



Global Symposium on Ageing Seoul, 2017

Joint statement of UNFPA and KOSTAT as co-chairs

Population aging is a growing concern for many countries around the world. In response, UNFPA and Statistics Korea, KOSTAT, have jointly launched a Global Programme on Population Ageing, and under this umbrella they have jointly organized the Global Symposium on Ageing, which was held in Seoul, the Republic of Korea from 23—24 October 2017. The Global Symposium brought together around 200 thought leaders from governments and parliaments, international organizations and civil society, as well as the scientific community and the private sector, and it benefited from the partnership with the Asia Pacific Population Institute (APPI), and the support by the Asian Population and Development Association (APDA).

The discussion on the challenges and opportunities of population ageing underscored a few key messages:

Population ageing, together with fertility decline, is the result of immense social and economic progress, which leads to a demographic transition, and both should thus be seen first and foremost as an achievement of development.

Population ageing is truly global phenomenon, which is happening in all countries, including the least

developed countries. Population ageing is truly transformative in nature as it affects the social, economic, political and cultural fabric of societies. Although the developed countries have the largest share of older persons, the rate of population ageing is fastest in the developing countries. Population ageing has therefore become major concerns around the world.

Population ageing is best addressed through a shift from inherently reactive, fragmented and negative responses -- to pro-active, integrated and positive policy and social responses. Many societies have not yet come to terms with the opportunities provided by population ageing, and have not yet begun to consider measures to take advantage of this opportunity. To empower people to make most of longer lives, and to help countries realize a demographic dividend, demands that governments better integrate social protection measures throughout the life course. The traditional trajectory from school to work to retirement becomes less of a viable (or desirable) path for many individuals, and in the future it must be possible for people to move more freely between learning, work and leisure, while enjoying support and protection.

Population ageing is best understood as a process, and addressed from a life-course perspective. It is not solely about wellbeing of today's generation of older persons, but also about investments today that will augment the wellbeing of the current and future generations of younger persons, and most importantly about a truly intergenerational approach. The younger generation is essential for sustainable responses to population ageing, and understanding their concerns and aspirations, as well as their needs is essential for any successful response to low and falling fertility.

Very low fertility in some ageing countries is exacerbating the pace of population ageing, and raising concerns about population productivity, as well as the loss of family and cultural traditions. Low fertility has rebounded in some countries, but not others, and far deeper understanding is needed to understand the social determinants of low fertility, in order to assure all couples the freedom start a family and have the children they may wish for.

Population ageing and fertility decline can only be addressed in a comprehensive and promising manner by recognizing and reinforcing the linkages between different threats of discussion and policies. The reform of pension and health care systems would suitably be informed by changes in the labor markets and the economy at large. Furthermore, these changes

must be supported by the empowerment of women and young people, and by the promotion of a truly intergenerational perspective which brings together older persons and younger generations.

For more effective, comprehensive, and sustainable policy responses, population ageing policies should be integrated with fertility decline issues on the one hand, and be fully consolidated within various international development plans and programmes on the other hand. It will not only further the implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action and Ageing (MIPAA), but also the implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, and promote progress towards the goals and targets that are enshrined in Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development.

The leaderships of UNFPA and KOSTAT would like to thank all participants in the Global Symposium in Ageing for their insights and key messages, and assure them that their insights and messages will guide the future work of UNFPA and KOSTAT on population ageing and fertility decline. At the same time, both agencies would like to extend an invitation to other to join this collaboration, and to promote a fundamentally positive, integrated and forward-looking response to ageing and fertility decline

