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Commission on Population and Development Background Guide 2020

Written by: Vikram Sakkia and Katie Conti, Directors
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Dear Delegates,

Welcome to the 2020 National Model United Nations New York Conference (NMUN•NY)! We are pleased to introduce you to our committee, the Commission on Population and Development (CPD). This year's staff includes: Directors Vikram Sakkia (Conference A) and Katie Conti (Conference B), and Assistant Directors Ryan Shepard (Conference A) and Xin Guan (Conference B). Vikram holds a B.S. from the American University of Sharjah and is currently pursuing a M.S. at New York University, both in Computer Engineering. Katie holds a B.A. in International Relations, Public Communication, and Geography from Syracuse University. She currently works with Meridian International Center in Washington, D.C. on the implementation of public diplomacy and international exchange programming for the U.S. Department of State. Ryan holds a B.S. in Urban and Regional Planning from California State Polytechnic University. He works full-time as a housing and climate resilience planner in California. Xin completed her B.A. in English Language and Literature at Northwestern Polytechnical University, Xi'an, China. She is currently pursuing her Masters in Translation, while taking an internship at the United Nations System Staff College.

The topics under discussion for the Commission on Population and Development (CPD) are:

- I. Improving Accessibility and the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Urban Areas
- II. Supporting a Growing Population of Older Persons in Rural Areas
- III. Population, Food Security, Nutrition and Sustainable Development

CPD is an important organization within the United Nations (UN) system, and it plays a critical role in assessing and reviewing the implementation of the Programme of Action from the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development. CPD offers a forum for the international community to discuss a wide range of topics related to population issues and international development. In order to accurately simulate the committee, it will be critical for delegates to understand its role as an advisory body undertaking normative, not operational or programmatic, work.

This Background Guide serves as an introduction to the topics for this committee. However, it is not intended to replace individual research. We encourage you to explore your Member State's policies in depth and use the Annotated Bibliography and Bibliography to further your knowledge on these topics. In preparation for the Conference, each delegation will submit a Position Paper by 11:59 p.m. (Eastern) on 1 March 2020 in accordance with the guidelines in the [Position Paper Guide](#) and the [NMUN•NY Position Papers](#) website.

Two resources, available to download from the [NMUN website](#), that serve as essential instruments in preparing for the Conference and as a reference during committee sessions are the:

1. [NMUN Delegate Preparation Guide](#) - explains each step in the delegate process, from pre-Conference research to the committee debate and resolution drafting processes. Please take note of the information on plagiarism, and the prohibition on pre-written working papers and resolutions. Delegates should not start discussion on the topics with other members of their committee until the first committee session.
2. [NMUN Rules of Procedure](#) - include the long and short form of the rules, as well as an explanatory narrative and example script of the flow of procedure.

In addition, please review the mandatory [NMUN Conduct Expectations](#) on the NMUN website. They include the Conference dress code and other expectations of all attendees. We want to emphasize that any instances of sexual harassment or discrimination based on race, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, religion, age, or disability will not be tolerated. If you have any questions concerning your preparation for the committee or the Conference itself, please contact the Under-Secretaries-General for the ECOSOC Department, Aiskell Roman (Conference A) and Marleen Schreier (Conference B), at usg.ecosoc@nmun.org.

We wish you all the best in your preparations and look forward to seeing you at the Conference!

