

Press Release



**South African
Institute of
Race Relations**

South Africa's Leading Research and Policy Organisation

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South Africa to experience population shrinkage after 2030

Estimates show that from 2030 onwards, South Africa will have a decreasing population.

Between 2010 and 2030, South Africa's population will grow, although at a decreasing rate each year. This is according to the 2009/10 *South Africa Survey* published by the South African Institute of Race Relations in Johannesburg this week.

By 2030 South Africa's population will be 53.81 million. The population will then decrease to 53.74 million by 2035, and to 53.28 million by 2040, according to data from the Institute of Futures Research at the University of Stellenbosch cited in the *Survey*.

One of the main reasons for this is the long term impact of HIV/AIDS.

In South Africa, the number of deaths in a year is making up an increasingly higher proportion of the number of births. In 1985, deaths were 25% of births. This was expected by the Actuarial Society of South Africa to increase to 87% of births by 2021.

Thuthukani Ndebele, a researcher at the Institute, said, 'If this trend continues, there will soon be more deaths than births in South Africa. It is evident that the HIV/AIDS pandemic has resulted in an increasing number of deaths. These deaths are mostly among people in the child-bearing age group, which will result in decreasing numbers of births.'

However, a lower fertility rate will also contribute to population shrinkage. Between 2001 and 2010, South Africa's fertility rate decreased from 2.86 to 2.38 births per woman.

By 2040, the fertility rate will have dropped to 1.98 births per woman. This is lower than the replacement rate of 2.1 births per woman, which is needed for the population to reproduce itself.

Ndebele said, 'Lower fertility rates are related to an increase in access to education and contraceptives, which results in women having fewer children.'

'A combination of increasing deaths as a result of the HIV/AIDS pandemic, as well as lower fertility rates will result in population shrinkage after 2030. This can be positive as there will be less strain on resources in South Africa. However, it will also be negative, as there will be fewer people to contribute to the economy and its internal consumer markets.'

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