

21 OCTOBER 2025

OPENING REMARKS

Opening remarks by Mr. John Wilmoth, Director, Population Division



**United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
28 October 2025, 8:00 a.m., EDT**

Good morning, good afternoon and good evening and welcome to our experts and colleagues joining us from around the globe.

For those who may not be familiar with the Commission on Population and Development, it is the intergovernmental body of the United Nations charged with the follow-up and review of the Programme of Action that was adopted at the International Conference on Population and Development, or ICPD, held in Cairo, Egypt, in 1994. As part of its mandate, the Commission also contributes to the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which includes the Sustainable Development Goals, or SDGs.

Each year, the Commission selects a special theme for its annual session based on topics addressed at the Cairo conference. One key area, highlighted in Chapter XII of the Programme of Action, is the role of technology and research in understanding how population trends interact with social, economic, and environmental factors. It calls on countries to strengthen their ability to collect, analyze, and share population data to improve planning and policy. The chapter also stresses the importance of research, highlighting first various dimensions of reproductive health research and secondly social and economic research on relevant population and development policies and programmes. Yet the profound transformations of the technological landscape impact the commitments and policy recommendations of every chapter of the Programme of Action.

Over the course of this consultation series for the next two weeks we are focusing on four selected areas: last week we discussed innovations in population data, as well as technology and research in sexual and reproductive health. In today's session we welcome experts technological advances for lengthening healthy, independent and active lifespans, and on Thursday we will look at advance digital inclusion and safety. The evidence and recommendations we hear in these meetings will inform two reports of the Secretary-General: one prepared by the Population Division, that will give an overview of the theme of Population, technology and research in the context of sustainable development; and one prepared by UNFPA, that will present programmes, interventions and best practices in the context of the theme.

As we listen to the presentations and discussion on ageing populations and technological advances for lengthening healthy, independent and active lifespans, over the next two hours, I would ask you to keep a few overarching

questions in mind: First – beyond the remarkable advances in the technology itself that we will hear about today, how have these advances led to better policy making? Second – how do we address concerns about potential harms of these advances, and ensure privacy, safety and equity? Third - in its deliberations this coming spring, where can the CPD best amplify and complement existing recommendations on technology and research—for example from the recent Global Digital Compact--to ensure that the ICPD Agenda remains future-fit for emerging issues?

I would like to thank all of the experts and participants for joining us and sharing your knowledge on these important topics. Together, let's make this a lively, productive, and meaningful meeting.