

Astri Syse, Senior Researcher, Statistics Norway, Norway

Chair

We would like to express our appreciation for the important work done by the Population Division in 2018, as well as ahead of and during this CPD session.

The Population Division has a unique position in international demography, with a wide range of publications – including policy briefs, datasets and activities that bring demographers together. We appreciate the technical expert meeting you organize, to help strengthen contacts and improve collaborations. We also want to emphasize the importance of your work with the World Population Prospects and look forward to the new results soon to be released. In Norway, we use the UN projections in our projections of international migration and are also currently considering utilizing the age distribution of sending countries in our work. We frequently look to the population division for innovations and improvements of projection methodologies.

Reliable data and publications from an independent, trusted institution are increasingly important today, in light of fake news and increasing disagreements around “facts”. Your information thus facilitates fundamental discussions of important aims and the way forward to reach agreed upon goals – without first having to discuss the premises of the figures that guide this work.

Harmonized and comparable data across nations are essential to improve our understanding of demographic phenomena and trends at a global level. Accurate and timely population data, disaggregated by age, sex, geographical location and migratory status enable individual countries to anticipate needs, determine the impact of public policies and confirm the pace of progress toward agreed-upon goals. We would like to underscore the importance of disaggregated data also at local levels, in areas relevant for measuring and monitoring progress of the SDGs and the ICPD PoA. Such information comprises the foundation of facts-based analyses and policy making at subnational, national, regional and international levels. We particularly applaud your efforts to expand data to measure universal access to sexual and reproductive health to include ALL women, not only those married or in a union. Likewise, we appreciate the updated data on living arrangements among elderly, important for policy work in aging societies. Along the same lines, we look forward to your review of new measures of population aging.

We recognize that arriving at comparative measures and comparable data is extremely challenging, and we appreciate the longstanding efforts of the Population Division in this field. At the same time, we observe that countries express the need to feel ownership of data and the handling of these, as mentioned frequently in the general debate. In light of this, we also want to underscore the important role the Population Division plays in statistical capacity building. By strengthening countries’ capacity to collect, process, disseminate and analyze relevant statistical information, they are enabled to promote evidence-based planning, public transparency and good governance - essential to promote the efficient management of a larger, older, more mobile and urbanized population facing higher levels of inequality.

Let me finish by once again complimenting the Population Division for the important work it does for the international community in facilitating the integration of the population dimension into the international development agenda. Thank you.