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Programme implementation and future programme of work of the Secretariat in the field of population

Programme implementation and progress of work in the field of population in 2024: Population Division, Department of Economic and Social Affairs

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report contains a review of progress made by the Secretariat in implementing its programme of work in the field of population during 2024. It covers the activities of the Population Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs on the analysis of global trends in fertility, mortality, migration, urbanization and population ageing, the preparation of global population estimates and projections, the monitoring of population policies, the analysis of linkages between population and sustainable development, the dissemination of population data and information, technical cooperation with and capacity development provided to Member States and the support provided to intergovernmental processes.

The objective of the programme of work in the field of population in 2024 was to improve knowledge of global population trends, advance an evidence-based understanding of interactions between population change and sustainable development among policymakers and the public and strengthen the international community's capacity to effectively address current and emerging population issues and integrate the population dimension into the international development agenda. The Commission on Population and Development oversees the work of the Population Division and provides guidance on the programme of work as part of its annual session.

* E/CN.9/2025/1.



I. Introduction

1. The Population Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs is responsible for the implementation of the programme of work on population of the United Nations Secretariat. The programme of work is guided by the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development,¹ by the outcome of the twenty-first special session of the General Assembly on key actions for the further implementation of the Programme of Action (resolution [S-21/2](#), annex) and by the decision of the Assembly to extend the Programme of Action and the key actions for its further implementation beyond the original 20-year time-horizon in 2014 (resolution [65/234](#)). The outcomes of other relevant international conferences and summits are also taken into account, including the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution [70/1](#)), the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (resolution [73/195](#)) and the Progress Declaration of the first International Migration Review Forum (resolution [76/266](#)). In addition, the work of the Secretariat in the field of population is guided by the resolutions and decisions of the Commission on Population and Development, in particular its resolution [2004/1](#) on the programme of work in the field of population ([E/2004/25-E/CN.9/2004/9](#), chap. I, sect. B), and by other relevant resolutions and decisions of the Assembly, including those related to international migration and development, and of the Economic and Social Council.

2. As described in the programme budget, the objective of the programme of work on population in 2024 was to improve knowledge of global population trends, to advance an evidence-based understanding of interactions between population change and sustainable development among policymakers and the public, and to strengthen the international community's capacity to effectively address current and emerging population issues and integrate the population dimension into the international development agenda (see [A/78/6 \(Sect. 9\)](#), subprogramme 5, Population).

3. On behalf of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the Population Division collaborates closely with the agencies, funds and programmes and other bodies of the United Nations system in implementing its programme of work and in supporting the follow-up to the International Conference on Population and Development. United Nations offices and missions, national Governments, academic researchers, media representatives and the public at large regularly consult with the Division to obtain timely and pertinent data, information and analyses on population patterns and trends and their connection with development issues.

4. The present report provides a summary of the activities and deliverables of the Population Division during 2024, which included the provision of support to intergovernmental processes, the preparation of reports of the Secretary-General and other parliamentary documents, the monitoring of internationally agreed development goals, the dissemination of population data and information and technical cooperation. A list of activities and outputs completed in 2024 is presented in the annex to the present report. Reference is also made in the report to work in progress in 2024 that is expected to result in one or more completed outputs in 2025 or beyond.

II. Fertility and family planning

5. The Population Division continued its work to monitor adolescent fertility as custodian for Sustainable Development Goal indicator 3.7.2. The Division updated a global data set that includes information for 222 countries and areas on the birth rate

¹ *Report of the International Conference on Population and Development, Cairo, 5–13 September 1994 (A/CONF.171/13/Rev.1)*, chap. I, resolution 1.

for girls aged 10–14 years and for 230 countries and areas on the birth rate of girls and women aged 15–19 years for the period from 2000 to 2023. The data for both age groups were submitted for publication in the Global Sustainable Development Goal Indicators Database.² The Division also prepared a section in the *State of World Population 2024* report published by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).³ The input served to evaluate data collection on adolescent fertility, showing that the poorest data quality and availability are seen in regions where the information available suggests higher adolescent fertility rates, which in some countries is connected to high child marriage rates.

6. The Population Division released two data sets on family planning indicators in July 2024. The World Contraceptive Use 2024 data set provides comparable and up-to-date family planning indicators for women of reproductive age (aged 15–49 years).⁴ The data set pertains to 200 countries and areas of the world for the period from 1950 to 2023 and contains data available as of April 2024. The Estimates and Projections of Family Planning Indicators 2024 data set presents a systematic and comprehensive series of annual, model-based estimates and projections of key family planning indicators for 200 countries and areas as well as for regions and development groups.⁵ A Bayesian hierarchical model combined with country-specific time trends was used to generate the estimates, projections and uncertainty assessments in that data set. Both data sets are accompanied by a methodology report summarizing the approach used to compile survey-based estimates and produce model-based estimates and projections.⁶ In addition, both data sets are used for the global monitoring of Sustainable Development Goal indicator 3.7.1 on the proportion of women of reproductive age (aged 15–49 years) who have their need for family planning satisfied with modern methods, as well as for the global monitoring of the family planning component (tracer indicator) of Sustainable Development Goal indicator 3.8.1 on the coverage of essential health services, for which the overall monitoring is led by the World Health Organization. The Division also provided inputs to the proposals of WHO to revise the family planning tracer indicator and relevant populations used in Goal indicator 3.8.1 for the 2025 comprehensive review conducted by the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators.

