

Jamaica's Contribution

Commission on Population and Development

Future role and organization of the Commission on Population and Development

Question 1: Given that the Commission is the only inter-governmental forum focussing on the implementation of the Programme of Action of the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in the United Nations, how can we improve its work to better assist Member States and the international community at large in advancing the ICPD agenda while contributing to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)?

The concept and approach to the population since 1974 World Conference on population in the United Nations was never to treat population as a stand-alone, discipline bound enterprise. Population has been inter-linked or interconnected with development from 1974 up to the World Conference in 1984, particularly in its social and economic dimensions. The concept of sustainable development in all its dimensions (social, economic and environmental) advances the original concept of development thereby broadening the sustainability framework within which the ICPD Programme of Action was formulated.

This understanding of the background and operating framework is vital to a better understanding of the relationship between the ICPD Programme of Action and Agenda 2030. Agenda 2030 advances the sustainable development framework and lays the foundation as a natural link between the ICPD POA and Agenda 2030. The implementation of the ICPD POA and Agenda 2030 should therefore be conceptualised and operationalised as integral, complementary and holistic.

The ongoing process of reform in the UN can be normatively interpreted as an attempt to create an integrated, holistic and coordinated structure and programming that minimise duplication and improve efficiency and effectiveness at all levels. Although Agenda 2030 epitomises this effort at the conceptual level, the structural, organizational and programmatic domains of the UN system which are critical for effective realisation are lagging behind at different stages of change

and transformation. The major challenge confronting existing programmatic domains is how to accelerate the rate of change and transformation to synchronise or integrate their mandates and operational modalities within the framework of Agenda 2030. This challenge is a reality for the Commission on Population and Development and probably more so for the other commissions, bodies and organs of the UN. This is so for the reason that the work programme for the CPD and its Secretariat, Population Division, is multifaceted and multidimensional.

At the most basic level, the purely demographic work in the area of population growth, size, structure and distribution, population projections, migration, mortality and fertility feeds into all sustainable development policies, plans and programmes at global, regional and national levels. This work is essential for all areas and should be continued without substantial modification. Further, this work should be integrated into all documentation being prepared for monitoring of the implementation of Agenda 2030 and all other programmes of action.

At a higher level, the interactions and inter-relationships between and among demographic elements and the three dimensions of sustainable development (social, economic and environment) are essential for adequate development, monitoring and evaluation of sustainable development policies and programmes. This aspect of the work of the CPD is probably the least developed and most needed based on the multidimensionality of sustainable development outcomes. In light of this, the work programme of the CPD should be aligned with that of Agenda 2030 on an annual basis. In order to attain this common ground, all bureaux under the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) should meet as necessary to develop and align their work programmes to facilitate congruency and harmonisation.

Question 2: Population and development issues and trends, including drivers and impacts, have important implications for the further implementation of the Programme of Action and the achievement of the SDGs. What role can the Commission play in guiding Member States and the international community in responding to these issues and trends?

As indicated in question 1, the ICPD POA and Agenda 2030 should be seen as complementary, supportive and integrated. Demographic principles, objectives and proposed actions as embodied in the ICPD POA and Further Actions for the Implementation of the POA as well as those proposed in all resolutions of the Commission should be integrated into Agenda 2030 to facilitate achievement of sustainable development. The CPD should envision itself playing a much more expansive and integral role in the implementation of Agenda 2030. This is not currently reflected in all dimensions of its work nor is this reflected in the perspective of the HLPF mandate, documents and planning and operating processes.

Question 3: In order to address the above questions and issues, would it be desirable or feasible for the Commission to adjust its methods of work (organisational aspects, substantive elements, outcome)? If so, could the practices and experiences of other subsidiary bodies of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) provide any guidance?

