United Nations expert group meeting on measuring population ageing: Bridging research and policy

Bangkok, Thailand, 25-26 February 2019

Report of the Meeting

United Nations
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Department of Economic and Social Affairs
Population Division

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1. BACKGROUND AND SCOPE

The expert group meeting on "Measuring Population Ageing: Bridging Research and Policy" took place in Bangkok, Thailand, from 25 to 26 February 2019.

The objective of the meeting was to review the status of implementation of relevant internationally agreed development goals included in the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPAA) and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In particular, the meeting, organized by the Population Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), the International Institute for Applied System Analysis (IIASA) and the College of Population Studies, Chulalongkorn University, in collaboration with the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), aimed to enhance the understanding of population ageing and its implications for development policy at the national, regional and global levels. It brought together experts to discuss the measurement of population ageing, including traditional and new concepts and methods, and to assess the strengths and limitations of these different measures for designing and implementing national development policies.

The meeting brought together 40 experts representing governments and international organizations, research institutions, the media and civil society organizations. In total, about 100 participants attended the meeting.

This report was prepared by Ms. Karoline Schmid and Ms. Sandrine A. Koissy-Kpein of the Population Division. For further information, please contact the Population Division, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, United Nations, New York, 10017, USA, by Fax: 1 212 963 2147 or by e-mail at population@un.org. Materials from the expert group meeting, including agenda, biographies, concept note, presentations from experts, and video recording of the session, can be accessed via the website of the Population Division, www.unpopulation.org, at the following location:
http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/events/expert-group/29/index.asp.

2. SUMMARY OF SESSIONS

A. OPENING

In opening the meeting, Mr. Bundhit Eua-arporn, President of Chulalongkorn University, underlined the importance of the expert group meeting in view of the challenges of an ageing society faced by Thailand. In response, the university had recently launched a programme called Ageing Research Innovation. Mr. Danucha Pitchayanan, National Economic and Social Development Council, welcomed the collaborative efforts of the collaborating entities in seeking to formulate appropriate measures to address the challenges of population ageing. He highlighted the link between the theme of the meeting and Thailand's national strategy (2018-2037), which aimed to ensure the happiness and well-being of the entire population.

Ms. Karoline Schmid (UN DESA) noted the fruitful partnership in organizing the event. The United Nations recognizes population ageing as a challenge, but also an opportunity for development. She highlighted the many different scenarios of population ageing across countries and over time. New measurements of ageing could provide a more in-depth understanding of the complexity of population ageing as a basis for policy making. The meeting was a welcome opportunity for researchers, policy makers, civil society and the media to discuss the causes and consequences of population ageing as well as the scope and limitations of various concepts for measuring population ageing.

Ms. Sabine Henning (UN ESCAP) recalled her organization's engagement in researching population trends, including ageing. Recently, ESCAP had organized a first meeting of the council on ageing in Turkey, underlining the importance of population ageing for countries in Asia and the Pacific. She underscored the importance of strengthening the capacity of national governments and other key stakeholders to understand the process of population ageing as well as its associated challenges and opportunities.

Mr. Sergei Scherbov (IIASA) highlighted the fruitful collaboration between UN DESA and IIASA as well as the support provided by the college of population studies, Chulalongkorn University, in organizing this event. He stressed the importance of focusing on the measurement of population ageing and how these measures could guide policy making. In particular, he emphasized the importance of developing new measurements of population ageing that recognize that people live healthier and longer lives as opposed to the traditional measures of ageing based on chronological age. He hoped that the meeting would help clarify which measure or measures were most appropriate for quantifying population ageing.

B. DIFFERENT MEASURES OF AGEING

This session was moderated by Ms. Karoline Schmid. The session included three presentations on different measures of population ageing. Ms. Schmid noted that the most widely used global indicators on population ageing were those traditionally produced by the Population Division in the context of the World Population Prospects, but that new measures had been developed more recently.

Mr. Sergei Scherbov noted that population ageing is a well-established global demographic trend with major socio-economic consequences. The long-term shift in the share of the population from younger to older ages was driven mainly by declining levels of fertility, and also by almost universal increases in life expectancy. The United Nations and most researchers had been using measures and indicators of population ageing based mostly or entirely on people's chronological age. While these provide a simple, clear and easily replicable way to measure and track changes, there has been increasing recognition that the health status, productivity, and 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 population ageing that redefine population ageing based on remaining life expectancy instead of on numbers of years already lived. These measures provide different perspectives on the levels and trends of population ageing, and afford a more nuanced appreciation of what ageing means in different contexts. This forward-looking, prospective approach to measuring population ageing has become ever more relevant given that people are increasingly making decisions, for example those related to their future health care and assets, based on how many more years they expect to live. The measures underlying this new approach, such as the prospective median age and the prospective old age dependency ratio, are a reflection of populations ageing at a slower pace than previously assumed. These measures are important for policy making in the context of ageing societies.

