

INTRODUCTION

Population dynamics—including changes in population growth rates, age structures and distributions of people—are closely linked to national and global developmental challenges and their solutions. In the years ahead, Governments and the international community will need to address the development consequences of population dynamics before they unfold by adopting forward-looking and pro-active policies based on foreseeable demographic trends. In these efforts, it will be critical to assess and monitor key Government policies and programmes related to population dynamics and their consequences.

All the United Nations international population conferences since 1974 have emphasized the need to monitor population policies and programmes related to the implementation of their goals and recommendations, including the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), held at Cairo in 1994 that recommended that actions be taken “... to measure, assess, monitor and evaluate progress towards meeting the goals” of its Programme of Action (United Nations, 1995, chap. I, resolution 1, annex, para. 13.6).

The overriding goal of the ICPD Programme of Action, namely, to improve human welfare and promote sustainable development, is fully consistent with the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) contained in the Millennium Declaration of 2000 (United Nations, General Assembly, 2000). Indeed, some of the goals in the Programme of Action are identical to the MDGs, including those pertaining to the reduction of child mortality, the improvement of maternal health and the achievement of universal primary education (United Nations, 2005). Recognizing the centrality of the ICPD Programme of Action to these and other developmental challenges in the future, the General Assembly has decided to extend the ICPD Programme of Action and its key actions beyond 2014, for further implementation and to “ensure its follow-up in order to fully meet its goals and objectives” (United Nations, General Assembly, 2011a, p. 2).

The Population Division of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs is responsible for global monitoring of the implementation of the Programme of Action adopted by the 1994 ICPD, in the same way as it was responsible for tracking the World Population Plan of Action of the 1974 World Population Conference (United Nations, 1975). In carrying out this task, the Division conducts regular updates of Government policies and programmes related key population issues, and prepares periodic monitoring reports that adhere to the principles of objectivity and neutrality to measure the progress that countries have made in the implementation of the Programme of Action.

The current report is part of the efforts of the Population Division to disseminate the information resulting from its monitoring of national population policies and programmes. It provides an overview of population policies and related population indicators for all 193 Member States and three non-Member States of the United Nations for data referring to the middle of the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s decades—relating approximately to the times when the three United Nations population conferences were convened at Bucharest (1974), Mexico City (1984) and Cairo (1994)—as well as for 2005 and 2011.

Successive monitoring reports have documented significant changes since mid-1970s in Government views on population issues as well as in the formulation, implementation and evaluation of population policies. Monitoring of Government views and policies may itself contribute to an evolution in thinking by increasing global awareness of population and development issues and the need for appropriate and timely policy responses.

MAJOR SOURCES OF INFORMATION

In order to compile the requisite information for monitoring the implementation of the World Population Plan of Action and later the ICPD Programme of Action, the Population Division has established the Population Policy Data Bank, now called the World Population Policies Database. The major sources of information contained in the Database are of four broad types (Box Intro.1).

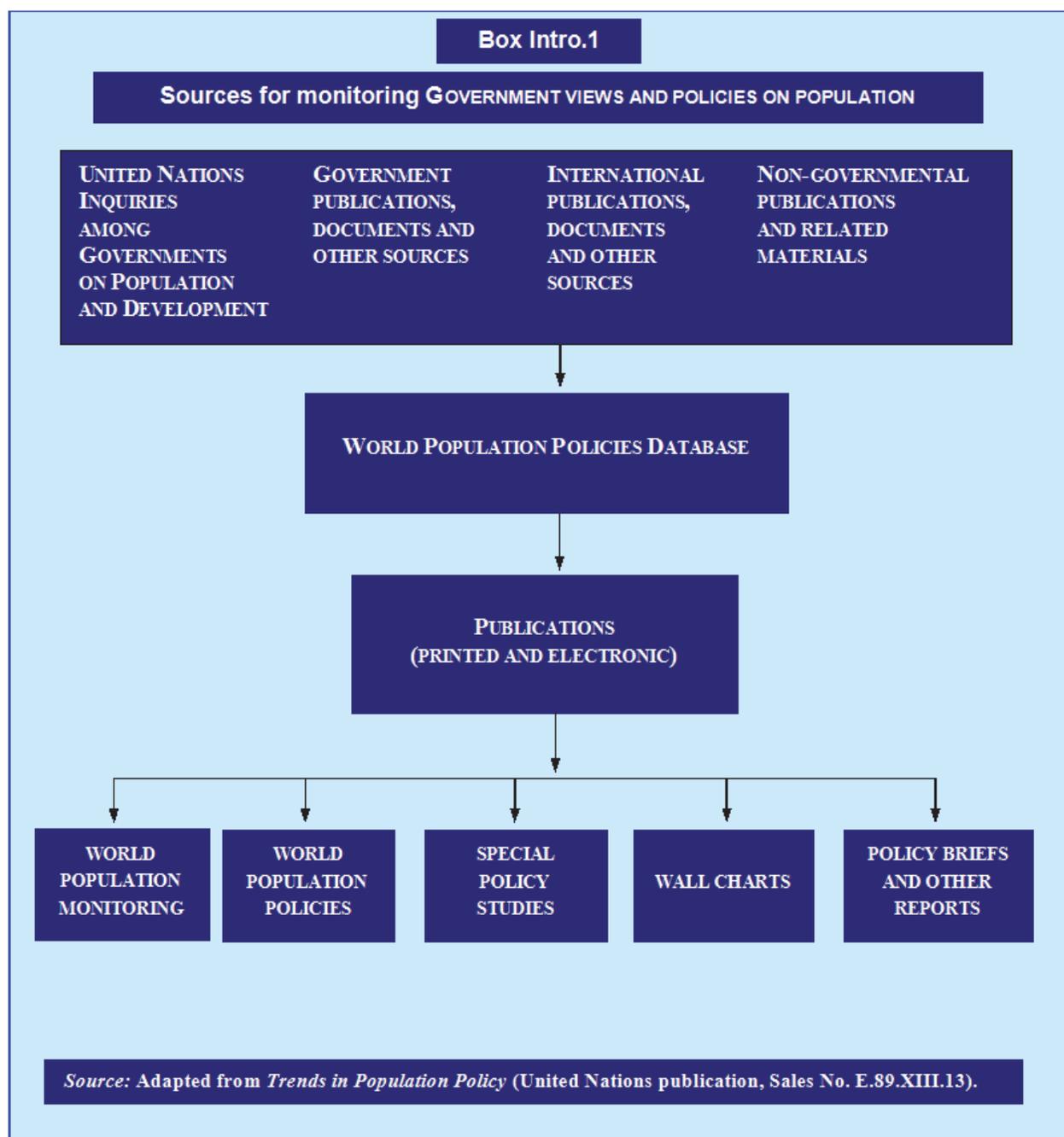
The first type of information comprises official Government responses to the *United Nations Inquiry among Governments on Population and Development*, of which there have been ten separate rounds since 1963. Each round of the Inquiry has consisted of a detailed request for information sent to all Member States and non-member States of the United Nations.