As implied in the above responses to the questions, the CPD and all other bodies of the UN need to adjust their respective work programmes to ensure inter-alignment with Agenda 2030. This relates to all aspects of their work- organisational, substantive elements, outcome etc). The only exception for CPD relates to the purely demographic work of the Commission/Population Division. The CPD could benefit from the practices of other subsidiary bodies and vice versa. This is primarily a function of the stage of their current adjustments of their programmes to align with that of Agenda 2030. **In the final analysis and to ensure congruency in the programmes of work of all parties (CPD and all subsidiary bodies) , annual planning meeting or meetings of all bureaux under ECOSOC need to be facilitated with this as the primary objective.**

Specific Comments on Work Organisation, Substantive Dimensions and Outcome

Organisational Aspects:

New Proposal: A proposed planning meeting of the bureaux of the HLPF and the subsidiary bodies of the ECOSOC for agreement on multi-year planning cycle, themes to be covered, responsibilities for preparation of documentation and any other planning imperatives. The frequency of the planning meeting (s) can be determined at the inaugural meeting. Collaboration among the various secretariats of the bureaux in the execution of the work programme should be agreed to ensure fluency and timeliness.

This proposed meeting of all bureaux is not expected to replace the regular meetings of the bureau of each subsidiary body. CPD has the mandate to organize its annual session and the frequency of its planning meetings as deemed appropriate to ensure effectiveness. The central focus of the meeting of the CPD for a given year is to facilitate the integration of the selected ICPD theme into that of the theme or themes of Agenda 2030 for that same year.

Term of office of the Bureau: The current one-year term of office has been quite effective for the CPD. There is no serious weakness in this arrangement. All UN commissions' programmes of work need to be synchronised with that of the HLPF. The term of office of each of the commission has no bearing on achieving this objective.

Multi-year work programme: ECOSOC's decision 2017/260 for a four-year cycle for the CPD to be aligned with the cycle for the review and follow-up of the 2030 Agenda should be adopted.

Duration of the sessions: The current duration for the CPD annual session should be followed. There is no strong reason to make any adjustments to coincide with other subsidiary bodies. The work programme should be the only real basis for proposing changes in the duration of the session.

Secretariat support: The Population Division of UNDESA should continue to be the Secretariat of the CPD while UNFPA should continue to operate as an observer in annual sessions with specific responsibility for the preparation of selected documentation. UNFPA should continue to provide assistance to the review and appraisal of the ICPD POA as has been the practice over the years.

Substantive dimensions:**Annual theme:**

The annual theme should be selected to coincide with the 4-year planning cycle of the HLPF. One of the central roles of the CPD is to ensure that population dynamics are integrated into Agenda 2030 in all its dimensions. This new role has to be clearly defined and elaborated by the CPD. The current approach by the CPD in integrating sustainable development (aspects of Agenda 2030) into the programme of work of the Commission is too narrow in both perspective and approach. Population has to be integrated into the programme of work of the HLPF and that this process should be led by the CPD. The selection of the annual themes among the HLPF and the subsidiary bodies of ECOSOC should be done conjointly as proposed above. The annual theme selected on the basis of the implementation of the ICPD POA should not be affected in any significant way by this new consideration.

Panel Discussion:

The inclusion of expert or multi-stakeholder panels on the agenda is primarily the decision of the CPD. There is no need to borrow from existing practices from other subsidiary bodies.

Regional dimensions:

The annual theme for the regional commissions and the CPD at the global level should follow the same 4-year planning cycle of the HLPF. The objective is to ensure that population dynamics are integrated into Agenda 2030 at the regional and national levels. This should be the core of the regional and national programmes as much as at the global level. The question as to how to incorporate the regional peculiarities into the work programme at the regional level should not be a problem. The current practice for the regional commissions to report to the CPD should be continued.

Civil society participation:

The proposal to give consideration to the role of civil society in organizing the annual sessions of CPD should be adopted.

Preparatory expert meeting:

The proposal for the Secretariat to continue convening expert meetings and informal technical briefings on the annual theme should be facilitated.

Outcome:

The proposal for the Commission to consider alternative methods of adoption when taking action on the draft resolution on the annual theme should be pursued. This is so in light of the difficulty in reaching consensus for the adoption of the resolution on the annual theme.

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