

STATEMENT
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TO THE FORTY-EIGHTH SESSION OF THE
COMMISSION ON POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT

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Agenda item 6. Programme implementation and future programme of work in the field of population in 2014: Population Division, Department of Economic and Social Affairs

Report of the Secretary-General on Programme implementation and progress of work in the field of population in 2014: Population Division, Department of Economic and Social Affairs (E/CN.9/2015/6)

Note by the Secretariat presenting the draft programme of work of the Population Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs for the biennium, 2016-2017 (E/CN.9/2015/CRP.1)

Madame Chairperson,
Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and gentlemen,

I have the honour of introducing document E/CN.9/2015/6, a report of the Secretary-General describing the activities of the Population Division in 2014, and document E/CN.9/2015/CRP.1, on the draft programme of work of the Population Division for the biennium 2016-2017.

Madame Chairperson,

The Population Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs is responsible for the implementation of the subprogramme on population, within the programme on economic and social affairs. The subprogramme is based largely on the recommendations of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, the key actions for its further implementation, and the outcomes of other

relevant international conferences and summits, including the Millennium Declaration and the outcome of the 2005 World Summit. The decision of the General Assembly to extend the Programme of Action and the key actions for its further implementation beyond 2014 (resolution 65/234), and the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, “The future we want” (resolution 66/288), also provide guidance for the work of the Population Division.

Madame Chairperson,

The report I am presenting (E/CN.9/2015/6) gives an account of the activities of the Population Division during 2014, grouped by thematic area. I am pleased to tell you that the Division made substantial progress last year in all of these areas. Given the time constraints, please allow me to highlight just a few of the major activities and outputs.

In the area of fertility and family planning, the Population Division published the *World Fertility Report 2013*, focusing on countries with very high or very low levels of fertility, and it issued *World Contraceptive Use 2014*, a comprehensive dataset of family planning indicators. The Division also published a new set of estimates and projections of family planning indicators for 1970 to 2030, which informed assessments made in 2014 of progress in international initiatives to improve women’s reproductive health. Extra-budgetary funds were secured in November 2014 from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to accelerate this work and to improve the quantity, quality, transparency and accessibility of key family planning indicators. As in previous years, the Population Division, with assistance from the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), reported on three indicators of universal access to reproductive health as part of Millennium Development Goal 5: namely, contraceptive prevalence (indicator 5.3), the adolescent birth rate (indicator 5.4) and the unmet need for family planning (indicator 5.6).

In the area of population policies, the Population Division launched the *United Nations Eleventh Inquiry among Governments on Population and Development*, including new questions on urbanization, ageing, family support policies, and international migration. The *Eleventh Inquiry* will be completed in 2015, and the results will be incorporated into the next biennial revision of the *World Population Policies Database*, to be published in 2015. The Division also published a report entitled *Abortion Policies and Reproductive Health around the World*, which discusses changes between 1996 and 2013 in the legal grounds on which induced abortion is permitted (or not permitted) in each country. The report showed that a growing number of countries of the world have expanded the legal grounds for abortion, although policies continue to be restrictive in many countries.

In the area of international migration, the Population Division prepared a report of the Secretary-General on international migration and development (A/69/207), which was drafted in collaboration with members of the Global Migration Group and with inputs from the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on international migration. The report includes a summary of the High-level Dialogue on International Migration and

Development, held in New York in October 2013. In addition, it outlines the main initiatives by members of the Global Migration Group to implement the eight-point agenda for action of the Secretary-General and offers recommendations for the follow-up of the 2013 High-level Dialogue. The Division also updated the global migration database, the world's most comprehensive collection of empirical data on the number and characteristics of international migrants, including over 4,800 data tables available for more than 90 per cent of countries and areas of the world.

The preparation of population estimates and projections for all countries and areas of the world is a core element of the work of the Population Division. The Division released a report on the methodology used to produce the *World Population Prospects: The 2012 Revision*, including an explanation of the approaches and assumptions used to project fertility, mortality and international migration up to the year 2100. The report also describes the projection variants and the recently developed probabilistic projection methods. The Population Division released a full set of probabilistic population projections, for the period up to 2100. These new projections are derived from demographic data series for the period between 1950 and 2010 for all countries and areas of the world, using the recently implemented Bayesian hierarchical modelling approach.

The Population Division also issued the *World Urbanization Prospects: The 2014 Revision*, which includes the latest estimates and projections of the urban and rural populations of all countries or areas of the world for 1950 to 2050, as well as estimates and projections of the population size of all urban agglomerations with 300,000 inhabitants or more in 2014, for the period from 1950 to 2030. This latest revision of the *World Urbanization Prospects* showed that 54 per cent of the world's population resided in urban areas in 2014, a percentage that is projected to increase to 66 per cent by 2050. All regions are expected to become more urban over the coming decades, with the percentage urban increasing faster for Africa and Asia than for other regions.

In the area of health and mortality, the Population Division produced several studies related to adult mortality, including mortality at older ages. In a two-page brief entitled "Living to old age: A new world norm", the Division called attention to the fact that mortality at ages 65 years and older accounted for half of all deaths worldwide in the period from 2005 to 2010, and that this number is expected to continue rising in the future. The Division contributed to the work of the Interagency Group for Child Mortality Estimation, which monitors progress towards the achievement of MDG 4, and it collaborated with UNICEF in the preparation of the 2014 report entitled *Levels and Trends in Child Mortality*. Also, the Population Division continued to collaborate with the World Health Organization and other members of the Maternal Mortality Estimation Inter-agency Group, which is responsible for monitoring progress towards the reduction of maternal mortality as part of MDG 5.

Madame Chairperson,

In the area of population and development, the Population Division provided up-to-date information and substantive inputs for the third International Conference on Small Island Developing States, held in Apia, Samoa, in September 2014. The latest estimates indicate that the total population living in Small Island Developing States (or SIDS) was around 66 million in 2014. Net out-migration had a significant impact on the population trends of SIDS countries, especially in the Caribbean and Pacific regions. Relatively high levels of out-migration have also enabled a significant inflow of remittances to several countries of these regions. The population of SIDS is disproportionately affected by environmental hazards and climate change: nearly 29 million people living in SIDS (44 per cent of the total population) were affected by natural disasters between 1990 and 2013.

The Division also made progress in its work on population ageing, an increasingly relevant global demographic trend. In this regard, the Division released a new database, called “Population Ageing and Development 2014”, with country-level data on the older population, including mortality levels and various socio-economic indicators, as well as government views and policies related to population ageing and older persons. The Division also published a four-page brief entitled “Population ageing and sustainable development”, which showed that global ageing is set to accelerate in the coming decades, as the percentage of the global population aged 60 years or over is expected to increase from 12 per cent in 2014 to 21 per cent in 2050. The brief emphasized that countries need to prepare for the increasing demand and costs of health care to prevent and treat morbidities associated with old age, especially non-communicable diseases.

As I noted earlier, Madame Chairperson, this is only a selection of the Population Division’s diverse portfolio of activities and outputs.

Finally, the second document under consideration (E/CN.9/2015/CRP.1) contains the draft programme of work of the Division for the biennium 2016-2017. The document spells out the objectives, expected accomplishments and indicators of achievement for the Population subprogramme, and a list of proposed outputs. You may recall that the programme narrative was reviewed by the Commission last year as part of the proposed strategic framework for the 2016-2017 biennium, and was subsequently approved by the General Assembly. The Commission is invited to take note of the programme narrative and to review the proposed outputs.

Thank you, Madame Chairperson.