

I. INTRODUCTION

Population dynamics—including changes in population growth rates, age structures and distributions of people—are closely linked to national and global developmental challenges and their solutions. In the years ahead, Governments and the international community will need to address the development consequences of population dynamics before they unfold by adopting forward-looking and proactive policies based on foreseeable demographic trends. In these efforts, it will be critical to assess and monitor key Government policies and programmes related to population dynamics and their consequences.

All the United Nations international population conferences since 1974 have emphasized the need to monitor population policies and programmes related to the implementation of their goals and recommendations, including the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), held at Cairo in 1994 that recommended that actions be taken “... to measure, assess, monitor and evaluate progress towards meeting the goals” of its Programme of Action (United Nations, 1995, chap. I, resolution 1, annex, para. 13.6).

The overriding goal of the ICPD Programme of Action, namely, to improve human welfare and promote sustainable development, is fully consistent with the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) contained in the Millennium Declaration of 2000 (United Nations, General Assembly, 2000). Indeed, some of the goals in the Programme of Action are identical to the MDGs, including those pertaining to the reduction of child mortality, the improvement of maternal health and the achievement of universal primary education (United Nations, 2005). Recognizing the centrality of the ICPD Programme of Action to these and other developmental challenges in the future, the General Assembly has decided to extend the ICPD Programme of Action and its key actions beyond 2014, for further implementation and to “ensure its follow-up in order to fully meet its goals and objectives” (United Nations, General Assembly, 2011a, p. 2).

The Population Division of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs is responsible for global monitoring of the implementation of the Programme of Action adopted by the 1994 ICPD, in the same way as it was responsible for tracking the World Population Plan of Action of the 1974 World Population Conference (United Nations, 1975). In carrying out this task, the Division conducts regular updates of Government policies and programmes related to key population issues, and prepares periodic monitoring reports that adhere to the principles of objectivity and neutrality to measure the progress that countries have made in the implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action.

The current report is part of the efforts of the Population Division to disseminate the information resulting from its monitoring of national population policies and programmes. It provides an overview of population policies and related population indicators for all 193 Member States, two Observer States (the Holy See and the State of Palestine) and two non-member States (Niue and Cook Islands) of the United Nations for data referring to the midpoints of the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s decades—relating approximately to the times when the

three United Nations population conferences were convened at Bucharest (1974), Mexico City (1984) and Cairo (1994)—as well as for two more recent time points, 2005 and 2013.

Successive monitoring reports have documented significant changes since the mid-1970s in Government views on population issues as well as in the formulation, implementation and evaluation of population policies. Monitoring of Government views and policies may itself contribute to an evolution in thinking by increasing global awareness of population and development issues and the need for appropriate and timely policy responses.

MAJOR SOURCES OF INFORMATION

In order to compile the requisite information for monitoring the implementation of the World Population Plan of Action and later the ICPD Programme of Action, the Population Division monitors information on Government views and policies and has established a comprehensive Population Policy Data Bank, now called the World Population Policies Database.

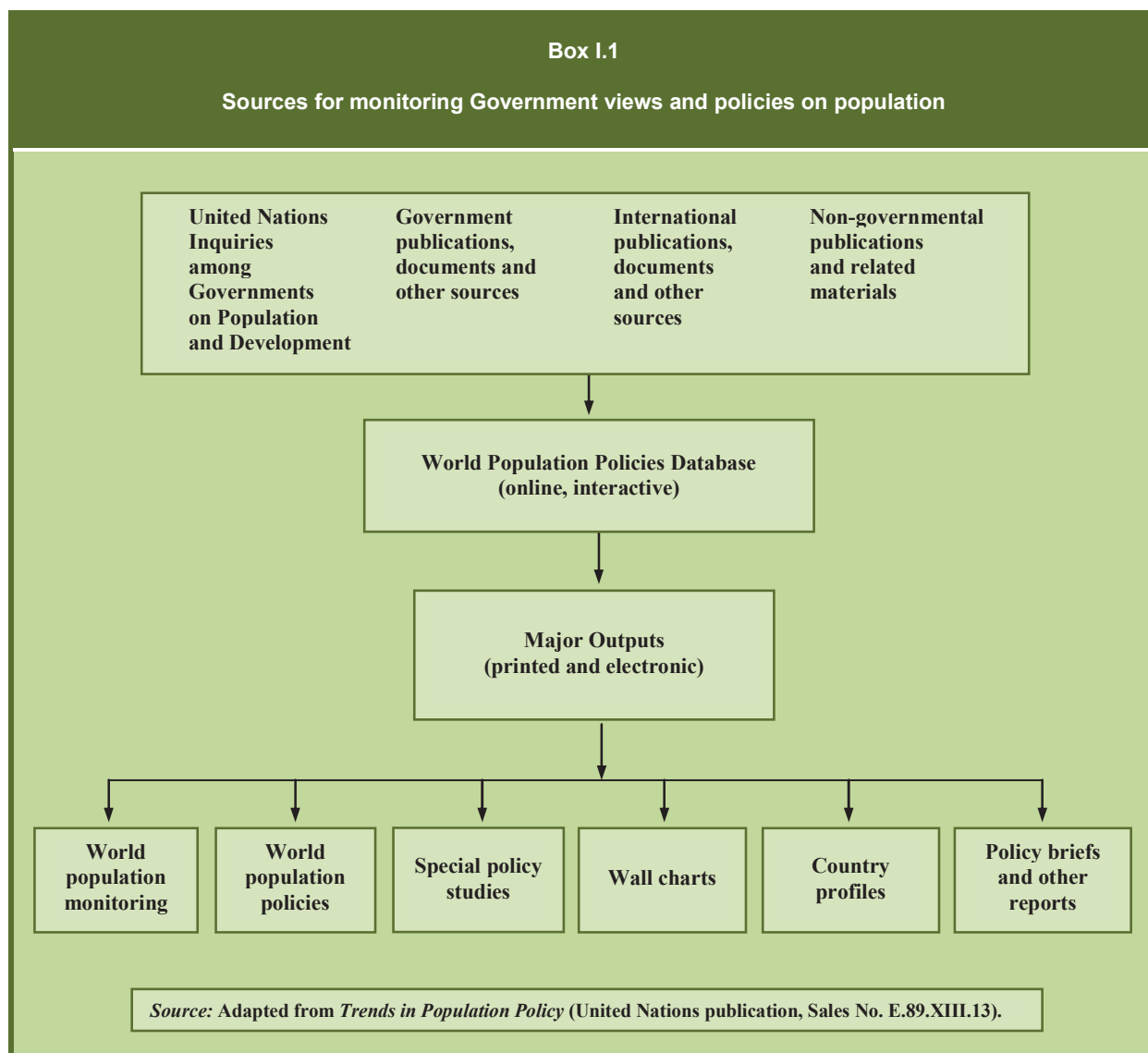
The World Population Policies Database provides comprehensive and available up-to-date information on the population policy situation and trends for 197 countries, including all Member States, Observer States and non-member States of the United Nations. The database shows the evolution of Government views and policies with respect to population size and growth, population age structure, fertility, reproductive health and family planning, health and mortality, spatial distribution and internal migration, and international migration within the context of demographic, social and economic change. The Database is updated biennially by conducting a detailed country-by-country review of information on selected population policy issues from a variety of sources.

