EXPERT GROUP MEETING ON
THE EVALUATION OF ADOLESCENT FERTILITY DATA
AND ESTIMATES
(Virtual meeting)
New York, 26-27 October 2020

UN/POP/EGM/2020/FER/INF.1
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CONCEPT NOTE

Background

The Population Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs provides the international community with timely and accessible population data and analysis of demographic trends and development outcomes for all countries and areas of the world. To this end, the Division undertakes regular studies of population size and characteristics and of all three components of population change (fertility, mortality and migration).

With the adoption of the Millennium Development Goals in 2000, the Division has been tasked by the international community to gather, estimate, assess and report data on childbearing among adolescent women aged 15 to 19 years. The increased interest of the global community to fill the knowledge gap about young adolescent reproductive health and fertility led to the inclusion of adolescent girls aged 10-14 into the Sustainable Development Goals indicator framework adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in July 2017.[4] As the custodian agency for Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) indicator 3.7.2 Adolescent birth rate (aged 10-14 years; aged 15-19 years) the Population Division has the responsibility to formulate standards for the measurement of this indicator and to report on it to the United Nations Global SDG Indicators Database[1] on an annual basis. The Population Division has so far only reported on adolescent fertility for young women ages 15–19 years. Given that various sources provide data on adolescent fertility at the country level and that only one data point for any given time can be reported, the Population Division has developed a method to select the value to report for the ABR (girls ages 15-19 years) for each country and year (more details in the background paper prepared for this meeting that will be made available to all panelists and other invited experts prior to the meeting).

To comply with the requirement of SDG indicator 3.7.2 to also monitor and report fertility rates among girls aged 10 to 14 years, the Population Division has started to undertake research on this topic for all countries or areas of the world with available data, building mainly on work undertaken by the Demographic Health Surveys (DHS) program. The data on childbearing at ages 10-14 compiled by the Population Division thus far include 78 countries or areas for the period 2015-2019, 84 countries or areas for the period 2010-2014 and 32 countries or areas for the period 2000-2009. Data sources include censuses and retrospective household surveys as well as civil registration and vital statistics (CRVS). The Division has undertaken a first examination of these data and has prepared two publications that give an overview of levels and trends of early adolescent childbearing for years starting in 2000[2].

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[1] https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/indicators/database/
[2] United Nations (2019). Population Facts: Fertility among very young adolescents, No. 2019/1 April 2019; United Nations (2020). Fertility among adolescents aged 10 to 14 years, New York (advance copy) ST/ESA/SER.A/448

The Division is now extending this initial work and has begun to evaluate available estimates for early fertility from the various statistical sources, starting in 2000, by applying the evaluation procedures used for the selection of ABRs for girls aged 15-19. This research also compares the range of estimates on early adolescent fertility to fertility rates of older adolescents (aged 15 – 19 years) and related indicators, such as union formation/marriage and educational attainment, among others. A summary of the findings of this research is also included in the above-mentioned background paper.

Objective
The purpose of the meeting is to assess the coverage and accuracy and consistency of the data and estimates related to early adolescent fertility and to review the scope of associated demographic factors to assess the accuracy of early adolescent fertility data and estimates. The invited experts from United Nations system entities, research institutions and data producers will also review and discuss approaches for early adolescent fertility data validation, estimation and selection for SDG reporting and analysis.

Sessions
This event is being organized as an online meeting of two half-day sessions on 26-27 October 2020. The meeting sessions will be organized as panel discussions around selected themes addressing data sources, methods to estimate early adolescent fertility data and approaches for data validation and selection for SDG reporting and analysis. The last session of the meeting will be dedicated to a) discuss ways to enhance the quality of early adolescent fertility data and related estimates and b) to provide practical recommendations for data validation and selection procedures for the reporting and analysis of early adolescent fertility data in the context of the SDGs.
Participating panelists will be invited to provide a brief summary of their presentation in advance of the meeting.
The report of the meeting will be made available on the Division's website later in 2020.

Expected outcomes
The expert meeting is expected to deliver the following outcomes:
Better understanding of existing data and research, and key gaps, on early adolescent fertility and related indicators.
Recommendations for the further development of methods for early adolescent fertility data validation and selection for reporting and analysis.
Recommendations on next steps to enhance data quality and data availability.
Future research priorities on early adolescent fertility data.