Mr. Zhen Zhang, Fudan University, agreed that the notion of a fixed old age threshold needed to change. The remaining life expectancy at different points during the entire lifespan should be emphasized and not only upon reaching a specific threshold. Characteristics such as functional health and economic characteristics should be considered when setting an old age threshold.

Ms. Ritu Sadana, WHO, emphasized that population-based measurements of population ageing at the aggregate level did not show the heterogeneity in life expectancy experienced by various sub-groups in the population, or whether the remaining years of life are spent in good health. One measure that captures the status of health and wellbeing at older ages is 'disability-adjusted life-years'. There is a need to better understand morbidity and mortality for policy and programme purposes, as well as to integrate information on diseases and causes of death. She raised the issue of older persons excluded from monitoring global commitments, including the Sustainable Development Goals. One such example was SDG indicator 3.4 that measures premature mortality including only individuals between the ages of 30 and 70 years. Also, Ms. Sadana noted that maintaining intrinsic capability is critical for healthy ageing, emphasizing the importance of policies and programmes in support of that goal.

The discussion focused on the need to rethink ageing beyond chronological age, on the characteristics considered in measuring population ageing and how to define and set an ageing threshold. Regional differences in population ageing would need to be reflected in the indicators used, and information standardized to ensure comparability among countries. Both the traditional and the new measures of ageing, including those presented by IIASA, would capture such international and interregional differences in population ageing. Other topics that were explored included ways and means of promoting healthy ageing, intergenerational support systems and the role of government and family. Some participants raised concerns about the balance between countries' priorities and resources devoted to the promotion of healthy ageing as compared to other development priorities. It was also noted that some of the language used in the context of ageing measurements supported ageism and negative stereotyping of older persons. The discussion also highlighted the financial vulnerability of households with older adults and the need for a sound long-term care system. In response to a question on possible application by the United Nations of new measures of population ageing, ESCAP reported that it was working on integrating such new measures in the context of countries who are member of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). Further, the Population Division promoted the use of these new measures during regional workshops organized for interested governments.

C. AGEING IN THE GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT AGENDA

Ms. Sabine Henning moderated the panel. The first speaker, Ms. Amal Abou Rafeh, Division for Inclusive Social Development, UN DESA, emphasized the need for measurements of ageing that were

useful for Member States. Some measures of ageing failed to reflect the contributions older persons made and can therefore lend themselves to negative stereotyping and ageism. A notable challenge in measuring population ageing was age-specific data limitations that impacted on the monitoring of development goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Concepts and measures associated with population ageing that did not account for older persons' diversity should be reviewed. She noted concerns about the sustainability of health care systems as well as pension schemes and the possible negative impact of population ageing on economic development.

Ms. Storey Angele, Office of National Statistics, United Kingdom, who also spoke on behalf of the Titchfield City Group on Ageing, raised the challenge of data availability to support the development of evidence-based policies. The main objectives of the Titchfield City Group on Ageing are to develop standardized methodologies to produce age-disaggregated data and to design approaches to fill the existing data gaps related to older persons.

Ms. Patricia Conboy, HelpAge International, stressed the importance of accounting for heterogeneities in population ageing across countries and across different age cohorts. Regarding monitoring and reporting on SDGs regarding older persons, the Inter-Agency Expert Group on SDGs (IAEG-SDGs), the intergovernmental body that governs monitoring and reporting on SDGs at the global level, had prioritized SDGs related to health, income, security, violence and safety, empowerment and participation. The speaker highlighted data gaps related to abuse, violence and safety of older persons.

Mr. Keisuke Nakashima, Kobe City University, noted wide differences in levels of income per capita in countries with similar levels of ageing, including China and the United States. Many developing countries lack resources and adequate institutions, most notably flexible labour markets and social protection programmes, to adjust to population ageing. Population ageing might lead to poverty and even to humanitarian crises if economic growth slows, for example in countries that do not leverage the demographic dividend, develop and 'get old before they become rich'. He recommended including both resident and non-resident populations, such as visitors and tourists as well as temporary workers in the analysis of population ageing, an approach which had gained growing interest in Japan. He suggested addressing population ageing by revitalizing and repopulating rural areas, mining "big data" to capture movements of non-residents and promoting the socio-economic vitality of ageing urban areas by using information technology.

Participants concluded that there was no one-size-fits-all approach to population ageing. The process of individual ageing is a life course process that does not necessarily start at a fixed 'old-age' threshold. As for population ageing, there is a wide range of concepts and measurements. Ageing is in some instances considered in a negative way – a negativity that could be countered to some extent by use of alternative terms, such as "mature population" or "age structure change". It was important to engage key stakeholders, integrate workers with all health characteristics in an inclusive employment system, and ensure that older persons' voices, particularly those of older women, are heard and acknowledged. Partnerships with governments should be established and strengthened through technical assistance.