Sincerely,

Conference A

Vikram Sakkia, *Director*

Ryan Shepard, *Assistant Director*

Conference B

Katie Conti, *Director*

Xin Guan, *Assistant Director*

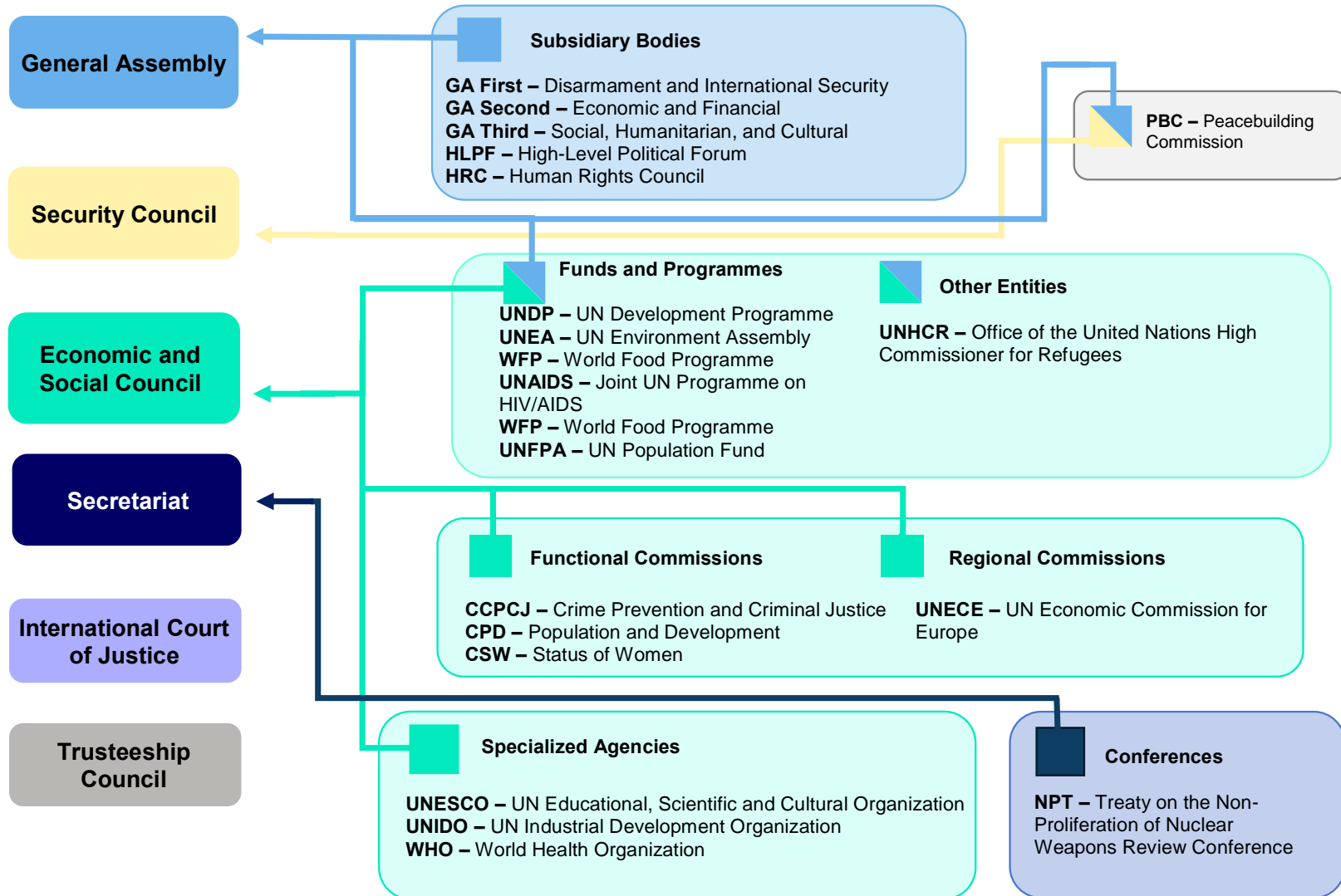


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United Nations System at NMUN•NY

This diagram illustrates the UN system simulated at NMUN•NY and demonstrates the reportage and relationships between entities. Examine the diagram alongside the Committee Overview to gain a clear picture of the committee's position, purpose, and powers within the UN system.



Committee Overview

Introduction

The world's population is projected to reach almost 10 billion by the year 2050, an increase of 26% of the current population.¹ Due to this unprecedented rapid population growth, it is essential for the international community to identify and monitor population growth, population ageing, migration, and urbanization.² The *Programme of Action (PoA)*, adopted at the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in 1994, identifies the links between a myriad of population and development issues, including accessibility for older populations and persons with disabilities, migrants, sexual and reproductive health, human rights, sustainable development, and places the focus of its development policy on individuals.³ Since its adoption, tremendous progress has been made on population and development issues.⁴ At the same time, increased ageing and youth populations in different parts of the world have posed severe socio-economic challenges, which hinder the process of accomplishing the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (2030 Agenda).⁵ An increasing number of Member States have experienced growth in the size and proportion of their ageing populations, requiring increased public services.⁶ Reliability, timeliness, and accessibility of demographic data has supported progress towards achieving sustainable development.⁷ International efforts have been able to improve the quality of life of many, as poverty has reached an all-time low of 8.6%, child mortality rates have been halved, access to drinking water has increased from 61% to 71%, and nearly nine out of 10 people now has access to electricity.⁸

The **United Nations Commission on Population and Development (CPD)** is a functional commission, reporting to the Economic and Social Council.

