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**Commission on Population and Development****Fifty-fourth session**

19 - 23 April 2021

Item 4 of the provisional agenda\*

**Programme implementation and future programme  
of work of the Secretariat in the field of population****Programme plan for 2021 and programme performance  
for 2019: subprogramme 5, Population, of programme 7,  
Economic and social affairs****Note by the Secretariat**

1. The programme plan of the Secretariat in the field of population for the year 2021, as published in [A/75/6\(Sect.9\)](#) for subprogramme 5, Population, of programme 7, Economic and social affairs, is contained in the annex to the present note.
2. Since 2020, the strategic framework and proposed programme of work have been aligned with the annual programme budget approved by the General Assembly in its resolution [72/266 A](#), which included a new results framework. A draft of the updated results framework was proposed in annex III to the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Shifting the management paradigm in the United Nations: improving and streamlining the programme planning and budgeting process" ([A/72/492/Add.1](#)).
3. The content for the subprogramme published in [A/75/6\(Sect.9\)](#) includes the programme narrative and list of deliverables for 2021, as well as a review of programme performance for 2019.
4. The Commission is invited to take note of the programme plan for 2021 and to make suggestions concerning future priorities for the work of the subprogramme.

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\* E/CN.9/2021/1.

## Annex

Excerpted from [A/75/6\(Sect.9\)](#), Proposed programme budget for 2021, Part IV, International cooperation for development, Section 9, Economic and social affairs, Programme 7, Economic and social affairs (pp. 43-49)

### Subprogramme 5

#### Population

##### Objective

- 9.95 The objective, to which this subprogramme contributes, is to improve knowledge of global population trends, advance an evidence-based understanding of interactions between population change and sustainable development among policymakers and the public, and to strengthen the international community's capacity to effectively address current and emerging population issues and integrate the population dimension into the international development agenda.

##### Strategy

- 9.96 To contribute to the improvement of knowledge of global population trends and the advancement of an evidence-based understanding of interactions between population change and sustainable development among policymakers and the public, the subprogramme will prepare studies on issues related to population growth, population ageing, migration, urbanization, fertility, family planning, mortality and other aspects of population in relation to sustainable development. This work will emphasize and rely upon the production of population estimates and projections, the analysis of demographic trends and the evaluation of population policies. The subprogramme will produce comprehensive global data sets on selected topics, as well as "highlights" reports on these topics and an annual report on a selected demographic megatrend. The subprogramme will disseminate population data, information and policy-relevant findings through its website and other means of outreach and communication. These actions are expected to result in improved access to data and reports on population matters for Governments and other users and increased use of the subprogramme's data and findings in the work of stakeholders. Past results in this area include the uptake of *World Population Prospects 2019*, released in June 2019. The *World Population Prospects* website had more than 1.4 million page views from 17 June 2019 to 31 December 2019, including downloads of data files and related reports by more than 427,000 users, 160,000 visits to obtain charts or maps and more than 190,000 interactive data queries, demonstrating the utility of the subprogramme's population estimates and projections to users in many fields. Other products with high uptake by the international community include the subprogramme's data sets and reports on urbanization, international migration and population ageing.
- 9.97 To contribute to strengthening the international community's capacity to effectively address current and emerging population issues and integrating the population dimension into the international development agenda, the subprogramme will provide substantive support to United Nations intergovernmental bodies, in particular the Commission on Population and Development, including by preparing reports of the Secretary-General and by convening expert meetings and panels. The subprogramme will assist Governments in assessing progress made in implementing the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development held in 1994, and achieving internationally agreed development goals, including the Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, with a particular focus on the global monitoring of Goal indicators on reproductive health, international migration and child and maternal mortality, often in partnership with other entities of the United Nations system. In addition, the subprogramme will continue to improve the United Nations estimates and projections of the global population. These actions are expected to result in accurate data and policy-relevant reports on population trends

and their relationship to sustainable development that benefit Member States and other stakeholders in policy and development planning. Past results in this area include the declaration on the occasion of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the International Conference on Population and Development held in Cairo in 1994, in which Governments pledged to undertake further action to ensure the full and accelerated implementation of the Programme of Action adopted by the Conference. Another important result is the finding that data produced by the subprogramme are being used by custodian agencies for the global monitoring of about one third of the Sustainable Development Goal indicators currently classified as tier 1 and tier 2.

### **Programme performance in 2019 against planned result**

- 9.98 A planned result for 2019, which is increased attention given to new and emerging population issues by the international community and increased knowledge and understanding of the interactions between population and development, including the gender dimensions of demographic phenomena, as referred to in the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2018–2019, was achieved, as evidenced by the 811,000 downloads of publications and data sets on population topics by stakeholders from the subprogramme’s website in 2019, compared with 652,000 in 2018, an increase of almost 25 per cent, far exceeding the biennial target of 10,000.

