



CONCEPT NOTE

The special theme of the 55th session of the Commission on Population and Development will be ***Population and sustainable development, in particular sustained and inclusive economic growth***. The theme is related to chapter III of the Programme of Action adopted by the International Conference on Population and Development (Cairo, Egypt, September 1994). That chapter focused on the integration of population in development strategies, and on the interlinkages between population, sustained economic growth and poverty on the one hand, and between population and the environment on the other.

These issues remain relevant today and have in fact assumed new importance and urgency. More research and evidence are now available on the connections between population dynamics and economic growth. Ending poverty in all its forms everywhere was enshrined by UN Member States as the first of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to be achieved by 2030. Poverty and other forms of inequality are receiving renewed attention in the light of the global health crisis and economic downturns caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Since the Cairo conference, there has been an accumulation of evidence on environmental problems attributable to unsustainable patterns of production and consumption. Such problems are compounded and amplified by continuing population growth. International commitments to take decisive action on climate change are part of the 2030 Agenda (including in SDG 13) and at the core of the Paris Agreement.

Population ageing, a gradual but relentless global demographic trend, brings the potential of economic benefits and personal opportunities associated with longer and healthier lives, as well as increased fiscal and macroeconomic pressures. Potential demographic dividends may not be realized in all developing countries, some of which could “getting old before getting rich”. As more countries are entering advanced stages of population ageing, those with persistently low levels of fertility face the reality or the prospect of population decline and need to formulate appropriate policy responses.

Extensive, systematic and comparable data are now available concerning the economic roles and contributions of men and women, both in the labour market and within households. Such data shed new light on the “gendered economy” and are relevant for SDG 5 on promoting gender equality.

This expert group meeting will review the latest evidence and analysis of these topics, drawing from the experiences of countries in all regions of the world. The presentations and discussion during the expert meeting are expected to generate inputs for the preparation of the Secretary-General's report on the theme of the 55th session of the Commission.

The *mandate* of the Commission, as reaffirmed in 2016, is to monitor, review and assess the implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD). Within that mandate, the Commission contributes also to the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, taking into account the integrated nature of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and their interlinkages. Each year, the Commission aims to adopt a resolution on the special theme of its annual session.

Key topics to be addressed in the expert meeting would be:

- Trends in the interrelations between population dynamics, macroeconomic growth, poverty and inequalities, including recent evidence about the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. New era of low interest rates and implications for global income and wealth inequality.
- The role of the intergenerational economy in enabling demographic dividends and in financing social programs against the background of demographic shifts.
- The “gendered economy” and accounting of the full economic contributions of women (within and outside of the household), and their connections to gender equality and the empowerment of women. Issues pertaining to the economy of care and its potential role in the new green economy.
- Health sector and labour market issues related to the extension of lifespans and healthy ageing, including flexible work and retirement arrangements, role of labour migration, etc.
- Policy challenges and financing, including for the labour market and social protection, faced by countries transitioning toward advanced stages of population ageing, including those experiencing, or expected to see soon, population decline.
- Interlinkages between population, sustainable consumption and production, the environment and climate change.
- National and regional experiences in the integration of population issues in development planning and strategies.
- Suggestions of other ways in which the Secretary-General’s report could effectively support the Commission’s mandate to review and assess the implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action and its contribution to achieving the SDGs.

The meeting, convened by the Population Division of the Department for Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), in collaboration with the Division for Economic Analysis and Policy (EAPD) and for Inclusive Social Development (DISD), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the UN

Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), will be held online using the Microsoft Teams or other platform. The organization of work gives the schedule of the sessions, designed to accommodate participants from different time zones. The length of presentations will be limited to 10 minutes, to allow sufficient time for discussion. Written inputs from speakers are encouraged, but not required.

The Population Division will prepare a report summarizing the discussions and key conclusions of the meeting. With the permission of participants, their presentations will be posted on the website of the meeting.