The Commission on Population and Development (CPD), the United Nations (UN) body tasked with monitoring the implementation of the PoA, has closely followed these issues, targeting its current priorities at sustainable cities, international migration, human mobility, changing population age structures, and sustainable development.⁹ CPD will continue to lead debates about population trends and serve as a critical body that conducts research on these issues and provides suggestions to the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).¹⁰

¹ UN DESA, Population Division, *World Population Prospects 2019: Highlights (ST/ESA/SER.A/423)*, 2019.

² Ibid.

³ UNFPA, *Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population Development 20th Anniversary Edition*, 2014.

⁴ Ibid, pp. viii-xiii.

⁵ UN General Assembly, *Transforming Our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*, 2015; UNFPA, *Programme of Action of at the International Conference on Population and Development, Cairo, 5-13 September 1994*, 2004, p. 251; UN DESA, *Commission on Population and Development: Changing Population Age Structures*, 2017.

⁶ UN DGC, *Ageing*, 2019; UN ECOSOC Commission on Population and Development, *Report on the Forty-ninth Session (E/2016/25-E/CN.9/2016/9)*, 2016, p. 8; UN DESA, *World Population Ageing 2017 Highlights (ST/ESA/SER.A/39)*, 2017, p. 5.

⁷ UN CPD, *Review and Appraisal 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 (E/CN.9/2019/2)*.

⁸ UN DESA Statistics Division, *The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2019*, 2019, pp. 22-36.

⁹ UN CPD, *Sustainable Cities, Human Mobility and International Migration: Report of the Secretary-General (E/CN.9/2018/2)*, 2018; UN CPD, *Actions for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development: Monitoring of Population Programmes, Focusing on Sustainable Cities, Human Mobility and International Migration, Report of the Secretary-General (E/CN.9/2018/3)*, 2018; UN CPD, *Changing Population Age Structures and Sustainable Development: Report of the Secretary-General (E/CN.9/2017/2)*, 2017; UN CPD, *Monitoring of Population Programmes, Focusing on Changing Population Age Structures and Sustainable Development, in the Context of the Full Implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development: Report of the Secretary-General (E/CN.9/2017/3)*, 2017.

¹⁰ UN DESA, Population Division, *United Nations Conferences on Population*.

The roots of CPD are found in the Population Commission, established by ECOSOC in 1946, aiming to offer a platform for Member States, civil society, and other key stakeholders to discuss international issues on human development and population-related social challenges.¹¹ As one of the ten functional commissions of ECOSOC, the Population Commission was mandated to follow up on the 1994 ICPD PoA.¹² The body was renamed that year to CPD to highlight its comprehensive approach to addressing issues related to the challenges of population and development, as outlined in the *Programme of Action*.¹³ The PoA emphasizes the link between human rights, including sexual and reproductive health rights, and development.¹⁴ It identifies development as improving individual lives and reducing inequalities.¹⁵ Although the PoA received some criticism over its lack of a central focus, it has contributed significantly to women's empowerment; one third of the recommendations specifically mentioning women or girls.¹⁶ For the first time, the UN attempted to explore the linkage between development and population and made it a goal to reduce population growth by advancing women's rights.¹⁷

Governance, Structure, and Membership

CPD, an advisory body, provides policy recommendations on population and development for both ECOSOC and the UN system as a whole.¹⁸ The Commission comprises 47 members elected to serve four-year terms following a specific geographic distribution, with 12 seats for African states, 11 Asian-Pacific states, 5 Eastern European states, 9 Latin American and Caribbean states, and ten Western European and Other states.¹⁹ All representatives possess expert knowledge in population and development issues.²⁰ The Commission meets annually in New York City, while the Bureau of CPD holds inter-sessional meetings to prepare for the annual meetings.²¹

The general administration of CPD is funded by the UN, but the Commission has also welcomed Member States and government agencies to provide support to its work.²² General Assembly resolution 50/124 of 23 February 1996 on "Implementation of the PoA of the International Conference on Population and Development" encouraged voluntary donations from Member States, particularly developed states, to ensure that the goals in the follow-up of ICPD could be met.²³ Both CPD and the United Nations

¹¹ UN DESA, Population Division, *Commission on Population and Development*, 2018; UN ECOSOC, *Resolution 3 (III) Population Commission (E/RES/3 (III))*, 1946, p. 1.