7. The Population Division prepared the *World Fertility Report 2024*,⁷ in which it analysed data on total fertility rates, numbers of births, age-specific fertility rates and the mean age at childbearing from the latest revision of the United Nations population estimates and projections, *World Population Prospects*.⁸ The report presents the levels, trends and prospects of fertility for a 60-year period between 1994 and 2054 for three groups of countries: (a) those where fertility had fallen below the level fertility required for each generation to replace itself – referred to as “below-replacement fertility” – by 1994; (b) those that had reached below-replacement fertility level recently or were expected to reach that level by 2054; and (c) those projected to reach that level after 2054. The report serves to examine the future

² See <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/dataportal>.

³ United Nations Population Division, “Who matters enough to measure? The case of adolescent mothers”, in *Interwoven Lives, Threads of Hope: Ending Inequalities in Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights – State of World Population 2024* (New York, UNFPA (United Nations Population Fund), 2024).

⁴ See www.un.org/development/desa/pd/data/world-contraceptive-use.

⁵ See www.un.org/development/desa/pd/data/family-planning-indicators.

⁶ United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, “World contraceptive use 2024 and estimates and projections of family planning indicators 2024: methodology report”, POP/DB/CP/Rev2024 and POP/DB/FP/Rev2024, July 2024.

⁷ Available at https://www.un.org/development/desa/pd/sites/www.un.org.development.desa.pd/files/undesd_pd_2025_wfr-2024_advance-unedited.pdf.

⁸ See <https://population.un.org/wpp/>.

impacts of fertility trends on population growth or decline and on the changes in population age structures in countries with different demographic situations and prospects and to review policy options aimed at helping individuals and couples to fulfil their desires regarding how many children to have and when to have them.

8. Staff of the Population Division co-authored two articles in peer-reviewed journals, on identifying contraceptive prevalence stalls in sub-Saharan Africa using probabilistic methods⁹ and on documenting changes in contraceptive behaviour since 1970 and its relation to fertility decline.¹⁰ The work on these articles was supported by the Making Family Planning Count 3.0 grant from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

9. In addition, the Population Division gave presentations at the annual meeting of the Population Association of America, held in Columbus, Ohio, United States of America, from 17 to 20 April 2024 on: (a) identifying stalls in total fertility declines using a probabilistic approach; (b) comparing expert opinions on the future of fertility trends with projections from the *World Population Prospects*; and (c) creating probabilistic projections of fertility conditional on policy interventions.

III. Health and mortality

10. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs, through its Population and Statistics Divisions, continued to support the Technical Advisory Group on COVID-19 Mortality Assessment, in collaboration with WHO.¹¹ The primary role of the Technical Advisory Group is to advise and support efforts by WHO and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs to assist Member States in obtaining accurate estimates of numbers of deaths attributable to the direct and indirect impacts of the pandemic. The Technical Advisory Group comprises more than 30 experts from the fields of epidemiology, demography, statistics and other relevant areas, drawn from national statistical offices, ministries of health, universities, research institutes and elsewhere.

11. As part of the work of the Inter-agency Group for Child Mortality Estimation, the Population Division contributed to the update of a joint database on the mortality crises. The database is used by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) to incorporate mortality crises when estimating under-five mortality in countries lacking vital registration and by the Division and the World Health Organization to incorporate excess mortality due to various types of crises when computing life tables for, respectively, the *World Population Prospects* and the *World Health Statistics* (including maternal mortality estimates by the Maternal Mortality Estimation Inter-agency Group; see also section IX.D).

IV. International migration

12. The Population Division implemented enhancements to the management of empirical data, documentation and estimation procedures for the next revision of the International Migrant Stock data set, to be released in 2025. The Division produces, on behalf of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, periodic estimates of the number of international migrants residing in all countries and areas, disaggregated by sex and origin. The data are widely used to describe levels and trends in the number of international migrants at the national, regional and global levels.

⁹ Mark C. Wheldon and others, "A new look at contraceptive prevalence plateaus in sub-Saharan Africa: a probabilistic approach", *Demographic Research*, vol. 50, No. 31 (2024).

¹⁰ Vladimíra Kantorová and John Bongaarts, "Contraceptive change and fertility transition", *Population and Development Review*, vol. 50, No. 52 (December 2024).

¹¹ See www.un.org/development/desa/pd/events/TAG.

