**UNITED NATIONS EXPERT GROUP MEETING ON
STRENGTHENING THE DEMOGRAPHIC EVIDENCE BASE
FOR THE POST-2015 DEVELOPMENT AGENDA**
Population Division
Department of Economic and Social Affairs
United Nations Secretariat
New York
5-6 October 2015

OBJECTIVES OF THE MEETING

The Population Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations is organizing an expert group meeting on "Strengthening the demographic evidence base for the post-2015 development agenda", which will be held at the United Nations Headquarters in New York on 5-6 October 2015.

The post-2015 development agenda offers a broad and ambitious set of goals and targets centred on people and planet.[1] Both at the national and international level, development strategies, programmes and policies depend on the availability of reliable, robust, accessible and timely population data given that:

o Demographic data lie at the heart of the monitoring and evaluation of any development agenda, as population numbers are the common denominator used in constructing most indicators of human development (e.g. income per capita, literacy rates, poverty indicators, educational attainment, and life expectancy).
o Planning and managing effectively the needs of current and future generations requires, at a minimum, knowledge about the population today, their numbers, age and sex composition spatial distribution and mobility patterns, as well as how such characteristics are changing over time.
o In order to achieve universal development, it is essential that the new monitoring framework goes beyond global and national averages and aggregate progress into disaggregated data with the ability to differentiate levels of achievement of relevant population groups.[2]

The meeting will bring together specialists and experts involved with population data collection, compilation, analysis, dissemination and utilization to review how the most common sources of demographic data such as census, surveys, civil registration and vital statistics systems

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[1] For the list of proposed goals and targets see the Report of the Open Working Group of the General Assembly on Sustainable Development Goals (A/68/970),
https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/1579SDGs%20Proposal.pdf.
[2] SDG target 17.18 calls for "high-quality, timely and reliable data disaggregated by income, gender, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability, geographic location and other characteristics relevant in national contexts".

and administrative records meet the needs of the post-2015 development agenda. Experts will also be invited to reflect on new data sources that are becoming increasingly available for more rapid and more localized monitoring and how these new sources can complement more traditional data sources. The experts will discuss the possibilities for the integration of multiple data sources available at different geographical scales and time periods to produce timely and robust estimates (including uncertainty ranges) on a wide range of indicators. One of the most salient conclusions of the recent forums on data revolution are the challenges around data utilization, particularly the production and utilization of data at the level at which decision making takes place and accountability resides. The meeting will identify points of intervention for strengthening the demographic evidence base throughout the data life cycle that would contribute to more relevant, effective, efficient and sustainable action-oriented development planning and monitoring, and ultimately to achieving the post-2015 development agenda.

Core questions for each session include:

- What are the experiences and lessons learned from demographic data collection, compilation, analysis, dissemination and utilization within the context of the Millennium Development Goals and the United Nations Conferences and Summits relevant to population and development?
- What are the key challenges of existing data sources to fulfil the needs of the post-2015 development agenda (including in terms of baseline setting for the targets, frequency, timeliness and disaggregation of data available)?
- What are the recommendations on how to strengthen the demographic evidence base and what are the actions required to implement them in the following areas:
    - principles and standards (e.g. quality and integrity, disaggregation, timeliness, transparency and openness, usability, protection and privacy, governance and independence, resources and capacities, and data rights);
    - technology innovation and analysis (e.g. data innovation networks, systems for global data sharing, filling research gaps);
    - capacity and resources (e.g. funding streams, investment needs, private sector participation, capacity development, and global data literacy); and
    - governance and leadership (e.g. global partnerships and forums, coordination, data sharing).

Proposed dates: 5-6 October 2015

Proposed venue: New York (rooms TBD)

Tentative Agenda:

Monday, 5 October 2015

- Opening:
    - Introduction and objectives of the meeting
    - Keynote address: Building a "fit-for-purpose" demographic evidence base for the post-2015 agenda within the framework of the Data Revolution
- Thematic sessions on:
    - Lessons learned from the 2010 round of censuses and planning for the 2020 round to meet the post-2015 development agenda
    - Existing survey programs and the need for new survey modules or new thematic surveys

      o Demographic evidence from civil registration and vital statistics systems, health information systems and other administrative data sources, including insights provided by health and demographic surveillance sites

<u>Tuesday, 6 October 2015</u>

- Thematic sessions on:
  - o Complementing traditional data sources with alternative acquisition, analytic and visualization approaches to ensure better utilization of data for sustainable development
  - o Data disaggregation and utilization challenges: Prospects for the integration of multiple data sources to produce estimates for different geographical scales and time periods
  - o The role of empirical observations and model-based estimates with uncertainty for global and country-level monitoring
- Concluding session

The Population Division will identify and invite three to four substantive experts for each of the six sessions. Each expert is expected to prepare a short note on their substantive area of expertise that will offer their reflections on lessons learned from the past two decades of demographic data collection, and priorities for strengthening existing data collection and dissemination mechanisms to meet the needs of the post-2015 agenda. After short presentations by the experts, there will be an opportunity for questions and statements from the floor followed by responses from the experts to the points raised.

Outcomes of the meeting:

A short report summarizing the key conclusions, lessons learned, and any recommendations based on the evidence presented and discussions at the meeting.

The discussion and key conclusions from the meeting will inform the report of the Secretary-General on strengthening the demographic evidence base for the 2015 development agenda, which will be prepared for the 49th session of the Commission on Population and Development taking place in New York on 11-15 April 2016.

The recommendations will also contribute to the discussions related to the monitoring of the post-2015 development agenda.