



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

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

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SESSION V NOTES

DAY 2: Thursday, 20 July 2023

Session V: Leaving no one behind in an ageing world

Background

Population ageing is a defining global trend of our time. People are living longer, and more people are older than ever before. Spectacular improvements in health and survival and reductions in fertility have driven this momentous shift, which has begun or is expected to begin soon in all countries and areas. This change brings both challenges and opportunities as countries strive to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). While the ICPD Programme of Action did not specifically address population ageing as a standalone topic, it envisaged that the economic and social impact of this “ageing of populations” was both a challenge as well as an opportunity to all societies. The Programme of Action also recognized the importance of addressing the rights and needs of individuals throughout their life-course, including old age. Other priority areas of the Programme of Action, such as gender equality and empowerment, health and social services, reproductive health and rights, indirectly contribute to addressing issues related to population ageing.

Since the adoption of the ICPD Programme of Action, there have been subsequent global agreements and frameworks that specifically address population ageing. This is particularly the case with the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPAA) adopted in 2002 and the United Nations Decade of Healthy Ageing (adopted by the General Assembly in 2020) that explicitly recognize the unique challenges and opportunities associated with population ageing and that provide a more comprehensive framework for addressing these issues. Also, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) recognize the implications of population aging. For example, Goal 3 acknowledges the importance of addressing the health needs of all at all ages and its implementation can contribute to promote longer and healthier lives for all, including older persons.

Population ageing is an inevitable result of the demographic transition towards longer lives and smaller families. While the shift towards older populations is largely irreversible, collective actions and policy decisions shape its path and consequences. Postponing critical measures that



Population Division

allow societies to benefit from and adapt to population ageing would impose high social, economic, fiscal and health-related costs, for both current and future generations. By contrast, with appropriate foresight and planning, Governments can manage the challenges from population ageing while enhancing opportunities for all people to thrive and ensuring that no one is left behind. Population ageing needs to be widely understood as more than just a set of discrete concerns mainly for one group of people who have advanced beyond a given chronological age. Ageing touches all parts of economies and societies, from health care and education to employment and taxation. Each stage of life can contribute to or detract from well-being at older ages.

Guiding Questions:

1. Implications of ageing for the macroeconomy and intergenerational equity

- How does population ageing affect gender aspects of labour force participation rates and productivity, and what are the implications for economic growth?
- What are the fiscal implications of population ageing, particularly in terms of healthcare and pension systems, and how can governments address these challenges?
- What are the intergenerational equity considerations related to population ageing, and how can policies ensure a fair distribution of resources and opportunities across different age groups?
- How can technological advancements and innovation contribute to addressing the challenges and opportunities associated with population ageing?
- What are the potential business opportunities that arise from population ageing and how can companies tap into them effectively?
- How does population aging impact the world of work, and what strategies can organizations implement to adapt to these changing demographics effectively?

2. Ageing, social protection and socioeconomic inequality, now and in the future

- What role can intergenerational solidarity play in mitigating socioeconomic inequality and promoting social cohesion in the context of population ageing?
- What innovative approaches or best practices from different countries can be adopted to address social protection and socioeconomic inequality in the context of population ageing?
- What are the long-term projections for socioeconomic inequality among older adults, and what policies can be implemented now to prevent or mitigate future disparities?
- What lessons can be drawn from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemics on the older population?

3. Increasing care needs and the care economy

- What are the potential opportunities for job creation and economic growth within the care sector, and how can policies foster its development?
- What are the economic and social implications of the care sector's expansion in the developed but increasingly also in the less developed world? How can policies promote its growth while ensuring quality care and fair working conditions?
- What new opportunities and technologies are and will be available to improve the quality of life of older persons, enhance the ability of families (particularly of female members) and communities to care for older family members, to foster generational solidarity, and to maintain and improve social cohesion?
- What international experiences and models can be drawn upon to inform policy development and address the challenges and opportunities related to increasing care needs in the context of population ageing?