### **Programme performance in 2019: new Sustainable Development Goals monitoring tool on international migration**

- 9.99 The subprogramme is a designated custodian or “partner” agency for 14 Sustainable Development Goal indicators, and serves as co-custodian, together with the International Organization for Migration (IOM), for indicator 10.7.2 on migration policies that facilitate the orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people.
- 9.100 No suitable data existed for indicator 10.7.2 before 2018. In agreement with the co-custodian and partner agencies, the United Nations Inquiry among Governments on Population and Development, mandated by the General Assembly and fielded 11 times by the subprogramme between 1963 and 2014, was adapted to serve as the data collection instrument for gathering country-specific data to measure this indicator. The revamped Inquiry is divided into three modules: module I on population ageing and urbanization; module II on fertility, family planning and reproductive health; and module III on international migration. Module II integrates the questions needed to measure indicator 5.6.2, and module III does the same for indicator 10.7.2. The development of the methodology for measuring indicator 10.7.2, as well as the new questionnaire for module III of the Inquiry, benefited from extensive consultations with countries and experts in all regions. The methodology was subsequently approved by the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators. The new Inquiry was fielded in late 2018 in close collaboration with the United Nations Population Fund, IOM and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. By the end of 2019, 111 Governments had responded to at least one of the modules (a response rate of 56 per cent), and the resulting data informed the annual reports on progress towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

#### *Progress towards the attainment of the objective, and performance measure*

- 9.101 This work contributed to strengthening the international community’s capacity to integrate the population dimension into the international development agenda, as demonstrated by the collection of consistent national data and baseline measures of Sustainable Development Goal indicator 10.7.2 through the twelfth United Nations Inquiry among Governments on Population and Development.

Table 9.12  
**Performance measure**

2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is adopted and includes target 10.7 on facilitating safe, orderly and regular migration	Indicator framework is adopted; no countries have systematic data for measuring indicator 10.7.2 on migration policies	Methodology for measuring indicator 10.7.2 is piloted and consultation and validation process begins	Methodology for indicator 10.7.2 is approved by the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators; twelfth Inquiry is launched	111 countries complete module III, providing a baseline estimate for indicator 10.7.2

### Planned results for 2021

#### **Result 1: improved accessibility of policy-relevant data and analysis, through streamlined reports and multimodal dissemination (result carried over from 2020)**

- 9.102 The subprogramme will continue the work related to the accessibility of data and analysis, in line with its mandate, and will continue to refine its reports and data sets, including on megatrends, for broader reach and accessibility of the information, which is expected to be demonstrated by the performance measure for 2021 below. For 2020, a proxy performance measure is indicated to reflect that the General Assembly, in its resolution [74/251](#), approved a programme narrative at the subprogramme level that is composed solely of the objectives approved by the Assembly in its resolution [71/6](#) and the deliverables for 2020.

Table 9.13  
**Performance measure**

2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
N/A	Numerous and lengthy thematic reports; overlap between full reports and highlights reports	Development of a new series on megatrends to replace longer thematic reports	Targeted promotion of new annual megatrends report leads to an increase in the number of downloads	Impact of megatrends report is visible in references to the report in websites and articles

*Abbreviation:* N/A, not applicable.

#### **Result 2: global population estimates and projections for the Sustainable Development Goals era (new result)**

- 9.103 The subprogramme produces and disseminates comprehensive and consistent population estimates and projections for all countries and regions, describing levels and trends of the global population and its three components of change (fertility, mortality and international migration). This information is relevant to all three dimensions of sustainable development (social, economic and environmental). *World Population Prospects*, the most widely cited collection of global population estimates and projections, is used extensively within the United Nations system (e.g., for calculating about one third of the Sustainable Development Goal indicators currently classified as tier 1 and tier 2), as well as by Member States, civil society and academic researchers around the world. The next revision of *World Population Prospects*, produced biennially, is due in mid-2021. To accommodate the evolving needs of users, future versions of *World Population Prospects* will

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provide greater detail, while at the same time maintain high standards of transparency and replicability. In order to produce data as needed by users and improve its accessibility, *World Population Prospects 2021* will benefit from a new information technology infrastructure for data production and a new online portal for data dissemination.

- 9.104 More broadly, the subprogramme has started work to integrate its existing data sets, previously disseminated in different forms and formats, into a central data portal to improve public access to the information. The central data portal will also provide enhanced descriptions of data sets as requested by users for transparency and replicability in monitoring progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals and other uses.