D. USING DIFFERENT MEASURES OF AGEING: COUNTRY CASE STUDIES

This session was chaired by Mr. Sergei Scherbov. Ms. Vipan Prachuabmoh, college of population studies, Chulalongkorn University, discussed the advantages of the application of new measures as compared to conventional measures in analyzing population ageing in Thailand. While conventional measures of ageing portrayed Thailand as one of the world's most rapidly ageing societies, prospective

measures showed a slower pace of population ageing as a consequence of increased longevity, which in turn suggested a potentially more productive ageing population. Morbidity and disability had become more prevalent as life expectancy increased. These and other characteristics of older persons that could impact their wellbeing and social inclusion needed to be captured by more granular measures. While the Government has undertaken a wide range of initiatives to address population ageing, and prospective measures of population ageing would provide 'a ray of hope' to the country, healthy, productive and joyful ageing could only happen if older persons' health and wellbeing were enhanced, and inequality reduced. Better data are needed, particularly by holding longitudinal surveys, to provide clearer evidence for policy formulation to address population ageing.

Mr. Bernd Marin, European Bureau for Policy Consulting and Social Research (EBPCSR), presented an age-inflation-indexed measure as an alternative concept of population ageing. This measure also took into consideration the rise in life expectancy over time. His research found that 41.8 years was the median age at which Europeans stopped feeling young, which was above the median age of 40.9 years. He stressed that an important part of the remaining life years for both men and women was spent out of work. Many countries in Europe need to change their retirement age to match the increase in longevity, as in Denmark, where age-inflation was considered as a basis for the continued increase of the legal pension age for cohorts born between 1967 and 2023. Individual and collective ageing should be differentiated, because individual's increased survivorship would lead to a gain in life expectancy while collectively, a given country's population age structure would rejuvenate as a result of immigration. He cautioned however that migration could only be a temporary remedy for ageing and called for significant labour market and pension reforms in the long run to sustain ageing populations.

Ms. Tengku Aizan Hamid, Universiti Putra Malaysia, noted that the Malaysian population was ageing regardless of the measurement applied. This was mainly due to rapidly decreasing birth rates. However, Malaysians were also living longer with the expected remaining life years depending on gender, ethnicity and region. Population ageing led to new challenges for Malaysia, notably with regard to health care and social welfare systems and older people's vulnerability to poverty. She argued that conventional definitions of ageing, such as those based on a cut-off at age 60, are needed as variable ageing thresholds would complicate policy formulation and implementation. While local government units recognized the need to select more appropriate ageing measures, their actions were constrained given the need to federal guidelines and their dependence on federal resources. This affected the implementation of the SDGs since local approaches were more practical and effective than those by the federal government.

Ms. Silvia Elena Giorguli Saucedo, El Colegio de México, underlined the demographic heterogeneity of Latin America regarding the timing and pace of the demographic transition and related demographic indictors, such as the old-age dependency ratio and the median age. More than half of the Latin American population was in the informal labour market with no access to pensions later in their lives, leading to a high rate of labour force participation among populations aged 60 years or older. Social security and welfare systems are needed to support older persons in the region.

In the discussion, Ms. Giorguli Sacedo stated that Mexico was currently subject to the first demographic dividend and that the development of its human capital was of utmost importance for it to be successful. In Latin America it was important to take gender into consideration since the majority of women worked in the informal sector without access to any pension scheme. Migration was also important; in the case of Mexico, 18 per cent of its working-age population was in the United States and this impacted on the dependency ratio. Should these migrants return to Mexico to retire they would not have access to Mexico's

health care or pension system. A further challenge the country faced was the integration into the domestic labour market of young people returning to Mexico.

The session also deliberated the advantages and disadvantages of setting a specific retirement age, noting possible negative impacts of a mandatory retirement age on health, social capital and wellbeing. Gender dimensions of retirement were also discussed. While many governments have increased the mandatory age of retirement, this is not a viable solution for those who work in hazardous and physically demanding jobs and thus require access to social welfare and retirement at earlier ages. The discussion concluded there should be some flexibility around setting retirement ages, taking into consideration various aspects of the nature of work, individual needs, the labour market and the wider economy. Other topics addressed included the challenge of explaining to policymakers the meaning of prospective measures of ageing, because most of them are not familiar with this approach; the importance of human capital investment, notably technology, for older persons and the need for lifelong learning programmes; and the existence of cultural barriers preventing older persons from engaging in volunteer work. The relevance of migration in countering population ageing was also touched upon. While some countries would need to at least double the intake of migrants to maintain the workforce, migrants would also age and thus migration would only provide relief for a limited period of time.

