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**UNITED NATIONS EXPERT GROUP MEETING ON  
POLICY RESPONSES TO LOW FERTILITY**

Population Division  
Department of Economic and Social Affairs  
United Nations Secretariat  
New York  
2-3 November 2015

**CONCEPT NOTE**

Falling fertility and rising life expectancy are changing the age structure of populations all over the world. Many economically advanced countries, faced with persistent low levels of fertility, are experiencing declining proportions of children and working-age adults and growing proportions of older persons. These age structure changes have profound implications for a broad range of policies and programmes related to labour markets, social security and health care systems.

The Population Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations, jointly with the East-West Center in Honolulu, Hawaii, is organizing an expert group meeting on “Policy responses to low fertility” that will be held at the United Nations Headquarters in New York during 2-3 November 2015. The purpose of the meeting is to identify and discuss policies and other institutional factors that are responsible for fertility trends and cross-country variations in fertility levels. The discussion will focus on identifying common features across selected countries and areas as well as distinctive cultural, institutional, and policy features of each country or area that might affect fertility levels, either deliberately or inadvertently. Such features may include flexibility of the labour market, the link between marriage and childbearing, factors that help or hinder parents in balancing work and family obligations, gender equity, education systems, the housing market, and governmental subsidies for the cost of childrearing.

The meeting will bring together expert researchers and academics from 16 countries (Australia, Austria, Canada, China, Czech Republic, France, Hungary, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, Norway, Singapore, South Korea, Spain, United Kingdom, and United States) and two areas (Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of China and Taiwan Province of China) who prepared papers discussing fertility policies and institutional factors, both formal policies and informal norms, which likely are affecting fertility levels and trends in their country or area. Funding for preparation of these papers was provided by the Korea Institute for Health and Social Affairs through the East-West Center. In addition to the expert researchers and academics who wrote the papers, the meeting will invite other experts and representatives from Governments and international organizations, including the relevant United Nations entities and the Regional Commissions, as well as from the civil society.

The meeting sessions will be organised as panel discussions around selected themes, whereby each panel member will be requested to comment on a few pre-selected issues or questions related to the theme of the session.

In preparation for the meeting, a series of two-page policy briefs will be prepared based on individual country papers, a comparative analysis of country papers and a review of family policies in low fertility countries. After the meeting, a short report will be prepared to summarize key conclusions, lessons learned, and any overarching policy recommendations based on the evidence presented and discussions at the meeting.

The report of the meeting and the policy briefs will be disseminated through institutional websites, mailing lists, professional newsletters and other outlets. A targeted effort will also be made to reach out to the popular media, both print and online, to disseminate the findings more widely.

In the afternoon following the EGM, a two-hour briefing will be held to inform the Member States about key findings and policy recommendations emerging from the discussions at the meeting.