13. The Population Division released a report on international migration and sustainable development¹² on 18 December 2024, on the occasion of International Migrants Day. In the report, the Division analyses trends in international migration at the global and regional levels and examines the relationship of international migration with development goals in the areas of poverty and inequality, health, education, gender equality and the empowerment of women, decent work, sustainable cities, climate change, responsible consumption and production and sustainable agriculture, inter alia. It also addresses the global governance of international migration and provides policy recommendations focused on the social, economic and environmental causes and consequences of international migration.

14. In collaboration with the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the Department of Economic and Social Affairs is co-leading a key workstream of the United Nations Network on Migration in developing a limited set of indicators to review progress related to the implementation of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, as requested in paragraph 70 of the Progress Declaration of the International Migration Review Forum held in 2022. The workstream was focused on the development of a proposal for the limited set of indicators. In 2024, two global consultations were held for Member States and stakeholders, with over 360 participants including representatives of 61 States, and two online surveys were conducted. Nearly 50 States, international organizations and stakeholders responded to the first survey, while 25 responded to the second survey. The final proposal consists of 27 core and 83 additional indicators grouped by objective. The indicators are accompanied by key background information and statistics on international migration. The proposed indicators are a voluntary tool that can be used by Member States at their discretion. The workstream also served to develop a comprehensive strategy for improving disaggregated migration data. The resulting proposal, consisting of the limited set of indicators and the comprehensive strategy for improving disaggregated migration data, was included in the biennial report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the Global Compact published in 2024 (A/79/590).

15. During 2024, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs contributed to statements, background notes and position papers prepared under the aegis of the United Nations Network on Migration, including in the context of the Summit of the Future, International Migrants Day and other events.

V. Global population estimates and projections

16. On World Population Day (11 July), the Population Division issued the 2024 edition of the *World Population Prospects*,¹³ which received considerable media coverage following its launch at a press briefing. According to this latest assessment, the world's population is expected to continue growing for another 60 years or so, reaching a peak of around 10.3 billion people in the mid-2080s, up from 8.2 billion in 2024. After peaking, it is projected to start declining, gradually falling to 10.2 billion people by the end of the century. These results refer to the medium projection, which assumes a decline in fertility in countries where large families are still prevalent and a slight increase in fertility in several low-fertility countries.

17. The preparation of the official United Nations population estimates and projections for all countries and areas of the world is a key part of the work of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, led by the Population Division. The data are used in the calculation of many of the development indicators commonly

¹² *International Migration and Sustainable Development* (United Nations publication, 2024).

¹³ See www.un.org/development/desa/pd/world-population-prospects-2024.

employed by the United Nations system, including for more than a quarter of the indicators used for the global monitoring of progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. The estimates and projections are used extensively by United Nations entities and the general public and are widely considered to provide the most authoritative set of demographic data on global population trends.

18. The 2024 revision contains the latest information available on population size, fertility, mortality and international migration and offers estimates and projections of various population parameters for 237 countries and areas as well as aggregated geographical regions and other groupings of countries or areas. Several outputs presenting results from the 2024 revision are available on the Division's website. Detailed data for countries and areas, world regions and various other country groupings¹⁴ are available from the website in a variety of file formats, including Excel and ASCII, and through the Data Portal dissemination platform.¹⁵

19. The Population Division prepared the report *World Population Prospects 2024: Summary of Results* to showcase key trends based on the new estimates and projections. In the report, the Division adopted the analytical framework of the demographic transition, focusing on the year in which populations peak in size, to explore differences in population trends across countries and regions today and to provide insights into their future trajectories. It also offered a series of policy recommendations to help countries to prepare for population sizes, age structures and spatial distributions that may differ appreciably from those of their recent past.¹⁶ A companion policy brief was also prepared summarizing some of the main findings and policy recommendations of the report.¹⁷

20. Supporting materials, such as data sources and structured meta-information, are also available.¹⁸ The website includes various graphs and thematic profiles illustrating the data,¹⁹ a methodology report²⁰ and a technical paper providing further details on the preparation of annual estimates of adult mortality by broad age groups and sex.

21. The 2024 revision builds on the progress achieved with the 2022 edition, with further enhancements made to the underlying methods.²¹ In the 2024 edition, the projections of net migration are probabilistic for the first time, with the magnitude of past variability in annual net migration rates being incorporated into the uncertainty of the migration projection for each country and adding additional uncertainty to the projection of total population. As a result, it is now possible to show how uncertainty around future migration trends contributes to the overall uncertainty around future

¹⁴ See <https://population.un.org/wpp/downloads?folder=Special%20Aggregates&group=Economic%20and%20trading%20groups>.

¹⁵ See <https://population.un.org/dataportal/home>.

¹⁶ *World Population Prospects 2024: Summary of Results* (United Nations publication, 2024).

¹⁷ United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, "Leveraging population trends for a more sustainable and inclusive future: insights from World Population Prospects 2024", Policy Brief, No. 167, November 2024.

¹⁸ See <https://population.un.org/wpp/data-sources>.

¹⁹ See <https://population.un.org/wpp/graphs>.