E.   AGEING AND THE MEDIA

Mr. Bernd Marin, EBPCSR, chaired this session. Mr. Simon Cox, The Economist, stressed the need to change the tone about the elderly who are generally presented in the media as a burden to society. Journalists often faced difficulties in covering population ageing because the topic was not particularly appealing or compelling as compared to other topics, such as national elections. There is a gap between scientists and journalists with regard to population ageing; journalists did not always understand demographic concepts, such as the difference between life expectancy at birth and remaining life expectancy. Population ageing is a complex topic and its press coverage has evolved. He introduced an additional concept, 'the sacrifice ratio', to measure the economic dependence of older persons on the younger generation. This measure assessed the percentage of the output the working age generation needed to surrender to the older generation in an effort to equalize the distribution of goods and services. Mr. Cox further suggested that a new category was needed to describe individuals between work and old age and suggested labels such as 'pre-retiree', 'the geriactives', 'generation zzzz' or 'jaggernaut'.

Ms. Elizabeth Isele, Global Institute for Experienced Entrepreneurship, debunked the negative stereotypes of ageing by citing the considerable share of entrepreneurs among individuals aged 55 or older compared to the share of entrepreneurs from the younger generation. She also pointed out that older women were often more likely than older men to start a business and concluded that investing in entrepreneurs who are seniors would be a worthwhile effort. She showcased a series of successful businesses run by seniors and emphasized their positive contributions to the global economy that were often neither recognized nor appreciated.

Mr. Steven Petrow, The Washington Post, emphasized that journalists could be the bridge between science and policy. He cautioned that since few journalists had enough scientific knowledge to understand complex scientific matters and transform that knowledge for a broader audience, they need to be aware that language and the meaning of words chosen often influenced attitudes towards the subject of the discussion. Given that scientific journalism was complex, he called on journalists to learn the language of science and asked researchers and scientists to provide clear guidance on language to be used in discussing various scientific matters in the press.

Ms. Paola Scommegna, Population Reference Bureau, emphasized the need for language used in presenting scientific findings to a wider audience to be nontechnical, visual, interactive and applying multiple formats in order to reach a wide range of people. She presented various tools, such as info-graphics, videos, interactive maps and various types of graphs as well as social media as examples of best practice in data visualization to disseminate research findings.

The discussion addressed the issue of the balance between storytelling and presentation of facts and data, highlighting the need to combine and explain data and storytelling. Journalists apply different methods, some starting their reports with statistics and then proceeding with storytelling, others preferring just to present a story. Points raised included the value of starting with the conclusion before providing the details, and the importance of the way scientists talked to journalists. Emphasis is needed on conveying the right message, since in some cases, comments by journalists are not based on scientific evidence and scientific terms may be misused or mixed up. This problem could be ameliorated by scientists providing simpler and clearer terms that journalists could more easily understand. It was also important to cultivate relationships with journalists and to provide statistics and relevant information to journalists on an ongoing basis. It was also important to focus on the message that should go out to the target audience, adjusting the language accordingly.

A number of other issues were raised in the discussion. In response to a question regarding the intergenerational relationship between women entrepreneurs, the representative from the Global Institute for Experienced Entrepreneurship indicated that younger women would reach out to older women in partnerships and that older women entrepreneurs would significantly benefit from younger women in relation to technology-related products. It was argued that the general acceptance of age 65 as a uniform marker of old age would continue to contribute to negative stereotyping, as would an emphasis on modernity (and calls for eternal youth) that had no place for ageing and older persons. It was important to continue promoting policy changes, to emphasize positive aspects of ageing and to portray older persons positively in the media, taking into consideration the heterogeneity of old age, since people aged differently at the individual level.

F.   CASE STUDIES: SDG3 – GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

This session was moderated by Mr. Sorapop Kiatpongsan, Chulalongkorn University. Mr. Karl Peltzer, Ton Duc Thang University and North-West University presented the results of the Study of Global Ageing and Adults' Health (SAGE) which examines rural-urban differences among persons aged 50 year or older in South Africa, the most rapidly ageing country in sub-Saharan Africa. The study showed many rural-urban health disparities; urban areas were associated with better access to health care services, higher cognitive functioning, and better health status and quality of life of older persons compared to older persons living in rural areas. These rural-urban disparities were related to other socioeconomic factors such as poverty, education, and unemployment, as well as lifestyle and gender. An integrated national development plan was needed to support the provision of health care to all older persons in the country.

Ms. Carol Jagger, Newcastle University, focused on measuring dependency and care needs of older persons and asked whether there would be a compression of dependency in the future. She stressed that most available data would not provide a real indication of care needs since health care-related administrative data would often indicate a demand, but not a need. She concluded her presentation with the finding that increases in life expectancy at older ages in England would not be accompanied by equivalent gains in years free of disability or dependency. She also pointed to gender differences in demands for care in old age;

women would experience a continued expansion of low-level dependency whereas men would see increased demands for care.