*Internal challenge and response*

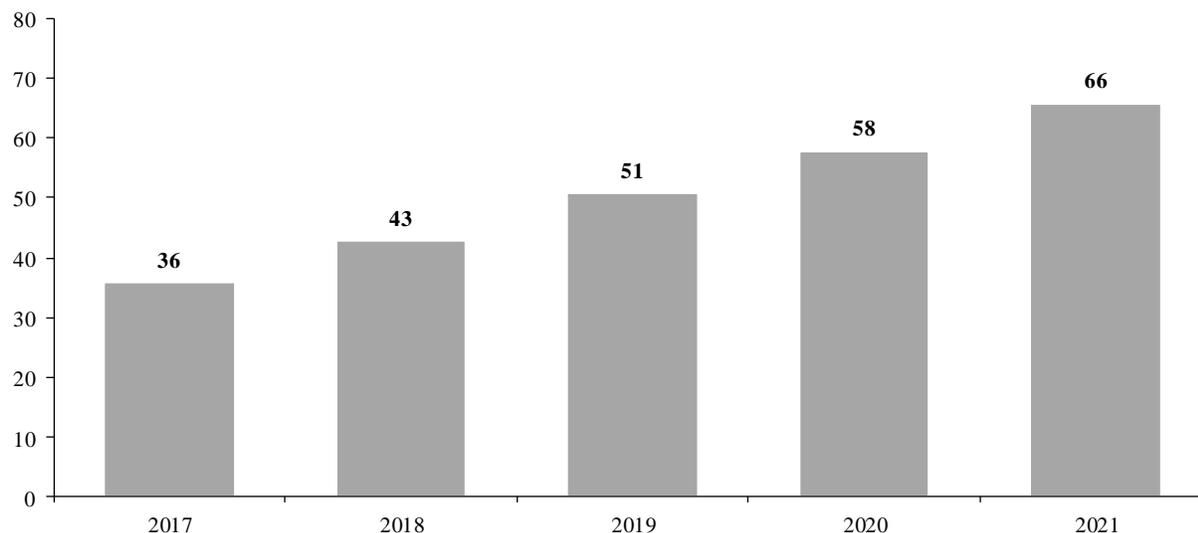
- 9.105 The challenge for the subprogramme was that the *World Population Prospects* data set has been produced using information technology that has evolved over several decades and includes some outdated software tools that no longer have technical support. This data infrastructure has been challenging to maintain and is inadequate to produce population estimates and projections at the level of detail currently desired by users, including for the global monitoring of progress toward the Sustainable Development Goals. In addition, the current infrastructure does not provide access to state-of-the-art tools for data visualization that would enhance Member States' and other stakeholders' analytical capacity to integrate the population dimension into the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. In response, in 2021 the subprogramme will reorganize and update its information technology infrastructure to improve both the quality and the accessibility of its global population data. The data portal for dissemination will add interactive tools for data visualization to generate, for example, graphs, population pyramids and thematic maps, which will improve users' ability to compare and analyse population patterns and trends.

*Expected progress towards the attainment of the objective, and performance measure*

- 9.106 This work is expected to contribute to strengthening the international community's capacity to effectively address current and emerging population issues and to integrate the population dimension into the international development agenda through the effective use of population estimates and projections, which would be demonstrated by the number of publications in the public domain that reference *World Population Prospects* as a source of population data used for analytical work. For example, based on the past trend in the number of citations in academic articles, rising from 36,000 in 2017 to 51,000 in 2019, it is projected that the cumulative number of citations may rise to approximately 66,000 in 2021.

Figure 9.VI

**Performance measure: annual number of citations of *World Population Prospects* in academic articles**



### Legislative mandates

9.107 The list below provides all mandates entrusted to the subprogramme.

#### *General Assembly resolutions*

<a href="#">49/128</a>	Report of the International Conference on Population and Development	<a href="#">68/4</a>	Declaration of the High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development
<a href="#">S-21/2</a>	Key actions for the further implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development	<a href="#">71/1</a>	New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants
<a href="#">57/299</a>	Follow-up to the outcome of the twenty-sixth special session: implementation of the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS	<a href="#">72/281</a>	International Day of Family Remittances
<a href="#">65/234</a>	Follow-up to the International Conference on Population and Development beyond 2014	<a href="#">73/195</a>	Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration
		<a href="#">73/241</a>	International migration and development
		<a href="#">73/326</a>	Format and organizational aspects of the international migration review forums

#### *Economic and Social Council resolutions and decisions*

1994/2	Work programme in the field of population	1999/10	Population growth, structure and distribution
1995/55	Implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development	2005/213	Improvement of the work of the Commission on Population and Development
1997/2	International migration and development	<a href="#">2016/25</a>	Future organization and methods of work of the Commission on Population and Development
1997/42	Follow-up to the International Conference on Population and Development		

#### *Commission on Population and Development*

1997/2	Reporting requirements to the Commission on Population and Development	2001/1	Population, environment and development
1997/3	Work programme in the field of population	2003/1	Population, education and development
1998/1	Health and mortality	2004/1	Work programme in the field of population
2000/1	Population, gender and development		

