

**UN stresses the need to anticipate changes in
world's population age structure
to achieve Sustainable Development Goals**

*Changes in the age structure of human populations are taking place worldwide,
with major implications for sustainable development policies,
highlights the 50th session of the UN Commission on Population and Development*

New York, 5 April—Presenting changes in the age structure of the world's population and understanding their implications for present and future policies to achieve sustainable development will be the focus of the 50th session of the United Nations Commission on Population and Development, which opened on 3 April at UN Headquarters and continuing until 7 April.

While countries are seeking to implement policies to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) they will be presented with data, tools and recommendations to help them anticipate current and future demographic trends and to factor them into their development planning.

Populations ageing: consequences and solutions

[The report of the UN Secretary-General on the annual theme of the Commission](#) highlights that population ageing is a generalized global trend, even if it is characterized by substantial variations in both pace and timing across countries and regions of the world.

This phenomenon presents many consequences, including increased fiscal pressure on public pension and health care programmes. The report points out that governments should react accordingly to make sure that social security systems are sustainable financially while providing adequate benefit levels in the coming years. One approach is to raise the age of retirement in response to increasing life expectancy.

The Commission will review policy recommendations designed to help older populations cope with the disability and functional limitations that are common at older ages. Promoting healthy lifestyles and providing quality health care at all ages, along with supporting family caregivers and providing options for community-based or institutional care, are highly recommended by the report.

Supporting women's reproductive health care and access to the work force

Despite the general trend toward older populations, the numbers of children and youth are still rising rapidly in much of Africa and parts of Asia. To achieve further reductions in rates of maternal and child mortality in these regions, the Commission will discuss policies to support further improvements in maternal and child care. The report also highlights the importance of ensuring universal access to sexual and reproductive health-care services for reducing levels of maternal and child mortality. Typically, such policies lead also to a reduction in the birth rate.

The report points out that young and middle-aged women, in particular, face substantial challenges in balancing work demands and family care, including care for children and for older parents. Governments are encouraged to support the participation of women in the workforce and parental leave for both fathers and mothers, as well as affordable child care and long-term care for older relatives, when needed. Such policies may help to ease the downward pressure on the birth rate in countries where fertility rates are at historically low levels, while also contributing to gender equality and women's empowerment.



Impact of international migration on changing population age structures

Lastly, the Commission will consider the role of international migration on changes in the age distribution of populations. Since migrants tend to be younger, on average, than the population of the host country, migration can help to slow the pace of population ageing. The report from the UN emphasizes the need for governments to facilitate migration that is safe, orderly and regular.

Find out more about the [50th session of the Commission on Population and Development](#) and follow the plenary session via [UN Web TV](#).

For more information about the Sustainable Development Goals visit:
www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/

Available for interviews:

Mr. Jorge Bravo, Chief, Demographic Analysis Branch, Population Division, UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA)

Mr. John Wilmoth, Director, Population Division, DESA

Media contacts:

Melanie Prudhomme, UN Department of Public Information
T: +1 917 367 3541 / E: prudhommem@un.org

Issued by the UN Department of Public Information