	24.1	278
1985-1990	7.3	108
1990-1995	-1.4	-24
1995-2000	-9.1	-175
2000-2005	19.6	440
2005-2010	1.2	31
2010-2015*	2.1	60
2015-2020*	1.9	60
2020-2025*	1.1	36
2025-2030*	1.0	36
2030-2035*	1.0	36
2035-2040*	1.0	36
2040-2045*	0.9	36
2045-2050*	0.9	36

Source: United Nations, World Population Prospects: The 2012 Revision,  
Available on: [http://esa.un.org/unpd/wpp/unpp/panel\\_indicators.htm](http://esa.un.org/unpd/wpp/unpp/panel_indicators.htm)  
\* Projections (medium variant)

### 3. Population Structure:

#### a. Saudi Arabia's Population Age Composition

The proportion of the population under 15 years of age has been decreasing since 1980 and is projected to continue this downward trend till the year 2050. At the same time, the proportion of the working-age group (15-64) has been increasing since 1980, where it rose from 52.6 per cent to reach 66.3 per cent in 2010. It is projected to reach a peak of 74.2 per cent in 2035 after which it will start decreasing and will get to 65.7 per cent in 2050. The proportion of the elderly (65+) population increased from 2.6 per cent in 1995 to 3.5 per



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cent in 2000. It then decreased to 3.0 percent in 2010. Projections show that the proportion of the elderly (65+) population will start increasing afterwards and will reach 18.4 per cent in 2050.

Table 10: Population Distribution by Broad Age Groups in Saudi Arabia, 1980-2050

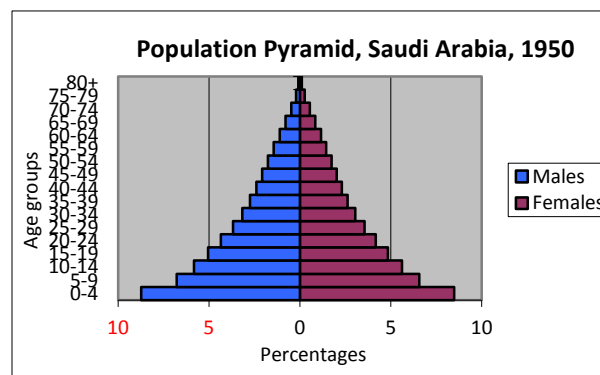
Year	Population by Age Group (%)			
	0-4	5-14	15-64	65+
1980	18.5	25.9	52.6	3.0
1985	17.4	25.3	54.7	2.6
1990	16.8	25.7	54.8	2.7
1995	14.1	26.9	56.3	2.6
2000	13.9	24.5	58.1	3.5
2005	11.4	22.9	62.6	3.1
2010	11.1	19.6	66.3	3.0
2015*	9.6	18.7	68.7	3.0
2020*	8.4	17.3	70.3	4.1
2025*	6.5	16.3	71.7	5.4
2030*	5.3	13.9	73.6	7.2
2035*	5.1	11.2	74.2	9.5
2040*	5.4	9.90	72.6	12.1
2045*	5.5	10.0	69.1	15.4
2050*	5.4	10.5	65.7	18.4

Source: United Nations, World Population Prospects: The 2012 Revision, Available on: [http://esa.un.org/unpd/wpp/unpp/panel\\_indicators.htm](http://esa.un.org/unpd/wpp/unpp/panel_indicators.htm)

\* Projections (medium variant)

### b. Changing Age Structure<sup>1</sup>

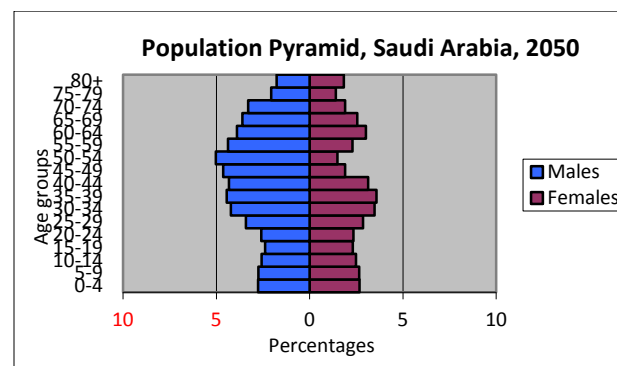
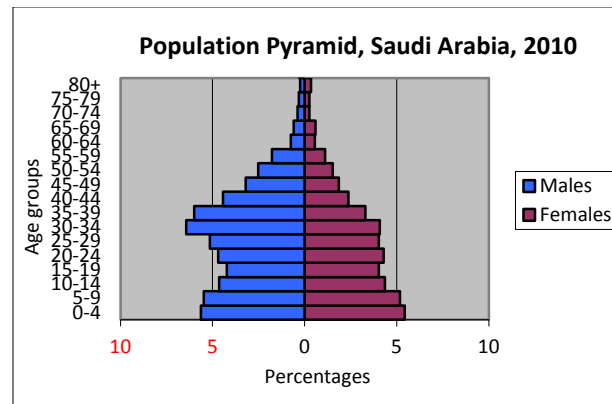
In 1950, the age-sex distribution of the population of Saudi Arabia shows a typical wide-based pyramid, characterizing the age structure as that of a young population. In 2010 and 2050, the pyramid shows an unbalanced age-sex structure due to the elevated immigration rates to Saudi Arabia and the reliance on foreign labour.



