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**Statement  
to the 40th Session of the Commission on Population and Development**

**Agenda Item 5:**

**Programme implementation and future programme of work of the Secretariat in the field  
of population**

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Mr Chairman, Delegates,

Thank you for allowing me the honour of presenting to you an overview of the work of the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) in the field of population. At ECE, this work belongs to the Subprogramme on Housing, Land Management and Population and is carried out in the Population Activities Unit of the Environment, Housing and Land Management Division with regular staff of two professionals and one general service staff.

It comprises two thematic areas: (1) population ageing, and (2) generations and gender. Our work in the area of ageing is linked to the implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPAA) and its review and appraisal. Since I already devoted my statement under Agenda Item 3 of this session to these activities, I would concentrate in this statement mainly on the Generations and Gender Programme. However, before doing so, allow me, Mr Chairman, to mention very briefly that the ECE work programme on population for this year includes the Conference on Ageing on 6 to 8 November in León, Spain. This Conference is expected to become an important milestone in reviewing the progress in developing policy responses to ageing and in identifying priorities for future actions in this area.

Mr Chairman, I am now turning to describe the other main thematic area of ECE work on population, namely, generations and gender.

At the International Meeting on Generations & Gender in 2000 in Geneva, Member States invited the ECE secretariat to organize another round of region-wide data collection and research on population issues, building on the successful experiences of the 1980s and the 1990s. This meeting initiated the Generations and Gender Programme (GGP), which is becoming the main source of sound

scientific support for developing policies related to family, fertility and intergenerational relationships in the region. The main policy questions for this programme could be summarised as follows: Are the changes in family and fertility behaviour amenable to policy interventions? Could these interventions influence the changes in ways that can lead to economically and socially sustainable demographic outcomes?

The Programme comprises (1) a survey that deals with a broad range of influences on demographic behaviour in a longitudinal panel study, (2) a related contextual database that covers national and regional trends and policies on these issues and (3) policy-oriented analysis of these data.

The ECE secretariat is co-ordinating the Programme, with support from a consortium of seven premier institutions in the field of population studies. Work of the Programme Manager at ECE is carried out on extra-budgetary funds, which are currently provided through a grant from the European Commission.

The participating countries have formed GGP national committees, consisting of national institutions, such as government ministries or agencies, national statistical offices and academic institutions. Leading members of the national committees represent their respective countries at the GGP International Working Group (IWG), which reviews programme progress and decides on strategic issues in programme development, most recently in January this year in Ljubljana, Slovenia.

As of this time, the conceptual framework and most methodological instruments of the Generations and Gender Programme have been completed and published. By the end of 2007, at least 16 countries will have completed data collection in the first panel wave of the survey; preparations are under way in several other countries. The contextual database has been made available online.

The ECE Secretariat is currently working on establishing the central micro-data archive that is expected to boost comparative studies in a number of policy-relevant areas, on preparing the standard tables and indicators of the GGP and making them available through the programme website, and on advising the national committees in programme implementation.

During this and next year, the focus is shifting from the technical tasks related to data collection to the preparation of policy-oriented research outputs. In spring 2008, the Conference *Causes and Consequences of Demographic Change: Policy-Relevant Insights from the Generations and Gender Programme* is planned to take place in Geneva as a meeting of experts and policymakers. It is expected to demonstrate the novel insights the GGP provides for developing population related policies in the UNECE region. In this connection, it is worth mentioning that analyses emanating from the GGP can also provide valuable insights for several policy areas addressed in the ECE Regional Implementation Strategy of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing.

Thank you for your attention.