²⁰ See https://population.un.org/wpp/assets/Files/WPP2024_Methodology.pdf.

²¹ In particular, three new scenarios were introduced to consider the potential impact of changes in fertility rates among adolescent women and girls, and several methodological refinements were implemented regarding: (a) the estimation of age-specific fertility rates; (b) the modelling of age and sex profiles of net international migration; (c) additional options for smoothing mortality schedules over age and time; (d) expanded use of official population estimates as benchmark populations for estimating net international migration; (e) refinements of age-sex patterns of crisis-related deaths; and (f) an update of crisis-related mortality estimates including a new category of deaths due to heat waves.

population trends and to compare the uncertainty attributable to migration to that associated with future trends in fertility and mortality.

22. The Population Division continued to compute probabilistic population projections for all countries and areas up to the year 2100. Given the long projection horizon, results at the country level are subject to a high degree of uncertainty. Therefore, the summary report and other outputs draw attention not only to the outcomes of the medium projection, but also to uncertainty intervals describing a range of plausible outcomes. In addition, the 2024 edition of the *World Population Prospects* includes 13 separate projection scenarios that demonstrate the sensitivity of the results to changes in the underlying assumptions, and the various scenarios can also be used to explore the implications of alternative future patterns of population change.²²

23. The Division collaborated with the Population Division of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) on various tasks in deriving the population estimates and projections for countries and areas of Latin America and the Caribbean.

24. On behalf of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the Population Division contributed to: (a) monthly meetings of the Inter-Agency Working Group on the interoperability of baseline population, displacement and refugee data,²³ a joint initiative of UNFPA, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, IOM, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and WorldPop, as well as participating in the technical workshop on Learning and Adapting Lessons on Baseline Population, Displacement and Refugee Data Interoperability in Ukraine, Mozambique and the Philippines, held in Johannesburg, South Africa, from 6 to 7 August; (b) the Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, and Reusable Vocabularies working group of the International Union for the Scientific Study of Population and the Committee on Data of the International Science Council to promote greater access to, and simpler means of utilizing, demographic data and associated metadata;²⁴ and (c) the second workstream of the Friends of the Chair Group on social and demographic statistics of the Statistical Commission to review national approaches and identify elements for a potential overarching conceptual framework for social and demographic statistics. The Department also organized the third expert group meeting for the fourth revision of the Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses, held in person from 4 to 6 September and led by the Statistics Division with support from the Population Division.²⁵

25. Staff from the Population Division contributed expertise on demographic trends and methods of population estimation and projection on several occasions, including: (a) a discussion panel of the Statistical Commission entitled “United Nations World Data Forum: championing data and statistics with a renewed global action plan” held on 29 February 2024 in New York; (b) virtual meetings on data reliability criteria for national population estimates convened on 12 March 2024 by the World Bank World Development Indicators team in Washington, D.C., and on 4 June 2024 by the Institute of Statistics of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization in Montreal, Canada; (c) a virtual seminar on probabilistic models used in the *World Population Prospects* held on 9 April 2024 at the University of Washington; (d) a virtual seminar on estimation challenges and analytical strategies to reconstruct demographic levels and trends since 1950 for 237

²² See <https://population.un.org/wpp/definition-of-projection-scenarios>.

²³ The aim is to strengthen in 2023–2025 the Common Operational Datasets on Population Statistics (COD-PS) availability, quality and usability across the humanitarian system of the United Nations to provide the most up-to-date information on the size, age/sex profile and geographic distribution of a population in an emergency preparedness and humanitarian context.

²⁴ See <https://iussp.org/en/iussp-codata-fair-vocabularies-working-group>.

²⁵ See <https://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic-social/meetings/2024/egm-20240904>.

countries and areas, held on 11 June 2024 and hosted by the Population Studies Group of the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine;²⁶ (e) a virtual Department of Economic and Social Affairs global policy dialogue for the classroom providing highlights from *World Population Prospects 2024*²⁷ on 27 August 2024; (f) an overview of national and international population estimates for a virtual session on building modern and resilient population data systems to enhance data quality, improve cost efficiency and policy relevance²⁸ for the second “sprint” organized by the Friends of the Chair group on social and demographic statistics, in collaboration with the Statistics Division on 3 October 2024; (g) an overview of future population trends and their measurement for the WorldPop tenth anniversary event on mapping the future of spatial demography,²⁹ held at the University of Southampton on 9 October 2024; (h) virtual participation in a panel discussion on the theme “Harnessing demographic data for policy and legislation to address Pakistan’s high population growth rate” organized by the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics for the National Data Fest 2024 of Pakistan in Islamabad on 21 October 2024; (i) a virtual presentation on the data and methodology that underpin the United Nations population estimates and projections to the Doha Data Forum on 23 October 2024; and (j) a virtual seminar on the population estimation methods used to prepare the *World Population Prospects*, organized by the African Union Institute for Statistics as part of a technical meeting on labour migration statistics held in Bujumbura, Burundi, from 6 to 8 November 2024.

