Between 1972 and 2002, there were increases in life expectancy at birth in 88% of territories. Large increases occurred in Northern Africa (an extra 10 years), Southern Asia (an extra 13 years) and Asia Pacific (an extra 14 years). Increases were smaller where life expectancy was already relatively high, such as Western Europe and North America. Worldwide the increase was 9 years.

The 12% of territories with no area on this map are those with no change in life expectancy, or a decline. Most of these territories are in sub Saharan Africa where many people live with HIV, and die young.

Territory size shows the proportion of all extra years of life expected to be lived by the population there in 2002, compared with a similarly sized population in 1972. Decreases in life expectancy are not shown here.

“... adding person-years-of-life back into the life table is far easier to accomplish when it involves saving infants and children from dying of infectious diseases than ... saving people over the age of 70.”  
S. Jay Olshansky, 2005