Ms. Shereen Hussein, University of Kent discussed older persons' health and needs in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). She stressed the variability of the Arab countries in MENA regarding present status and past, present and future pace of population ageing and related demographic indicators, and highlighted differences across countries in socio-economic determinants such as poverty levels, labour force participation and migration. Shared factors were language, religion and norms around family and the role of women. With increasing longevity, these countries are currently experiencing an epidemiological and health transition with an expansion of non-communicable diseases, disability and dementia as the leading causes of morbidity and mortality. Ageing is occurring in the context of continued population growth, while the region is also experiencing increased levels of lone residency, particularly among older women, increased migration and increased female labour force participation, which impacts on the availability of women as caregivers for older persons. For the Arab countries, not all years gained were years of health, free of disabilities. Comprehensive ageing policies are needed for the region, along with investment in data and in the care and health workforce.

The discussion started with a question about the best way to measure health and wellbeing in the next 10 to 20 years. Indices developed by WHO might be good for comparisons at the aggregate level, but not for assessing the health status of individuals. The discussion recognized the need to consider both subjective and objective measures of well-being, as well as the need for more research on the meaning of well-being for older persons. The number of indicators needed depended on their purpose. The meeting agreed that the 169 targets of the SDGs were too many to assess in relation to older persons. To recognize various dimensions of population ageing a composite indicator was needed; an example presented by IIASA was the newly developed 'years of good life' indicator that took various dimensions of human well-being into consideration. However, it was noted that a composite measure would be difficult to interpret and there can be no single measure for health.

Does increasing life expectancy bring with it increasing health care needs? The panel agreed this was partially true and recommended looking at healthy life expectancy by age. It was noted that women generally had more years of unhealthy life expectancy than men, due to an increase in risky behaviours such as smoking and greater prevalence of chronic, life-style related diseases such as obesity and related ailments. Changing disease patterns can be expected in the future, in particular more chronic diseases related to overweight and obesity; the growth in the share of older persons aged 85 or older increased the predominance of multi-morbidity. The discussion also pointed towards the need for early interventions to prevent younger generations from falling into poor health and to increase chances of growing old in good health. The discussion concluded with a call to address the various determinants of health, including environmental conditions through specific and targeted policies taking into consideration the heterogeneity of countries as well as the diversity of different population groups within countries.

G.   CASE STUDIES: SDG8 – DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

Ms. Sandrine A. Koissy-Kpein, UN DESA, chaired this session. Mr. Jesús Crespo Cuaresma, Vienna University of Economics and Business, discussed economic productivity and population ageing by comparing the outcomes shown by conventional and prospective measures of population ageing, using a panel dataset covering European countries, spanning the period 1970 to 2017. The negative effects of population ageing on economic growth appeared to be stronger in economies with relatively low levels of

income per capita, particularly in Eastern Europe, and the economic effects of population ageing were heterogeneous across countries.

Mr. Naohiro Ogawa, University of Tokyo, portrayed the working capacity and potential contribution of older persons in Japan by analysing levels of labour income and public and private consumption through the lifecycle. Older persons were playing the role of society's safety net and would need to be considered as a source of potential work capacity that should be tapped to realize the "silver demographic dividend" which could have added as much as 4.8 per cent to Japan's real GDP in 2014. He emphasized the need to take advantage of dementia prevention efforts that had shown positive results in the United States, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Denmark, Germany and Canada, whereas in China and Japan, without such efforts, the onset of dementia was earlier.

Mr. Andrew Scott, London Business School, noted that societies, while ageing, remained 'young' for longer in various ways. He suggested moving away from the idea that ageing was fixed, and to investigate how ageing was made more malleable in terms of education, careers, individual behaviours and policies. He highlighted the main myths currently dominating the discussion on ageing, including that chronological age is a good measure of population ageing, that all countries are ageing, and that ageing is about end of life issues and about young versus old, and provided a wide range of empirical data to challenge these myths. He called for developing better ways of measuring population ageing, for a better understanding of the mechanisms of ageing and for a focus on policy instruments to improve the living conditions of older persons address ageing. Further, he stated that it was important to take a life-course approach and try to disentangle the nominal age effects in our economies and better understand how the path of ageing could be influenced by policy and other factors.