VI. Urbanization and spatial distribution

26. In 2024, the Population Division participated in several technical meetings on the new “degree of urbanization” concept for measuring urbanization in a more internationally comparable manner and on new methods for forecasting urbanization. The Division continued to collaborate with the European Commission on incorporating the new statistical concept as a complement to national definitions of urban residence in the next revision of the *World Urbanization Prospects* in 2025 and on obtaining estimates and projections from 1950 to 2050 based on the new concept.

27. During 2024, the Population Division worked to prepare the 2025 revision of the *World Urbanization Prospects*. The 2025 revision will incorporate the latest available census data and provide two sets of estimates of urbanization over time: one based on national definitions for context-specific use, and one based on the degree of urbanization definition, providing a new, internationally comparable way to monitor and compare levels and trends in urbanization across the globe. The new revision will provide estimates of the urban and rural populations of 237 countries and areas (with additional geographical and functional groupings of the 237 countries and areas) from 1950 to 2024 and projections from 2025 to 2050. It will also provide data on the size and spatial distribution of major urban areas based on the 2024 release of the Global Human Settlement Urban Centre Database³⁰ developed by the European Commission’s Joint Research Centre.

VII. Population ageing, household composition and living arrangements

28. The Population Division prepared the Department of Economic and Social Affairs policy brief No. 161, “On the path to an older population: maximizing the

²⁶ See www.lshtm.ac.uk/newsevents/events/series/population-studies-group.

²⁷ See <https://webtv.un.org/en/asset/k1c/k1cyxbcfxa>.

²⁸ See <https://events.teams.microsoft.com/event/5b29df4d-c42c-49e2-98fa-014d5ada548c@0f9e35db-544f-4f60-bdcc-5ea416e6dc70>.

²⁹ See www.worldpop.org/blog/worldpop-10-year-anniversary-event/.

³⁰ See https://human-settlement.emergency.copernicus.eu/ghs_ucdb_2024.php.

benefits from the demographic dividend in the least developed countries”, drawing on findings from the report *World Population Ageing 2023: Challenges and Opportunities of Population Ageing in the Least Developed Countries*. The policy brief served to encourage the Governments of these countries to accelerate the implementation of the Doha Programme of Action, including its call to “support the acceleration of the demographic transition, where relevant”, to maximize the benefits derived from the demographic dividend and to develop economically before their populations become much older.

29. The Population Division, on behalf of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, also participated in activities of the United Nations Inter-Agency Group on Ageing, a network³¹ of entities of the United Nations system that exchange information on and integrate ageing into their programmes of work on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The focus of the Group’s work is on supporting the implementation of General Assembly resolution [75/131](#) on the United Nations Decade of Healthy Ageing (2021–2030). The Division also continued to support the Technical Advisory Group for Measurement, Monitoring and Evaluation of the United Nations Decade of Healthy Ageing.

30. The Population Division made several presentations in the context of international meetings on population ageing, including a keynote address at the opening of a conference entitled “Global ageing phenomenon: navigating demographic shifts in the twenty-first century”, convened by the Government of Malaysia on 4 and 5 June 2024 in Kuala Lumpur.

VIII. Population and development

31. Drawing on the findings of the 2023 report *Population Prospects of Countries in Special Situations: Tracking Demographic Change among the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States*, the Population Division prepared a policy brief entitled “Demographic outlook for the small island developing States: implications of population trends for building resilience and prosperity across SIDS”.³² The policy brief was launched at a global policy dialogue on the demographic prospects of small island developing States organized by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs on 30 May 2024 on the margins of the fourth International Conference on Small Island Developing States.

IX. Support for intergovernmental processes

32. The Population Division, on behalf of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, supported the organization of the fifty-seventh session of the Commission on Population and Development, which was held at United Nations Headquarters from 29 April to 3 May 2024. The special theme of the session was “Assessing the status of implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and its contribution to the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development during the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development”. The Division supported the work of the Chair and the Bureau, including by organizing briefings of the Chair and convening meetings of the Bureau. The Division assisted the Bureau in organizing plenary meetings by inviting

³¹ The United Nations Inter-Agency Group on Ageing was formalized in 2023; see General Assembly resolution [78/177](#).

³² United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, “Demographic outlook for the small island developing States: implications of population trends for building resilience and prosperity across SIDS”, Policy Brief, No. 159, June 2024.

high-level officials for the opening, organizing interactive panel discussions and facilitating the participation of panellists. The Division also supported the co-facilitators during informal consultations on draft proposals, including a political declaration (see [E/CN.9/2024/L.4](#)) on the occasion of the thirtieth anniversary of the International Conference on Population and Development. In the declaration, adopted by consensus at the opening of the session, Member States reaffirmed their sustained commitment to the Programme of Action of the Conference and pledged their unwavering support to continue to work towards its full and effective implementation.