<sup>1</sup> Source for all pyramids: United Nations, World Population Prospects: The 2012 Revision; Projections (medium variant). Available on: <http://www.un.org/esa/population/publications/wcu2010/Main.html>



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### c. Saudi Arabia's Youth Population

In 1975, the percentage of youth (15-24) formed 18.3 per cent of the population of Saudi Arabia (or 34.9 per cent of the working-age group). In 2010, the percentage decreased to 17.2 per cent (or 26 per cent of the working-age group). It is projected to continue declining to reach 9.60 per cent in 2050 (or 14.7 per cent of the working-age group).

Table 11: Youth (15-24) in Relation to Total Population and to Working-Age Population (15-64), Saudi Arabia, 1950-2050

Year	Youth (thousands)	Youth (% of total population)	Working-age Population (thousands)	Youth (% of working-age group)**
1950	575	18.4	1,706	33.7
1955	652	18.3	1,921	33.9
1960	735	18.1	2,164	34.0
1965	871	18.1	2,535	34.4
1970	1,057	18.2	3,029	34.9
1975	1,352	18.3	3,879	34.9
1980	1,740	17.7	5,181	33.6
1985	2,368	17.8	7,261	32.6
1990	2,881	17.8	8,881	32.4
1995	2,969	16.0	10,450	28.4
2000	3,747	18.6	11,699	32.0
2005	4,446	18.0	15,458	28.8
2010	4,698	17.2	18,073	26.0
2015*	4,520	15.1	20,532	22.0
2020*	4,507	13.9	22,726	19.8



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Year	Youth (thousands)	Youth (% of total population)	Working-age Population (thousands)	Youth (% of working-age group)**
2025*	5,207	15.2	24,515	21.2
2030*	5,674	15.9	26,210	21.6
2035*	5,683	15.4	27,397	20.7
2040*	5,043	13.2	27,734	18.2
2045*	4,225	10.7	27,224	15.5
2050*	3,886	9.6	26,530	14.6

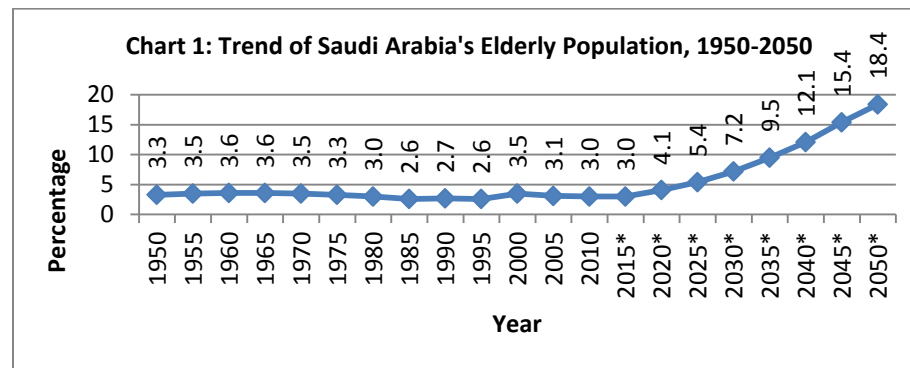
Source: United Nations, World Population Prospects: The 2012 Revision, Available on: [http://esa.un.org/unpd/wpp/unpp/panel\\_indicators.htm](http://esa.un.org/unpd/wpp/unpp/panel_indicators.htm)

\* Projections (medium variant)

\*\* ESCWA calculation

### d. Saudi Arabia's Elderly Population

In Saudi Arabia, the percentage of the population aged 65+ fluctuated between 2.6 per cent and 3.6 per cent from 1950 to 2005 and stood at 3.0 per cent in 2010. It is projected to start an upward trend after 2015, with the pace of increase accelerating after 2025, and will reach 18.4 per cent in the year 2050.



Source: United Nations, World Population Prospects: The 2012 Revision, Available on: [http://esa.un.org/unpd/wpp/unpp/panel\\_indicators.htm](http://esa.un.org/unpd/wpp/unpp/panel_indicators.htm)

\* Projections (medium variant)

### e. Saudi Arabia's Dependency Ratios

The total dependency ratio in Saudi Arabia stood at 83 per cent in 1950 and increased to reach 92 per cent in 1970. It then started decreasing mainly due to the decrease in child dependency and reached 51 per cent in 2010. It is projected to continue decreasing to reach 35 per cent in 2035, after which it will start to go up due to the increase in old-age dependency and will reach 52 per cent in 2050.