Ms. Alexia Fürnkranz-Prskawetz, Vienna Institute of Demography and IIASA, provided an introduction to economic dependency measures based on the assumption that periods of economic dependency occur throughout the life course, especially in childhood and old age. Differences in the economic life course were caused by socio-economic characteristics and institutional frameworks. Economic dependency ratios measured the degree of economic dependency and their expected change due to population ageing. This provided useful information on economic consequences of population ageing to be used to guide and legitimate related policies. She discussed the advantages of employment-based dependency ratios and life cycle deficits as alternative economic dependency measures compared to the demographic dependency ratio, highly favouring the use of employment-based dependency ratios to formulate recommendations about labour market policy. She also highlighted how the integration of demographic information into the National Transfer Accounts (NTA) allowed to identify more precise cut-off ages where individuals became dependents, based on the difference between their consumption and their labour income at each age, enabling the computation of indicators on life cycle deficit to inform policy makers. The most effective ways to decrease economic dependency were to tap into people's full labour force potential, including by postponing retirement, investing in human capital yielding future benefits and accessing assets to finance old age consumption.

The discussion began with a question about the inclusion of unpaid care work in the NTA model, notably to account for the important contribution of women to domestic unpaid care activities that could affect their contribution to the formal labour market and paid work. Experts noted the effort of some countries to valuing unpaid care work through the use of time use surveys. The discussion focused on the economic contribution of domestic work, the significance of the informal sector and informal care work in many places. The meeting addressed concerns about the impact of increased longevity on youth unemployment and possible intergenerational conflicts regarding access to the labour market and jobs.

However, as new technologies were introduced, the participation of older persons in the labour market would create more employment rather than taking away jobs. Based on estimates for Japan, the impact of older persons' participation in the labour force was small. The discussion concluded with a call to governments to support people to work longer and stay productive throughout the lifecycle, notably through investment in human capital.

H. CASE STUDIES: SDG 1 - REDUCING POVERTY AND INCREASING SOCIAL PROTECTION FOR OLDER PERSONS

Ms. Wiraporn Pothisiri, Chulalongkorn University, moderated this session. Ms. Dilitina M. Baleinabuli, Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation, Fiji, discussed social protection for older Fijians, outlining the development of the social protection system and the key schemes currently available to older persons. These included the family assistance scheme, the poverty benefit scheme and the social pension scheme. Older persons in Fiji could benefit from a free medicine scheme and long-term health care support. The main challenges were coordinating the various programs, collecting and evaluating data to monitor the implementation of the programs and establishing a holistic legislative framework in support of older persons.

Mr. Razak Gyasi, African Population Health and Research Center (APHRC), noted that while Africa was the world's youngest region, population ageing was becoming an increasing challenge with the population aged 60 and over increasing rapidly. He observed that populations living in slums were ageing faster than populations residing in rural areas. He raised concerns about access to pensions for retirees from the informal and formal sectors, the vulnerability of older persons to poverty, and the significant risk of food insecurity for older persons. In his view, Africa had an opportunity to put in place measures to harness the benefits of ageing populations.

Ms. Vanessa Steinmayer, UN ESCAP, stressed that populations in the Asia were ageing rapidly, while the coverage of pension systems was still very low. In most countries, pension benefits were inadequate and social protection for persons working in the informal sector was limited. Existing pension systems perpetuated existing inequalities, notably gender inequalities and inequalities between the formal and informal sectors. In Asian countries, life expectancy beyond retirement in the formal sector was between 19 and 30 years. While most people continued to work beyond age 60, employment decreased with age with more men than women continuing to work. Health-related challenges were the main reason to stop working. The provision of social protection for older persons would be crucial for achieving the SDGs.

Mr. Philip O'Keefe, World Bank, noted that work and co-residence with adult children were important sources of financial protection for older persons, especially in low-income countries where social pension coverage remained low. The coverage of contributory pension systems also remained low, especially for women, and were strongly correlated with income levels in the region. Addressing these gaps, the World Bank was currently promoting the introduction of universal social pensions, but the levels of benefit of such pensions were often too modest to provide full financial protection in old age. Another challenge was access to long-term care in developing countries. He stressed that pension reforms should remove mandatory retirement ages or eventually adjust retirement age in line with prospective ageing.

Given that most pension schemes in the Asia-Pacific region, for example in China, were 'defined benefit systems', discussion focused on the role played by the defined benefit in these contributory systems. Participants also discussed the possibility of the private sector or individuals replacing the government in

an effort to move away from a middle-class market and provide pension coverage for all. It was suggested that the private sector could be an option if a sound and sustainable financial sector was in place. A note of caution was that even in developed countries, private sector pension schemes were unsatisfactory or insufficient. India was cited as an example of a country that had adopted private sector pension schemes but was struggling with implementation. Another aspect discussed was the need to expand community-based care and how this could be achieved.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS – EVIDENCE-BASED POLICIES ON AGEING

This session was moderated by Mr. Landis MacKellar, Population Council. The presentation by Mr. Stuart Gietel-Basten, Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, discussed possible policy implications of new measures of population ageing that had been presented during earlier sessions. He stressed the complexity of measuring population ageing, notably regarding the interpretation of such measures by policymakers.