33. In response to requests from Member States for events related to the theme of the annual session throughout the year, the Population Division organized an informal substantive briefing by the Chair of the fifty-eighth session of the Commission on Population and Development on 12 December 2024.³³ The briefing featured presentations by representatives of the Division, UNFPA and WHO on topics related to the special theme of the fifty-eighth session, “Ensuring healthy lives and promoting well-being for all at all ages”. Member States posed questions to the panellists and shared their ideas and expectations for the upcoming session of the Commission.

A. Reports of the Secretary-General

34. On behalf of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the Population Division prepared the report of the Secretary-General on the theme of the fifty-seventh session of the Commission, “Assessing the status of implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and its contribution to the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development during the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development” ([E/CN.9/2024/2](#)). The report served to examine population megatrends since 1994 and prospects until 2054, provide regional perspectives on population and development and investigate the causes and consequences of rapid population growth in a subset of developing countries as well as slowing population growth and even population decline in other countries. The report also served to explore the impact of advanced levels of population ageing, increased urbanization, greater mobility and other key cross-cutting issues affecting the implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the 2030 Agenda. The report included forward-looking policy recommendations emphasizing the importance of international cooperation in maintaining the momentum of recent decades, extending development gains to the most marginalized and coordinating global action to meet the ambition of the Conference and the 2030 Agenda.

35. On behalf of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the Population Division prepared the report of the Secretary-General to the General Assembly on international migration and development ([A/79/323](#)). In the report, building on the recommendations of the *Global Sustainable Development Report 2023*, the Division used the organizing framework of the six transitions developed by the United Nations Sustainable Development Group, comprising food systems, energy access and affordability, digital connectivity, education, jobs and social protection, and climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution. The Division described sustainable, resilient and innovative solutions for leveraging international migration to accelerate progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals within and across countries. Spanning the economic, social and environmental dimensions of the six transitions, the report served to investigate policy responses that could facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people while countering the adverse drivers and structural factors that compelled people to leave their countries of origin.

³³ See www.un.org/development/desa/pd/events/briefing-substantive-preparations-CPD58.

B. Expert group meetings

36. To inform the preparation of the fifty-eighth session of the Commission, on 16 and 17 October 2024, the Population Division convened a virtual expert group meeting on ensuring healthy lives and promoting well-being for all at all ages. The meeting included 21 invited experts from research institutions, Governments, UNFPA, WHO, the World Bank, and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, as well as some 100 observers from Member States, civil society and the United Nations system. The meeting was focused on achievements, opportunities and challenges on key health topics, such as promoting health and well-being for all across the life course, accelerating progress towards the target of universal health coverage, strengthening the sustainability of health systems in countries confronting a variety of demographic situations and prospects and enhancing the preparedness and resilience of health systems in the face of health emergencies, pandemics, conflicts, natural disasters and climate change. The discussions concluded with recommendations on promoting health and well-being for all across the life course.

C. Support for the General Assembly

37. Pursuant to Economic and Social Council decision 2022/332, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs supported the Chair and the Bureau of the fifty-seventh session of the Commission on Population and Development in preparing for a commemorative event on the occasion of the thirtieth anniversary of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development that was convened by the General Assembly on 29 April 2024.

38. During the seventy-ninth session of the General Assembly, the Population Division serviced intergovernmental negotiations in the Second Committee on a biennial resolution on international migration and development.³⁴ The resolution was adopted by consensus.

D. Monitoring of internationally agreed development goals

39. During 2024, the Population Division contributed to the work of the Inter-Agency Group for Child Mortality Estimation, whose task is to monitor progress made towards the achievement of target 3.2 of the Sustainable Development Goals, on ending preventable deaths of newborns and children under 5 years of age. The Group is led by UNICEF and also includes WHO, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (represented by the Population Division) and the World Bank. The Division provided information to update a database maintained by UNICEF, participated in the annual meeting of the technical advisory group held in New York from 8 to 10 July and collaborated in the preparation of a report entitled *Levels and Trends in Child Mortality*, released on 13 March 2024.

40. In addition, the Population Division continued to participate, on behalf of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, in the Maternal Mortality Estimation Inter-Agency Group, which is responsible for monitoring progress in reducing maternal mortality, as called for in target 3.1 of the Sustainable Development Goals. The Group is led by WHO, with the participation of UNICEF, UNFPA, the World Bank and the Department (represented by the Population Division). The Division provides key inputs for the estimation process, including country-level estimates of the number of women of reproductive age, the total fertility rate and the number of

³⁴ See General Assembly resolution [79/217](#).

live births, as well as female adult mortality and excess deaths due to crises. The Division also contributed to two virtual technical advisory group meetings, held on 14 and 15 February and on 9 and 10 September, respectively, to review the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on maternal mortality for the next round of global estimates, to be published in 2025 and covering the period from 2000 to 2023.

41. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs prepared the report of the Secretary-General on global progress in the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals in 2024, which include its estimates of the proportion of women of reproductive age (15–49 years) who have their need for family planning satisfied with modern methods of contraception (Goal indicator 3.7.1) and of birth rates for girls aged 10–14 years or 15–19 years (Goal indicator 3.7.2).³⁵ These estimates were included in the Department's update of the Global Sustainable Development Goal Indicators Database.³⁶

42. During 2024, the Population Division developed plans and tools for the implementation of the fourteenth United Nations Inquiry among Governments on Population and Development, to be launched in the fourth quarter of 2025. This included preparation of four thematic Inquiry modules on: (a) population trends and ageing; (b) spatial distribution and urbanization; (c) fertility, family planning and reproductive health; and (d) international migration. The Inquiry module on fertility, family planning and reproductive health provides information for global monitoring of Sustainable Development Goal indicator 5.6.2 on guaranteed full and equal access to sexual and reproductive health care, information and education, and the module on international migration for the measurement of Goal indicator 10.7.2 on orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration.

X. Dissemination of population information and data

43. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs continued to strengthen its communications and outreach activities on population, in close collaboration with the Department of Global Communications. In line with the strategic communication framework of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the Population Division prepared key messages, media advisories, press releases and social media packages, including digital cards, infographics, tweets and Facebook posts to promote major publications and intergovernmental events on population.

44. According to information obtained through Google Analytics, the websites maintained by the Population Division had nearly 3.3 million page views in 2024. Outputs presenting the data and findings of the 2024 edition of the *World Population Prospects*, including reports, data files in Excel and ASCII formats, a new online database and interactive plots and maps, as well as other supporting materials, were widely consulted in 2024. The report *World Population Prospects 2024: Summary of Results* was the third most downloaded publication in the Department and alone accounted for 14 per cent of the annual downloads recorded by the Department.³⁷

45. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs worked closely with UNFPA and the Department of Global Communications in organizing outreach activities in the context of the fifty-seventh session of the Commission on Population and Development. On World Population Day (11 July), the Population Division launched *World Population Prospects 2024: Summary of Results*, presenting the key findings of the twenty-eighth edition of the official United Nations population estimates and projections. The launch was supported by a wide range of academic institutions and

³⁵ *The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2024* (United Nations publication, 2024).

³⁶ See <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/dataportal>.

³⁷ See <https://desapublications.un.org/most-downloaded-publications>.

media outlets from around the world. The Division contributed virtually to three partner events organized by academic institutions in China, Oman and Poland. The Division also shared the preliminary data set with various academic institutions and media houses around the globe before the launch and conducted interviews with journalists from the BBC, the China News Service, *Die Zeit*, *El País*, *Le Monde*, National Public Radio and the *Wall Street Journal*, among others.

46. In 2024, staff continued to meet with delegations of Member States to discuss various population-related topics, including the Population Division's estimates and projections of the global population, the work of the Commission, the follow-up to and review of the 2030 Agenda and the work of the United Nations in the area of international migration. Throughout the year, the Population Division responded to a large number of requests for population information and data from Governments, international organizations, civil society, the media, the research community, the private sector and the general public.

XI. Technical cooperation

47. At the request of national statistical offices of several countries, and with support from the Technical Division of UNFPA and its regional and country offices, the Population Division held technical meetings in New York with representatives of the United Arab Emirates on 29 February, Uganda on 12 July and Qatar on 16 July, and virtually with Saudi Arabia on 19 February, Papua New Guinea on 19 November and Ghana on 17 December, to discuss new census results and explain the analytical methods used by the Division in preparing population estimates and projections, in particular the methods used to evaluate the quality of census data used as the baseline reference for population projections. Meetings to discuss policy responses to low fertility and population ageing were held in New York with representatives of the Republic of Korea on 19 September and of China on 19 November.

48. At the request of the National Institute of Population and Social Security Research of Japan, a staff member of the Population Division participated in a public seminar in Tokyo on the theme "Visualizing intergenerational solidarity using National Transfer Accounts" on 3 and 4 December 2024. During the seminar, the staff member discussed connections between the 2030 Agenda and the National Transfer Account framework, showing how National Transfer Account analysis can support the twin goals of sustainability and inclusion. More than 150 participants from the Government of Japan and academia attended the seminar. Government officials recognized the importance of the work of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs in developing manuals to guide countries in implementing the new frameworks as part of its efforts in capacity development.

49. As part of its contribution to the support provided by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs to the resident coordinator system and the United Nations country teams, the Population Division provided input and reviewed common country assessments, United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks and other documents, such as strategic prioritization concept notes and methodology notes, for some 18 countries.

50. The Population Division continued its collaboration with UNFPA for the development of the fourteenth Inquiry module on fertility, family planning and reproductive health and with IOM and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development for the module on international migration. It established new partnerships with WHO for the Inquiry module on population trends and ageing and with the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) for the module on spatial distribution and urbanization.

