

## Chapter 1 : Looking at Caribbean Countries | Gareth Stevens

*The explorative series is designed to help young readers learn about important countries around the world. Each exciting volume presents an overview of the featured country's land and people, capturing the unique flavor of that country.*

At You, How a less Christian Europe, an aging population in the West, and the empowerment of women are going to shape the future. By Paul Taylor illustration by pablo delcan january 16, The 21st century is still just a teenager, but we can already forecast with a fair degree of confidence what its demographic profile will look like by Population growth will have slowed down. Global aging will have risen to unprecedented levels. Poverty will ameliorate in poor countries; income inequality will worsen in wealthy ones. However, the fact that they are connected does not mean they are universal. Beneath the broad umbrella of global demographic change, there will be sharp variances across regions and sometimes within countries. See the data Consider the most basic demographic metric of all " population size. This means that in there will be around 3. In , there were nearly twice as many Europeans as Africans. Demography is a drama in slow motion. But tick by tock, it transforms the world. The staggering reversal of population fortunes is largely the result of the huge continental differences in birthrates " 1. By midcentury, however, those rates are expected to increase in Europe and decrease in Africa, as both continents converge toward the projected global rate of roughly 2. As more girls and women have acquired more education, economic independence, and control over their reproductive decisions, they have had fewer babies. During the 20th century, it nearly quadrupled. As population growth slows, median ages will rise " the result not just of fewer children but also of steady increases in human longevity. By , the share of the global population that is 60 or older will nearly double to Aging will be most pronounced in economic powerhouses like Japan, where the median age by midcentury will be 53, South Korea 54 , Germany 51 , China 50 , and the United States Aging See the data These aging societies will be hard-pressed to maintain their economic vitality as the working-age shares of their populations decline and the fiscal pressures on their health care systems and old-age social insurance programs grow. Meanwhile, the less-developed countries throughout Africa, the Middle East, Latin America, and parts of Asia are still experiencing a youth bulge albeit one with less girth than in the past. Countries like India, Nigeria, Egypt, South Africa, and Kenya will see the working-age shares of their population grow between now and midcentury. Their challenge will be to make the investments in human and physical capital needed to take advantage of this demographic dividend. Since the turn of the millennium, these disparate age structures, along with the incessant march of technology, have already yielded different economic outcomes around the world. According to the World Bank, 1 billion people have climbed out of extreme poverty since , the vast majority of them in poor countries, where inexpensive mobile technology has unlocked new economic opportunity in rural villages and urban slums. Islam is the fastest-growing major religion in the world. According to projections by the Pew Research Center, by midcentury, the number of Muslims 2. Muslim women have the highest fertility rate of any major religion an average of 3. Christian women are not far behind 2. Religion For the first time ever, Islam and Christianity will be at near parity in their number of followers by See the data In fact for the first time, the Christian populations in France and the United Kingdom are projected to drop below half by midcentury. The growth of Christianity is expected to slow in part due to followers leaving the faith, a phenomenon most prevalent in developed countries like the United States where the Christian population is projected to decline from more than three-quarters in to two-thirds in In comparison, throughout Europe, the Muslim population is expected to rise slightly to These projections are dependent on migration patterns that could be affected by geopolitical developments. That caveat applies to all projections: Harold Macmillan, a 20th-century British prime minister, put it well. Projected Population Growth from to In Millions Growth rates will vary sharply by region and continent. Africa will see its population double, while Asia, North America, South America, and the Caribbean will grow by less than 25 percent. Regional distribution of global population and Life expectancy at birth In years The rise of life expectancy across the globe is forecast to continue, with the greatest advances coming in Africa. However,

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this is contingent on further reductions in the spread of HIV and other infectious diseases. Acceleration of global aging by percent of population By midcentury, Africa will still be young but less so , while the rest of the world will age substantially. Slower growth, unprecedented aging.

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