



Expert panel on the reports of the Secretary-General

Monday, 7 April 2025, 3:00 – 4:30 p.m. EDT

Concept Note (draft, 7 March 2025)

Introduction

The Commission on Population and Development, at its fifty-eighth session, will consider the special theme of “Ensuring healthy lives and promoting well-being for all at all ages”.¹ On the afternoon of Monday 7 April, the Commission will organize an expert panel to discuss the three reports of the Secretary-General prepared for the general debate (item 3 of the agenda).² The panel will include experts from the Population Division of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and other UN entities. The panel will be moderated by a Vice-Chair of the Bureau of the fifty-eighth session.

Background

The Programme of Action adopted by Governments at the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), held in Cairo, Egypt in 1994, reaffirmed that everyone has the right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health and called for increasing the availability and affordability of healthcare services, particularly primary health care services, to provide access to basic health care for all.

The comprehensive health-related goals identified in the ICPD were integrated and further elaborated in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including as part of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). SDG 3, “Ensuring healthy lives and promoting wellbeing for all at all ages”, includes 13 targets covering health topics ranging from reproductive, maternal, newborn and child health and infectious and non-communicable diseases (NCDs) to universal health coverage and measures to strengthen health systems. Critical elements of health, including sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights, are

¹ For further information on the annual session, including the reports of the Secretary-General, please refer to <https://www.un.org/development/desa/pd/events/CPD58>.

² (a) Ensuring healthy lives and promoting wellbeing for all at all ages (E/CN.9/2025/2), (b) Programmes and interventions for the implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development in the context of ensuring healthy lives and promoting well-being for all at all ages (E/CN.9/2025/3), and (c) Flow of financial resources for assisting in the further implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (E/CN.9/2025/4). In response to General Assembly 72/305, the Bureau of the Commission has substituted the traditional presentation of the three reports of the Secretary-General prepared for the general debate, with an expert panel to be followed by an interactive debate.

addressed in other SDGs, notably SDG 5 on gender equality. Additionally, the Programme of Action acknowledged the links between health, population dynamics, and environmental changes, recognizing that migration, urbanization, ageing, and climate-related factors can influence health outcomes and should be integrated into policy responses.

The reports of the Secretary-General on the theme of the fifty-eighth session review progress and obstacles in achieving the health-related goals of the ICPD and the 2030 Agenda. Taking a life-course approach to the theme, the two thematic reports outline key health needs at different life stages, measures needed to achieve universal health coverage, and the implications of different demographic profiles for the sustainability of health systems. The report on flow of financial resources reviews recent trends in aid for population and health.

The panel gives the opportunity for delegates to interact with authors of the reports as well as other experts on the topic.

Structure and format

The panel discussion will be chaired and moderated by a Vice-Chair of the Commission on Population and Development. The Vice-Chair will open the session with brief remarks and introduce the panellists and discussants. Representatives from UN DESA and UNFPA will offer policy insights based on the key messages of the three reports of the Secretary-General (5-10 minutes each). Panellists are expected to structure their presentations around concrete strategies that have proven to be successful in ensuring healthy lives and promoting well-being for all at all ages. Two discussants will also provide reactions on the three reports focusing on the guiding questions (5-10 minutes each). Following these interventions, the Vice-Chair will invite interventions, questions and comments from the floor. Panellists and discussants will have the opportunity to respond to the interventions from delegations, which will be followed by a wrap-up and concluding remarks from the Vice-Chair.

Guiding questions

The Commission on Population and Development may wish to consider the following questions in its deliberations on the priority theme at its fifty-eighth session:

- What are some of the “best buys” and investments to ensure health and well-being at various stages of the life course? What specific interventions are most effective to address the rising burden of NCDs and mental health disorders, and the slow progress in sexual and reproductive health?
- What should countries confronting a variety of demographic situations and prospects prioritize to strengthen the sustainability of their health systems?
- How can countries accelerate progress towards the target of universal health coverage and close gaps and address inequalities in access to quality essential healthcare services? How can new technologies and data-driven solutions be effectively adopted to reach underserved communities?
- What steps are needed to improve resource mobilization from all sources, including development aid and international cooperation, to enhance health outcomes for all and the implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action?

- How can countries enhance the preparedness and resilience of health systems in the face of health emergencies, pandemics, conflicts, natural disasters and climate change?

Outcome

The discussion will be summarized in the report of the Commission on its fifty-eighth session, which will be submitted to the Economic and Social Council shortly after the session. It will also inform the Commission's contribution to the 2025 High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, in particular the Forum's in-depth review of SDG3 on health.