51. At the request of the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, and with the support of the UNFPA country office, the Population Division held a national capacity-building workshop from 9 to 13 December in Islamabad to train 21 government officials from the Bureau, the National Institute of Population Studies of Pakistan, the four provincial bureaux of statistics and the Sustainable Development Policy Institute in the methodology for the production of national and subnational probabilistic population projections based on the statistical methods developed and used by the United Nations for the production of the *World Population Prospects*. The goal was to strengthen the capabilities of national and provincial statistical organizations and other institutions involved in conducting and interpreting population projections in Pakistan. The workshop followed the commencement of the release of results from the 2023 census of Pakistan.

52. As part of its capacity development efforts, the Population Division published the *National Time Transfer Accounts Manual: Measuring and Analysing the Gendered Economy*.³⁸ A new extension of the National Transfer Account methodology, the National Time Transfer Accounts, includes both paid market work and unpaid household work to measure how national populations simultaneously produce, consume, share, and save resources. The National Time Transfer Accounts manual provides systematic, comprehensive and coherent methods for the disaggregation of the major components of national accounts by age and sex, filling an important gap in understanding of the gender dimension of economies and providing a sound basis for policy decisions in the Sustainable Development Goal era.

53. The Population Division, in collaboration with ECLAC and the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, is implementing the Development Account project entitled “Inclusive and sustainable economic growth in a society for all ages in the post-COVID-19 era in Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean”. The project establishes a new analytical framework called National Inclusion Accounts, a further extension of the National Transfer Accounts that provides a methodology to estimate national economic activity disaggregated by age and socioeconomic status, giving evidence on economic inclusion and inequality across various population groups. National Inclusion Accounts make inequality more visible, and in a way that provides an evidence base for policy action by revealing how individuals, families, markets and Governments – the whole of society – transfer resources within national economies. A first draft of a manual on National Inclusion Accounts was developed in 2024 and will be revised as the methodology is implemented and tested in eight pilot countries (Colombia, Costa Rica, Jamaica, Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Maldives, Uruguay and Viet Nam). In October and November 2024, the Population Division, together with ECLAC and the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, held virtual national training workshops for seven of the pilot countries to introduce the National Inclusion Accounts methodology.

³⁸ *National Time Transfer Accounts Manual: Measuring and Analysing the Gendered Economy* (United Nations publication, 2024).

Annex

Publications, expert group meetings and other materials prepared or events organized by the Population Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (1 January–31 December 2024)

Expert group meetings

Expert group meeting on ensuring healthy lives and promoting well-being for all at all ages, virtual meeting, 16 and 17 October 2024

Capacity development workshops

National training workshop on National Inclusion Accounts, Colombia, 2 and 3 October 2024 (virtual)

National training workshop on National Inclusion Accounts, Costa Rica, 22 and 23 October 2024 (virtual)

National training workshop on National Inclusion Accounts, Jamaica, 29 and 30 October 2024 (virtual)

Training workshop on the National Inclusion Accounts methodology for the Lao Democratic People's Republic, Malaysia, Maldives and Viet Nam, 26–28 November 2024 (virtual)

National training workshop on probabilistic population projections, Islamabad, 9–13 December 2024

Reports of the Secretary-General and other parliamentary documents

Report of the Secretary-General assessing the status of implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and its contribution to the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development during the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development ([E/CN.9/2024/2](#))

Report of the Secretary-General on programme implementation and progress of work in the field of population in 2023: Population Division, Department of Economic and Social Affairs ([E/CN.9/2024/5](#))

Report of the Secretary-General on international migration and development ([A/79/323](#))

Publications

International Migration and Sustainable Development (UN DESA/POP/2023/TR/NO.7)

World Population Prospects 2024: Summary of Results (UN DESA/POP/2024/TR/NO.9)

World Fertility Report 2024 (UN DESA/POP/2024/TR/NO.10)

Technical materials

World Population Prospects 2024: Methodology of the United Nations Population Estimates and Projections (UN DESA/POP/2024/DC/NO. 10)

World Population Prospects 2024: Data Sources. (UN DESA/POP/2024/DC/NO.11)

World contraceptive use 2024 and estimates and projections of family planning indicators 2024: methodology report (POP/DB/CP/Rev2024 and POP/DB/FP/Rev2024)

“Estimating age-sex-specific adult mortality in the *World Population Prospects*: a Bayesian modelling approach” (UN DESA/POP/2024/TP/No. 9)

National Time Transfer Accounts Manual: Measuring and Analysing the Gendered Economy (United Nations publication, 2024).

Policy briefs and fact sheets

“Demographic outlook for the small island developing States: implications of population trends for building resilience and prosperity across SIDS”, Policy Brief, No. 159, June 2024

“On the path to an older population: maximizing the benefits from the demographic dividend in the least developed countries”, Policy Brief, No. 161. August 2024

“Leveraging population trends for a more sustainable and inclusive future: Insights from *World Population Prospects 2024*”, Policy Brief, No. 167, November 2024

“International migration and sustainable development: ten key messages”, December 2024

“*World Population Prospects 2024: Summary of Results* – ten key messages”, July 2024

“Commission on Population and Development: Ten key messages”, April 2024