The major sources of information contained in the Database are of four broad types (Box I.1).

The first type of information comprises official Government responses to the *United Nations Inquiry among Governments on Population and Development*, of which there have been 10 separate rounds since 1963. Each round of the Inquiry has consisted of a detailed request for information sent to all Member States and non-member States of the United Nations.

The first and second rounds of the Inquiry were conducted prior to the 1974 World Population Conference. The Eighth Inquiry, the first directed towards the ICPD Programme of Action, was initiated in 1997. The Ninth Inquiry was sent to Governments in 2003 and the Tenth Inquiry was sent in 2008. More recently, the Eleventh Inquiry is being developed to be sent to Governments in coming weeks.

The second type of information consists of publications, documents, statements and other materials issued by Governments, including development plans, sectoral programmes, laws, regulations and proclamations. These materials are a particularly important source of data because they reflect the official positions taken by Governments.



The third category of information consists of materials provided by international organizations, such as regional commissions, funds, programmes and agencies of the United Nations system, as well as other regional intergovernmental organizations. Because countries collectively are the source of these materials, an official status is attached to them.

The fourth type of information consists of non-governmental materials, including clippings from the world press, articles in academic journals, proceedings of conferences and seminars, reports and studies prepared by research centres and non-governmental organizations, as well as correspondence and personal communications with experts.

A complete list of policy variables for which information is available in the World Population Policies Database for selected time points since 1976 is provided under the “Data Availability for Policy Variables” section, including a complete mapping of how some of the variable names have changed over time.

The World Population Policies Database can be accessed through an interactive website that allows users to run custom data queries on population policy and demographic indicators for all countries and selected time points since 1976, create graphs and maps, and download country profiles.

ORGANIZATION OF THE REPORT

The report is divided into two parts. Part One provides a global perspective on the evolution of selected aspects of population policies between 1976 and 2013 on the following topics: population size and growth, population age structure, fertility, reproductive health and family planning, health and mortality, spatial distribution and internal migration, and international migration.

For the 2013 revision of the World Population Policies Database, information was gathered between April and October 2013 on 22 selected policy variables, covering the above seven topics. These variables reflect three basic types of policy information: (i) Government views and concerns on the policy significance of selected population issues; (ii) Government intentions and objectives with respect to selected population parameters; and (iii) legal and programmatic measures adopted by Government to influence the levels or direction of selected population parameters.

The information on Government views and policies is presented through summary tables and graphs by level of development and by major geographic regions of the world, divided into four substantive chapters: Population Size, Growth and Age Structure; Fertility, Reproductive Health and Family Planning; Health and Mortality; and Migration. The chapter on Migration covers spatial distribution, internal migration and international migration. Given the 20-year anniversary of the ICPD in 2014, a special effort is made to discuss changes in population policies and programme measures since the mid-1990s.

Part Two of the report presents country-specific information on the evolution of Government views and policies from 1986 to 2013 with respect to population size and growth, population age structure, fertility, reproductive health and family planning, health and mortality, spatial distribution and internal migration, and international migration. Country profiles are presented for each of the 197 countries. The material is presented in the form of two-page country profiles.

The first page of the country profiles contains population policy information for each country referring to four points in time: 1986, 1996, 2005 and 2013. Policy information is presented for all 22 variables included in the 2013 revision of the World Population Policies Database and 20 additional policy variables that were included in the 2011 revision, but not in the 2013 revision. Details about these 42 policy variables, including definitions and response categories, are provided under the “Definitions of Population Policy Variables” section.

The second page of the country profiles provides data on 38 selected demographic and socioeconomic indicators for dates or time periods corresponding to the four revision years for policy information included on the first page of the profiles. Details about these indicators are provided under the “Definitions of Population Indicators” and the “Data Sources for Population Indicators” sections.