The first and second rounds of the Inquiry were conducted prior to the 1974 World Population Conference. The eighth Inquiry, the first directed towards the ICPD Programme of Action, was initiated in 1997. More recently, the Ninth Inquiry was sent to Governments in 2003, and the Tenth Inquiry was sent to Governments in 2008.

The second type of information consists of publications, documents, statements and other materials issued by Governments, including development plans, sectoral programmes, laws, regulations and proclamations. These materials are a particularly important source of data because they reflect the official positions taken by Governments.

The third category of information consists of materials provided by international organizations, such as regional commissions, funds, programmes and agencies of the United Nations system, as well as other regional intergovernmental organizations. Because countries collectively are the source of these materials, an official status is attached to them.

The fourth type of information consists of non-governmental materials, including clippings from the world press, articles in academic journals, proceedings of conferences and seminars, reports and studies prepared by research centres and non-governmental organizations, as well as correspondence and personal communications with experts.



ORGANIZATION OF THE REPORT

The report is divided into two parts. Part One provides a global perspective on the evolution of selected aspects of population policies between 1976 and 2011 and Part Two presents individual country profiles based on seven major topics: (1) population size and growth; (2) population age structure; (3) fertility; (4) reproductive health and family planning; (5) health and mortality; (6) spatial distribution and internal migration; and (7) international migration.

Information on a total of 42 policy variables, covering the above seven topics, was gathered for the 2011 revision of the World Population Policies Database (see Definitions of Population Policy Variables) between June 2011 and September 2012. These variables reflect three basic types of policy information: (i) Government views and concerns on the policy significance of selected population issues; (ii) Government intentions and objectives with respect to selected population parameters; and (iii) legal and programmatic measures adopted by Government to influence the levels or direction of selected population parameters.

There are several innovations in this version of the report, compared with previous editions. First, special attention is given to international migration issues in light of the forty-sixth session of the United Nations Commission on Population and Development in 2013, whose special theme is “New Trends in Migration: Demographic Aspects”, as well as the High-Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development scheduled to take place during the sixty-eighth session of the General Assembly in 2013. In addition to the standard information on Government views and policies on immigration and emigration, the report includes information on several new international migration topics, such as irregular migration, naturalization, facilitating return of migrants to their home countries, dual citizenship, and measures to attract diaspora investments. Second, given persistent morbidity and mortality challenges associated with undernutrition and infectious diseases in many countries, this report includes information on Government views on child undernutrition and Government concerns about tuberculosis and malaria. This is in addition to the information on child mortality, maternal mortality, life expectancy, and HIV/AIDS already included in previous rounds. Third, given rapid ageing and the growing significance of non-communicable diseases and their consequences for development in many countries, the report includes information on measures to address population ageing and Government concerns about the prevalence of overweight and obesity and non-communicable diseases in their countries. Finally, the report includes information on legal grounds on which abortion is permitted and laws and policies related to domestic violence under the reproductive health topic.

Part Two of the report presents country specific information on the evolution of Government views and policies from 1976 to 2011 with respect to population size and growth, population age structure, fertility, reproductive health and family planning, health and mortality, spatial distribution and internal migration, and international migration. Country profiles are presented for each of the 193 Member States and three non-member States (Cook Islands, the Holy See and Niue) of the United Nations. The material is presented in the form of two-page country profiles. The first page contains population policy information for each country referring to four points in time: 1976, 1986, 1996, and 2011. The second page provides data on selected demographic and socioeconomic indicators for selected dates.