Mr. Warren Sanderson, IIASA, stressed that demography might not matter much if institutions could adapt. In reality, however, demography was highly relevant to policy since many institutions are not able to manage demographic changes. He recommended getting economists, policymakers and the media interested in new measures of population ageing.

Ms. Plenee Grace J. Castillo, Philippine Statistics Authority, highlighted efforts made by her government in collecting data on population ageing. The Government was fully aware of the challenges facing the older population: since major policies and programs were in place to respond to the needs of the ageing population.

Mr. Selash Pasali, United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, presented the results of the recent review of the implementation of the Madrid Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPAA+15), highlighting challenges faced by governments in Africa. He emphasized the need for data on older persons in Africa to bridge the research and policy gap. He also pointed to the importance of a gender perspective on ageing populations, notably regarding prospective ageing measurements.

Mr. Wolfgang Lutz, IIASA, argued that population ageing and climate change were the major challenges of this century. The world needed to think about adaptive capacities to address both of these challenges. With regard to population ageing, he called for the definition of distinguishable but related mitigation and adaptation policies, particularly regarding social security systems that needed to adapt to the changing population structures. He emphasized investment in human capital as a relevant strategy for mitigation.

The discussion highlighted that prospective ageing measurements, even with a fixed remaining life expectancy, were not static measurements of population ageing and could spark policymakers' interest and be considered relevant for defining policies to address population ageing. Reactive and proactive policies were similar to adaptation and mitigation measures mentioned earlier. Alternative measures of ageing facilitated flexibility in rethinking policies. Others argued that, given the challenge of garnering comprehensive data on older persons in many countries, relying on chronological measurements of ageing was a more viable solution for analysing population ageing. Concerns were also raised about using prospective ageing measurements that made population ageing appear less acute. One response was that prospective ageing measurements aimed to capture the 'real' ageing trend, adjusted for ageing inflation.

It was noted that, given the changes in the labour market, the rise of the informal sector in the developed world and the large share of the population working in the informal sector in the developing world, formal retirement and pensions that afforded a comfortable standard of living beyond retirement have always been the luxury of a small minority and might soon become a thing of the past. People would have to work longer; ways of financing old age would need to be adjusted to these changing realities and new mechanisms developed to ensure comprehensive social security and social protection for all ages. Policies needed to be proactive, reactive and flexible enough to adapt to a changing world.

A number of other topics were also addressed. One was the importance of people-centered measurements since dependency also included physical and/or psychological dependency. Another was the impact of international migration on the care chain and the care policies of countries of origin. The discussion also addressed the frequent failure of higher education to translate into employment, often due to a mismatch between skills acquired in training and those needed in the labour market. It was noted that education also enhanced intrinsic capacities and cognitive skills that went beyond the immediate needs of the specific skills in the labor market.

The discussion called for a bottom-up approach in addressing ageing, to better understand the real and most urgent needs of older populations. This was supported by a call to continuously engage scientists who developed concepts of population ageing with those who worked with older persons on the ground. The meeting concluded with a call to refocus the policy discussion away from chronological age towards multidimensional approaches that were able to address the unmet needs of older persons and not just consider their absolute numbers.

4. CLOSING

The meeting was closed by Ms. Karoline Schmid and Mr. Sergei Scherbov, who thanked the participants, particularly the panelists, for their contributions. Gratitude was also expressed towards the team of the Population Studies Center of Chulalongkorn University for their generous support and for hosting this event.

24 February 2019

EXPERT GROUP MEETING ON
MEASURING POPULATION AGEING:
BRIDGING RESEARCH AND POLICY
Population Division
Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA)
International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA)
College of Population Studies, Chulalongkorn University (Chula)

In collaboration with:
United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UN ESCAP)

Bangkok, Thailand
25-26 February 2019

ORGANIZATION OF WORK

25 February 2019
8:00 – 8:45   Registration
8:45 – 9:30   Opening (**Kanokwan Tangchitnusorn and Yot Amornkitvikai**,
                     Chulalongkorn University**, *Masters of Ceremony***)
- Welcome: *Bundhit Eua-arporn*, President of Chulalongkorn University
- Welcome: *Danucha Pichayanan*, Deputy Secretary General, Office of the National Economic and Social Development Council
- Welcome: *Karoline Schmid*, DESA-Population Division & *Sabine Henning*, Social Development Division, ESCAP
- Welcome: *Sergei Scherbov*, IIASA

9:30 - 11.00   **Session 1: Different measures of ageing**
                     Chair: *Karoline Schmid*, DESA

1. Presentation: New measures of population ageing (30 min.)
   Sergei Scherbov, IIASA
2. Presentation: Alpha-ages based on constant vs. varying characteristics (15 min.)
   Zhen Zhang, Fudan University
3. Presentation: Additional measurement concepts of ageing (15 min.)
   Ritu Sadana, WHO

Discussion (30 min.)