2004/2	Follow-up to the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development		and Development to the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals
2005/1	Population, development and HIV/AIDS, with particular emphasis on poverty	2010/1	Health, morbidity, mortality and development
2005/2	Contribution of the implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, in all its aspects, to the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the United Nations Millennium Declaration	2011/1 2012/1 2013/1 2014/1	Fertility, reproductive health and development Adolescents and youth New trends in migration: demographic aspects Assessment of the status of implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development
2006/1	Methods of work of the Commission on Population and Development	2016/1	Strengthening the demographic evidence base for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development
2006/2	International migration and development		
2007/1	Changing age structures of populations and their implications for development		Declaration on the occasion of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the International Conference on Population and Development, as contained in the report on the fifty-second session of the Commission on Population and Development (E/2019/25-E/CN.9/2019/6)
2008/1	Population distribution, urbanization, internal migration and development		
2009/1	The contribution of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population		

## Deliverables

9.108 Table 9.14 lists all deliverables, by category and subcategory, for the period 2019–2021 that contributed and are expected to contribute to the attainment of the objective stated above.

Table 9.14

### Subprogramme 5: deliverables for the period 2019–2021, by category and subcategory

Category and subcategory	2019 planned	2019 actual	2020 planned	2021 planned
<b>A. Facilitation of the intergovernmental process and expert bodies</b>				
<b>Parliamentary documentation</b> (number of documents)	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>
1. Reports to the General Assembly	–	–	1	–
2. Reports to the Commission on Population and Development	2	2	3	2
<b>Substantive services for meetings</b> (number of three-hour meetings)	<b>33</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>33</b>
3. Meetings of the General Assembly	–	–	7	–
4. Meetings of the Economic and Social Council	1	1	1	1
5. Meetings of the Commission on Population and Development	24	24	24	24
6. Meetings of experts on population topics	8	6	8	8
<b>B. Generation and transfer of knowledge</b>				
<b>Publications</b> (number of publications)	<b>17</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>
7. <i>World Population Monitoring 2019: Concise report</i>	1	1	–	–
8. <i>World Population Prospects: Highlights</i>	1	1	–	1
9. <i>World Population Prospects 2019, Vol. I: Comprehensive Tables</i>	1	1	–	–
10. <i>World Population Prospects 2019, Vol II: Demographic Profiles</i>	1	1	–	–
11. <i>World Population Prospects 2019: Methodology</i>	1	1	–	–
12. <i>World Mortality 2019</i>	1	1	–	–
13. <i>World Mortality: Highlights</i>	1	1	–	–

<i>Category and subcategory</i>	<i>2019 planned</i>	<i>2019 actual</i>	<i>2020 planned</i>	<i>2021 planned</i>
14. Report on emerging issues in health and mortality	1	1	–	–
15. Report on population and development topics*	1	1	1	–
16. <i>International Migration 2019</i>	1	1	–	–
17. <i>International Migration: Highlights</i>	1	1	1	–
18. <i>World Fertility 2019</i>	1	1	–	–
19. <i>World Fertility and Family Planning: Highlights</i>	1	1	1	–
20. <i>World Population Ageing 2019</i>	1	1	–	–
21. <i>World Population Ageing: Highlights*</i>	1	1	–	–
22. <i>World Population Policies 2019</i>	1	1	–	–
23. <i>World Population Policies: Highlights</i>	1	1	–	1
24. <i>Population Megatrends</i>	–	–	1	1
25. Questionnaire for the thirteenth United Nations Inquiry among Governments on Population and Development	–	–	1	–
<b>Technical materials</b> (number of materials)	<b>16</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>12</b>
26. Major data sets on population topics	4	4	2	2
27. Sustainable Development Goal indicator data sets	1	2	3	3
28. Reports of expert group meetings on population topics	5	4	3	3
29. Technical papers on population topics	6	6	4	4

#### C. Substantive deliverables

**Consultation, advice and advocacy:** briefings for and consultations with Member States for the Commission on Population and Development; briefings/expert advice to Member States on sustainable development issues, including high-level bilateral consultations and intergovernmental meetings.

**Databases and substantive digital materials:** databases and data sets on population topics.

#### D. Communication deliverables

**Outreach programmes, special events and information materials:** booklets, fact sheets, wallcharts and information kits on population topics.

**External and media relations:** press conferences, press releases and social media content related to the Commission on Population and Development; press releases and social media content to support the launch of major publications or data sets; responses to requests from Member States, the media, United Nations entities and other stakeholders.

**Digital platforms and multimedia content:** interactive data visualization and other Internet content on population topics.

\* Note: A *World Population Ageing: Highlights* report was produced in 2020 in place of the output labelled “Report on population and development topics”.