

Population Division
Department of Economic and Social Affairs

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**Ageing and Living Arrangements of
Older Persons:
Critical Issues and Policy Responses**

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PREFACE

An inevitable consequence of the demographic transition and the shift to lower fertility and mortality has been the evolution in the age structure of the world population. Many societies, especially in the more developed regions, have already attained older population age structures than have ever been seen in the past. Many developing countries in the midst of the demographic transition are experiencing rapid shifts in the relative numbers of children, population of working age and older persons.

Population ageing is expected to have a major impact on many aspects of life in the twenty-first century. According to United Nations population estimates and projections prepared by the Population Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, persons aged 60 years or older comprised 10 per cent of the world's 6 billion inhabitants in 2000. This number is projected to increase to about 2 billion or 22 per cent of the world population by 2050, at which time it will be as large as the population of children. This historic crossover of an increasing share of older persons and a declining share of children will mark the first time that the number of children and older persons are the same.

Concerned by population ageing and a looming pension crisis, many Governments are promoting more self-reliance in income security for older persons and greater family responsibility for providing care. Consequently, patterns of caregiving and co-residence are emerging as pre-eminent issues related to the well-being of older persons.

In response to these concerns, the United Nations Population Division, with financial support from the United States National Institute on Aging, organized the Technical Meeting on Population Ageing and Living Arrangements of Older Persons: Critical Issues and Policy Responses, at United Nations Headquarters in New York from 8 to 10 February 2000. The purpose of the meeting was to bring together experts from different world regions to address the most pressing issues concerning population ageing and living arrangements of older persons and their historical and cultural contexts, the social process through which the living arrangements of older persons influence the demand for formal and informal support systems, and how Governments respond to these perceived needs. The meeting also aimed to improve the knowledge base, identify priorities for future research and raise the long-term visibility of ageing-related issues.

This volume contains the collected set of papers presented at the Technical Meeting. The papers examined demographic and policy dimensions of population ageing and living arrangements of older persons, living arrangements and the well-being of older persons in the past, living arrangements and family support, adapting to rapid societal transformation, poverty, health and living arrangements of older persons, future research directions and methodological issues. The sessions of the Meeting were organized along these major themes. Each session was supported by background papers, which reviewed the theme of that session.

The proceedings of the Meeting are here gathered as a special issue of the *Population Bulletin of the United Nations*. They include the papers presented to the Meeting after revision based on the discussion at the Meeting. The report on the Meeting, summarizing the discussion surrounding each agenda item and the conclusions reached, is contained in part one. The background papers are presented in part two.