



same time, the number of people forced to flee their homes has risen sharply due to protracted conflicts and could become a major challenge for many countries in the global South.

## ➤ YOUTH BULGES

In some regions of the world, young people (ages 15 to 24 years) comprise a large and rapidly growing segment of the population. In Sub-Saharan Africa, where the total population is projected to reach 2.5 billion by 2050, the population of working-age people (from ages 15 to 64) is growing faster than in any other age group. Most countries in Asia and in Latin America and the Caribbean have already witnessed a similar bulge of young people followed by a bulge at working ages.

While it lasts, a relative increase in the working-age population offers an opportunity for accelerated economic growth: the so-called demographic dividend. In this context, efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals – such as ending hunger, ensuring healthy lives, promoting education and life-long learning, creating jobs, improving social protection and reducing inequality – can reinforce these trends and lead to greater opportunities. At the same time, youth bulges can increase the challenge to public finances struggling to provide services to the young people today, as well as the challenge to the society in coming decades as it struggles to deal with its ageing population.

Older persons (ages 65 and above) today comprise the world's fastest growing age group. Globally, for the first time in 2018, the number of older persons surpassed the number of adolescents and youth (ages 15 to 24). Some regions, such as Europe and Eastern Asia, already face a considerable challenge in supporting and caring for their older populations. As life expectancy continues to increase, older

persons are likely to play more significant roles in societies and economies. We must adapt education, health-care and social protection systems to provide a public safety net for this growing age group.

From our earliest days, migration has provided humans with opportunities. In 2019, international migrants – people living outside their country of origin – numbered around 272 million, or almost 3.5 per cent of the world population. In 2000, this figure was 2.8 per cent. Asia hosts the largest number of international migrants, but in recent years Africa has experienced the fastest increase. Most international migration occurs between countries in the same geographic region.

People move for many reasons, including work, family and education. A growing number, however, are displaced by conflict, persecution, natural disasters and climate change.