Table 12: Dependency Ratios in Saudi Arabia, 1950-2050 (per cent)

Year	Child Dependency Ratio	Old-Age Dependency Ratio	Total Dependency Ratio
1950	77	6	83
1955	78	7	85
1960	81	7	88
1965	83	7	90
1970	85	7	92
1975	84	6	90
1980	84	6	90
1985	78	5	83
1990	78	5	82
1995	73	5	78





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Year	Child Dependency Ratio	Old-Age Dependency Ratio	Total Dependency Ratio
2000	66	6	72
2005	55	5	60
2010	46	4	51
2015*	41	4	46
2020*	37	6	42
2025*	32	8	40
2030*	26	10	36
2035*	22	13	35
2040*	21	17	38
2045*	22	22	45
2050*	24	28	52

Source: United Nations, World Population Prospects: The 2012 Revision,  
Available on: [http://esa.un.org/unpd/wpp/unpp/panel\\_indicators.htm](http://esa.un.org/unpd/wpp/unpp/panel_indicators.htm)

\* Projections (medium variant)

### f. Saudi Arabia's Demographic Dividend

The demographic change in Saudi Arabia is not clear due to the distorted age structure resulting from the labour migration flows into the country.



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### 4. Population Policy Profile of Saudi Arabia

Population policy Variable	1976	1986	1996	2011
<b>Population Size and Growth</b>				
View on growth	Too low	Too low	Too low	Satisfactory
Policy on growth	Raise	Raise	Raise	Maintain
<b>Population age structure</b>				
Level of concern about working-age population	..	..	..	Minor concern
Level of concern about aging of the population	..	..	..	Minor concern
Measures to address population ageing*	..	..	..	Neither
<b>Fertility</b>				
View on fertility level	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Policy on fertility level	Maintain	Maintain	Maintain	No intervention
Level of concern about adolescent fertility	..	..	..	Not a concern
Policies to reduce adolescent fertility	..	..	..	No
<b>Reproductive health and family planning</b>				
Government support for family planning	Limits	Limits	Limits	No support
Grounds on which abortion is permitted**	..	..	1,2	1,2,3
Level of concern about violence against women	..	..	..	Major concern
Policies to prevent domestic violence***	..	..	..	2
<b>Health and mortality</b>				
View on life expectancy at birth	Unacceptable	Unacceptable	Unacceptable	Unacceptable
View on under-five mortality	..	..	..	Unacceptable
View on under nutrition in children	..	..	..	Unacceptable
View on maternal mortality	..	..	..	Unacceptable
Level of concern about overweight and obesity	..	..	..	Major concern
Level of concern about non-communicable diseases	..	..	..	Major concern
Level of concern about tuberculosis	..	..	..	Major concern
Level of concern about malaria	..	..	..	Major concern
Level of concern about HIV/AIDS	..	..	..	Major concern
Measures to address HIV/AIDS****	..	..	..	1,2,3,4,6
<b>Spatial distribution and internal migration</b>				
View on spatial distribution	Minor changed desired	Minor changed desired	Minor changed desired	Minor changed desired
Policy on migration from rural to urban areas	..	..	..	Lower
Policy on migration into urban agglomerations	..	..	..	Lower
<b>International migration</b>				
View on immigration	Too low	Satisfactory	Too high	Too high
Policy on immigration	Raise	Maintain	Lower	Lower
Policy on permanent settlement	..	..	..	No intervention
Policy on temporary workers	..	..	..	Lower
Policy on highly-skilled workers	..	..	..	Maintain
Policy on family reunification	..	..	..	Maintain
Policy on integration of non-nationals	..	..	..	Yes
Policy on naturalization	..	..	..	Restricted
Level of concern about irregular migration	..	..	..	Major concern
Prgms. to facilitate migrants' return to home countries	..	..	..	..
View on emigration	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Policy on emigration	Maintain	Maintain	Maintain	Lower
Policy to encourage the return of citizens	..	..	..	Yes
Acceptance of dual citizenship	..	..	..	No
Special governmental unit dealing with Diaspora	..	..	..	No
Measures to attract investment by Diaspora*****	..	..	..	None of these

\* Measures to address population ageing: (1) change in statutory retirement age in the last 5 years; (2) pension system reform in the last 5 years.

\*\* Grounds on which abortion is permitted: (1) to save a woman's life; (2) to preserve a woman's physical health; (3) to preserve a woman's mental health; (4) in case of rape or incest; (5) because of foetal impairment; (6) for economic or social reasons; (7) on request.

\*\*\* Policies to prevent domestic violence: (1) legal provision; (2) policy.

\*\*\*\* Measures to address HIV/AIDS: (1) blood screening; (2) information/education campaigns; (3) antiretroviral treatment; (4) non-discrimination policies (legal measures); (5) Distribution of condoms; (6) prevention of mother-to-child transmission (PMTCT).

\*\*\*\*\* Measures to attract investment by Diaspora: (1) tax exceptions or breaks; (2) reduction of tariffs on goods or import duties for Diaspora companies; (3) preferential treatment in providing credit; (4) preferential treatment in allotment of licenses; (5) streamlined bureaucratic procedures for investment; (6) Diaspora bond/mutual fund.

Source: United Nations, World Population Policies, 2011.