Workshop on Prospects for Fertility Decline in High Fertility Countries

Objectives

The past four decades have witnessed tremendous changes in fertility levels in developing countries. Many countries have recorded dramatic declines in total fertility rates and in many others fertility has started to decline. Despite those trends there remain 48 countries that have fertility levels above 5 children per woman. In Africa alone, the countries that have not yet embarked on their fertility transition account for over a fifth of the population of the continent.

There is broad agreement about the conditions that favour the onset of fertility transition. Those include general socio-economic development, decline in mortality, improvement in female education, changing demand for children, diffusion of new ideas and strong government policies and programmes. However, there is no consensus regarding the specific conditions that need to be present for the transition to begin. Among countries that have begun their fertility transition there exist a variety of circumstances that challenge existing theories of fertility transition and defy simple characterization of the conditions that lead to fertility decline. Thus, determining the prospects for fertility decline for the current high fertility countries requires an examination of the specific conditions in those countries.

The Population Division of the United Nations is organizing a Workshop on the *Prospects for Fertility Decline in High Fertility Countries* from 9-11 July 2001 at the United Nations Headquarters in New York. Researchers from 14 different countries will meet to investigate the conditions that hinder or facilitate fertility decline, to provide insights into the prospects for decline and to indicate policy measures that may facilitate the onset of fertility decline. Five young researchers from Togo, Burkina Faso, Morocco, Cote D'Ivoire and the Democratic Republic of the Congo will also attend the Workshop as part of the Out-Reach Programme of the Population Division.