

Expert Group Meeting: “Measuring population ageing: Bridging Research and Policy”, Bangkok, Thailand, 25–26 February 2019

Session 8: Recommendations – evidence-based policies on ageing or Ageing and public policy

Chair: Landis MacKellar, Population Council

1. Presentation: Ageing and public policy (15-20 minutes)
Stuart Gietel-Basten, Hong Kong University of Science and Technology
2. Panel discussion:
 - *Warren Sanderson, IIASA*
 - *Wolfgang Lutz, IIASA*
 - *Plenee Grace J. Castillo, Philippine Statistics Authority*
 - *Selash Pasali, ECA*
 - *Jennifer Soundy, Secretariat of Social Inclusion, El Salvador*
3. Discussion

Population ageing is a well-established global demographic trend, with major socio-economic consequences. The long-term shift of the share of the population from the younger to the older ages is driven mainly by the declining levels of fertility, and also by the increases of life expectancy that are taking place almost everywhere. There is considerable international diversity in the onset and speed of population ageing, which, according to United Nations data, is most advanced in Japan and countries in Europe, followed by Northern America. Asia and the Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean and Oceania are projected to follow similar trends over the next few decades. Even in most of African countries, whose populations are still relatively young, the absolute number of older persons is growing rapidly, and is leading to long-term shifts in the age-structure.

Traditionally, the United Nations and most researchers have used measures and indicators that are mostly or entirely based on people’s chronological age, which provides a simple, clear and easily replicable way to measure and track various indicators of ageing. At the same time, there has been increasing recognition that the health status, type and level of activity, productivity, and other socio-economic characteristics of older persons have changed significantly over the last century, and even over the last several decades. This has led to the development of alternative concepts and measures of ageing, which provide different outlooks on the levels and trends of ageing, and a more nuanced appreciation of what ageing means in different contexts. At the frontline is the Characteristics Approach to the measurement of population ageing developed at IIASA.

These changes and the various approaches to understanding and measuring ageing, have important implications for the design and implementation of national development policies and programs, and for the follow-up and review of internationally agreed development goals that are related to or are affected by population ageing. Specifically, the different ways of measuring ageing affect the assessments of the evolution of the number of older persons, their living conditions, their contributions to the societies where they live and their needs for social protection. They have significant implications for labour markets, life-long education and health, and the interactions and mutual support of older persons with the younger generations.

Recognizing the diverse stages and characteristics of ageing in various regions of the world, as well as the recent developments and innovations in measurement, the Population Division the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), the International Institute for Applied System Analysis (IIASA), and Chulalongkorn University, in collaboration with the Social Development Division of the Economic Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), are organizing an international expert group meeting on ***“Measuring Population Ageing: Bridging Research and Policy”***, to be held in Bangkok, Thailand, from 25 to 26 February 2019.

This expert meeting will seek to take stock of different concepts and methodologies, and their applicability to and usefulness for various policy analyses and purposes. It will bring together experts to discuss key questions related to the measurement of population ageing, including discussion of traditional and new concepts and methods, and to assess their scope and limitations to support national policy design and implementation, as well as the regional and global review of progress in the achievement of internationally agreed development goals, as noted above. Experts from governmental and international organizations, from research institutions as well as civil society organizations will be invited to discuss the applicability of various measures of ageing in different contexts.

This session rounds up the expert group meeting by aiming at formulating recommendations for evidence-based policies on ageing. Policies related to employment, health policies, family caregiving need to be addressed with different urgency in different countries as traditional structures are not adequate anymore to address the new realities. The session will explore how new measures of ageing can contribute to policy formulations.

This session is expected to set the stage and possibly address the following points:

- What policies are crucial for responding to the challenges of a rapid population ageing?
- How can different measures of aging impact those policies?
- How do different governments tackle challenges of ageing?
- What are the challenges and goals on a regional/national level?
- What are regional/national approaches dealing with health issues at older ages?
- What policies have proven to be successful, which have not?
- What are the appropriate measures to compare the level in the speed of aging in different countries?
- What can countries benefit from the experience of others?
- How can we measure the gender gap in different countries?
- Can migration be a remedy for ageing?
- Should the old-age threshold be related to legal pension age?
- What's the relationship between policies and public opinion?
- What is the role of media in formulation of policies related to ageing?

Each discussant will provide a 5-minute introduction to the topic by address some or all of the questions listed above. The moderated panel will discuss these introductions of the panelists. At a second stage, the moderator will also take questions from the floor for further deliberations by the panel.

Should you have additional questions, please contact either Ms. Stefanie Andruchowicz (andrucho@iiasa.ac.it) or Ms. Karoline Schmid (schmidk@un.org)