

18 August 2016

**UNITED NATIONS EXPERT GROUP MEETING ON
CHANGING POPULATION AGE STRUCTURES
AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

Population Division
Department of Economic and Social Affairs
United Nations Secretariat
New York
13-14 October 2016

CONCEPT NOTE

The world population is experiencing a historical shift in its age distribution, from the mostly young age structures of the past, towards larger proportions of middle-aged and older persons in the present and future decades. This shift is driven by the demographic transition from high to lower levels of both fertility and mortality. The social and economic consequences of these changes vary greatly across regions and countries, due to considerable diversity in levels of fertility and mortality, and in the speed with which the demographic transition has unfolded or is unfolding in different parts of the world. In consideration of these major global demographic trends and their impacts on development, the Commission on Population and Development decided that the special theme of its 50th session, which will take place in New York from 3 to 7 April, 2017, would be “Changing population age structures and sustainable development”.

The Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (1994) recognized the importance of changing age structures for understanding and implementing policies and programmes to achieve the goals of the Programme of Action. Subsequently, the World Programme of Action for Youth (1996) and the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (2002) specified internationally agreed commitments to foster the dignity, social integration, participation and improvement of the living conditions of two major population age groups. Changes in the age composition of the population are also highly relevant for attaining the Goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2015), which, as part of its pledge that “no one will be left behind”, includes a number of targets pertaining explicitly to people of all ages and all social categories, especially in the areas of health, education, decent work, poverty and social protection.

Objective 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 “Changing population age structures and sustainable development”, which will be held in New York on 13-14 October 2016. The purpose

of the meeting is to examine the various aspects of this topic, with emphasis on new evidence and analysis regarding the drivers and consequences of the changing age distribution of the population.

The meeting will bring together experts from different parts of the world to review the demographic drivers of changing population age structures and to examine the implications of shifts in the population age distribution for government policies regarding health, education, work, social protection and intergenerational support.

Substantive materials

The Population Division will prepare a brief presentation on global trends in the population age distribution, household size and composition, and invited speakers/experts will be requested to provide a brief background note, or “think piece”, of approximately 5 pages summarizing their views of the assigned topic, including main results from their own research and other sources. The think piece may include, where appropriate, an analysis of the implications of changes in the population age distribution for implementing the new development agenda and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. We request the submission of these materials by 6 October 2016, both to facilitate their review before the meeting and to start incorporating the material into the substantive preparations for the 50th session of the Commission on Population and Development.

Outcomes of the meeting

A report summarizing the conclusions based on the background notes submitted and on the evidence presented and discussions taking place at the meeting.

The meeting will also provide substantive material for the preparation of the report of the Secretary-General on the special theme of 50th session of the Commission on Population and Development, “Changing population age structures and sustainable development”.