



United Nations

Department of
Economic and
Social Affairs

EXPERT GROUP MEETING ON
ASSESSING THE STATUS OF IMPLEMENTATION
OF THE ICPD PROGRAMME OF ACTION AND ITS
CONTRIBUTION TO THE FOLLOW-UP AND REVIEW
OF THE 2030 AGENDA

(Virtual meeting)
New York, 19-20 July 2023

19 JULY 2023

OPENING REMARKS

**Opening remarks by Mr. John Wilmoth, Director, Population Division United Nations
Department of Economic and Social Affairs**

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Good morning, good afternoon and good evening. My name is John Wilmoth, Director of the Population Division of the United Nations, in the Department of Economic and Social Affairs.

Let me begin by extending a warm welcome to all of you. Thank you for participating in this expert group meeting, which is being organized as part of the preparations for the 57th session of the Commission on Population and Development, which will be held from 28 April to 2 May 2024.

At its last session, the Commission decided that the theme for its upcoming session will be as follows: “Assessing the status of implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and its contribution to the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development during the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development”.

For those not familiar with the Commission, it is the intergovernmental body of the United Nations charged with the follow-up and review of the Programme of Action adopted by UN Member States at the International Conference on Population and Development, held in Cairo, Egypt, in 1994. As part of its mandate to follow up on the Cairo agreement, the Commission contributes to the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2015.

Each year, the Commission selects a special theme for the annual session guided by the topics considered in the Programme of Action. Next year's theme is quite broad and suggests that the Commission will undertake a comprehensive review of the status of implementation of the Programme of Action, looking both backwards and forwards. The selection of this broad theme coincides with the 30th anniversary of the Cairo conference.

Today's meeting is being convened to gather the latest evidence and insights concerning both progress and gaps in implementing the Programme of Action and to take stock, similarly, of progress and gaps in achieving those elements of the Sustainable Development Goals that are closely related to population and development issues. The primary purpose of this meeting is to inform the reports of the Secretary-General that will be prepared by the Population Division and UNFPA over the next few months to serve as inputs to the deliberations of Member States during the Commission's 57th session next year.



Population Division

As you know, considerable progress has been made in implementing the Programme of Action since 1994. However, this progress has been uneven both within and among countries, and the benefits of social and economic progress have not been shared equitably.

Perhaps the most important part of this meeting will be the discussion on possible recommendations to include in the reports of the Secretary-General on next year's theme. The recommendations should address priorities for policies and programmes in the area of population and development, considering the social, economic and environmental aspects of sustainable development and keeping in mind the pledge contained in the 2030 Agenda that no one will be left behind.

Managing the discussion of such a broad topic can be challenging, so it is important to narrow the scope somewhat. In earlier discussions between the Population Division and UNFPA, we have agreed that the narrative of the two reports on the theme of next year's session will be framed around an understanding of population dynamics and the linkages between population megatrends and achievement of sustainable development.

Thus, over the next two days, we will review evidence and discuss policy recommendations related to four of the defining global trends of our time: population growth, population ageing, international migration and urbanization. We will seek to identify clear and helpful conclusions about the global demographic situation and to formulate concise and actionable recommendations that can inform the discussion by Member States in the session next year.

I wish to thank all the experts and other participants for joining us today and tomorrow and for sharing your knowledge and insights on these important topics. This hybrid meeting is also being attended by representatives of Member States, civil society and the UN system.

I encourage everyone to participate in the question-and-answer segment at the end of each session, including the interactive closing session tomorrow afternoon. I also wish to remind you that this is not an intergovernmental meeting, and therefore the priority to intervene in the discussions will not follow the usual protocol of UN formal meetings. We are here to listen and learn from the experts, and I look forward to an interesting and productive meeting.

In this opening session, I am joined by two colleagues who unfortunately cannot be here in person right now. However, we will see each of them later today.

First, we will hear from H.E. Ambassador Noemí Ruth Espinoza Madrid, the current Chair of the Commission on Population and Development. Ambassador Espinoza began her career in 1996 at the Permanent Mission of Honduras to the United Nations, where she rose to the rank of Ambassador, Deputy Permanent Representative. She was also a senior adviser on strategic engagements in the Office of the President of the 73rd Session of the United Nations General Assembly. Unfortunately, she has a scheduling conflict this morning and is not able to attend the opening session. She will join us later this morning to deliver some opening remarks at the start of Session II.

I will now invite our UNFPA colleague, Ms. Priscilla Idele, to deliver some opening remarks by pre-recorded video message. Although a scheduling conflict has prevented her from attending this opening session, Ms. Idele will be joining us in person for other sessions of this meeting.

Ms. Priscilla Idele joined UNFPA recently as Chief of the Population and Development Branch in New York. She also spent several years at UNICEF, including serving as Deputy Director of the UNICEF Office of Research in Florence, Italy, and Global Chief of Data and Analytics in New York. More recently, she was a principal adviser in the Executive Office of the Secretary-General in New York. Priscilla holds a Ph.D. in Social Statistics from the University of Southampton, United Kingdom.