11:00 – 11:30   *Coffee break*
11.30-13.00   **Session 2: Ageing in the global development agenda**
                     Chair: *Sabine Henning*, ESCAP

1. Presentation: Conceptual considerations for measuring ageing in the context of MIPAA and Agenda 2030 (15 min.)
   Amal Abou Rafeh, Division for Inclusive Social Development/DESA
2. Presentation: The Titchfield City Group on Ageing (15 min.)
   Storey Angele, Office of National Statistics, United Kingdom; Titchfield City Group on Ageing
3. Presentation: Leaving no one behind – Measurement Issues (15 min.)
   Patricia Conboy, HelpAge International
4. Presentation: The interregional approach of measuring population (15 min.)
   Keisuke Nakashima, Kobe City University of Foreign Studies

Discussion (30 min.)

13:00-14:00   ***Lunch break***

14:00-15:30   **Session 3: Using different measures of ageing: Country case studies**
Chair: *Sergei Scherbov*, IIASA

1. Presentation: Ageing in Thailand (15 min.)
   Vipan Prachuabmoh, College of Population Studies, Chulalongkorn University
2. Presentation: Dynamically adjusted pension age. Coping with age inflation by lifetime indexing in selected Scandinavian and continental EU countries (15 min.)
   Bernd Marin, European Bureau for Policy Consulting and Social Research
3. Presentation: Ageing in Malaysia (15 min.)
   Tengku Aizan Hamid, Universiti Putra Malaysia
4. Presentation: Ageing in Latin America: heterogeneous timings and implications (15 min.)
   Silvia Elena Giorguli Saucedo, El Colegio de México

Discussion (30 min.)

15:30-15:45   ***Coffee break***

15:45-17:15   **Session 4: Ageing and the media**
Moderator: *Bernd Marin*, European Bureau for Policy Consulting and Social Research

Panel discussion:
- *Simon Cox*, The Economist
- *Elizabeth Isele*, The Global Institute for Experienced Entrepreneurship
- *Steven Petrow*, The Washington Post
- *Paola Scommegna*, Population Reference Bureau

26 February 2019

9.00-10.30   **Session 5: Case studies: SDG3 – Good health and well-being**
Chair: *Sorapop Kiatpongsan*, College of Population Studies,
Chulalongkorn University

1. Presentation: Rural-urban health disparities among older adults in South Africa (15 min.)
   Karl Peltzer, Ton Duc Thang University & North-West University
2. Presentation: Health and dependency (15 min.)
   Carol Jagger, Newcastle University
3. Presentation: Older people's health and care needs in the Middle East: policy and practice perspectives within changing population (15 min.)
   Shereen Hussein, University of Kent

Discussion (30 min.)

10.30-11.00   Coffee break

11.00-12.30   **Session 6: Case studies: SDG8 – Decent work and economic growth**
Chair: *Sandrine A. Koissy-Kpein*, DESA

1. Presentation: Ageing and economic growth: Measures, effects and policies (15 min.)
   Jesus Crespo Cuaresma, Vienna University of Economics and Business & IIASA
2. Presentation: Untapped work capacity among old persons and their potential contributions to the "Silver Dividend" in Japan (15 min.)
   Naohiro Ogawa, University of Tokyo
3. Presentation: Myths of an ageing society (15 minutes)
   Andrew Scott, London Business School
4. Presentation: Quantifying economic dependency (15 min.)
   Alexia Fürnkranz-Prskawetz, Vienna Institute of Demography & IIASA

Discussion (30 min.)

12.30-13.30   ***Lunch break***

13.30-15.00   **Session 7: Case studies: SDG1 - Reduce poverty and increase social protection for older persons**
Chair: *Wiraporn Pothisiri*, College of Population Studies, Chulalongkorn University

1. Presentation: Social protection for older persons in Fiji (15 min.)
   Dilitina M. Baleinabuli, Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation, Suva
2. Presentation: Understanding patterns and dynamics of later life poverty in urban slum settings, Kenya (15 min.)
   Razak Gyasi, African Population Health and Research Center (APHRC)

3. Presentation: Population ageing and the need for social protection in Asia and the Pacific (15 min.)
   Vanessa Steinmayer, UN ESCAP
4. Presentation: Expanding financial protection and care services in the developing world: Status and challenges (15 min.)
   Philip O'Keefe, World Bank, East Asia and Pacific Region

Discussion (30 min.)

15:00-15.30   ***Coffee break***

15.30-17.00   **Session 8: Recommendations – evidence-based policies on ageing or ageing and public policy**
Moderator: *Landis MacKellar*, Population Council

1. Presentation: New measures of ageing and policy implications (15 min.)
   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*, UN Economic Commission for Africa

Discussion

17.00-17.15   **Closing**
Karoline Schmid, DESA-Population Division and *Sergei Scherbov*, IIASA

ANNEX 2: LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

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