¹² UN General Assembly, *Report of the International Conference on Population and Development (A/RES/49/128)*, 1994; UN DESA, Population Division, *Commission on Population and Development*, 2018.

¹³ UNFPA, *Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population Development 20th Anniversary Edition*, 2014, pp. viii-xiii.

¹⁴ UN General Assembly, *Report of the International Conference on Population and Development (A/RES/49/128)*, 1994; UNFPA, *Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population Development 20th Anniversary Edition*, 2014.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Mirkin, *Evolution of National Population Policies Since the United Nations 1954 World Population Conference*, 2005, p. 305.

¹⁷ Hayes, *Cairo and the Changing Definition of Population and Development Issues*, 1995, p. 21.

¹⁸ UN General Assembly, *Report of the International Conference on Population and Development (A/RES/49/128)*, 1994.

¹⁹ UN General Assembly, *Implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (A/RES/50/124)*, 1996; UN DESA Population Division, *Commission on Population and Development*, 2018; New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, *United Nations Handbook 2017-18*, 2017.

²⁰ UN General Assembly, *Implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (A/RES/50/124)*, 1996, p. 3.

²¹ UN CPD, *Member States of the United Nations Note Verbale (18-037 – PC (51))*, 2018.

²² UN CPD, *Assessment of the status of implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (Resolution 2014/1)*, 2014.

²³ UN General Assembly, *Implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (A/RES/50/124)*, 1996, p. 4.

Population Fund (UNFPA) were tasked with following up on ICPD.²⁴ CPD was designed to fully support ECOSOC and play the primary role in the follow-up process with its three-tiered intergovernmental mechanism, which includes monitoring, reviewing and assessing the implementation of the ICPD PoA.²⁵ On the other hand, UNFPA, as a subsidiary organ of the UN General Assembly, was mandated to take the lead in helping countries carry out the PoA by providing technical support and guidance with a focus on sexual and reproductive health and rights.²⁶ As detailed in the Strategic Plan 2018-2021, UNFPA will continue to accelerate the implementation process of the PoA at the operational level.²⁷ In contrast, CPD monitors and assesses the progress made from a policy perspective.²⁸ CPD also focuses on acknowledging major achievements towards this goal and drawing attention to areas that need improvement.²⁹

The Population Division within the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) serves as the substantive secretariat for the Commission.³⁰ It is also tasked with conducting research about population and development issues and the progress of the PoA and its implementation.³¹ The Population Division has actively facilitated the intergovernmental dialogue on population and development through organizing important UN conferences on the same topics and planning annual sessions of CPD.³² Further, UN DESA facilitates development by providing Member States with a wealth of information through multiple publications and databases such as the World Population Prospects.³³ The Statistics Division of UN DESA has also worked with the CPD to combine data on various population metrics and additional topics creating the Demographic Yearbook System.³⁴

Mandate, Functions, and Powers

The mandate of CPD is to provide “advice and assistance on matters affecting or affected by population changes,” with the specific mandate to “[play] the primary role in the follow-up to the implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, and (...) monitor, review and assess the implementation of the Programme of Action at the national, regional and international levels and advise [ECOSOC] thereon.”³⁵

The primary functions of CPD are:

1. To conduct studies on population and development themes;
2. To monitor, review, and assess the ICPD PoA; and
3. To give recommendations to ECOSOC on these themes.³⁶

²⁴ UN General Assembly, *Report of the International Conference on Population and Development (A/RES/49/128)*, 1994; UNFPA, *Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population Development 20th Anniversary Edition*, 2014; UNFPA, *Frequently Asked Questions: What is the UNFPA Mandate*, 2018.

²⁵ UN General Assembly, *Report of the International Conference on Population and Development (A/RES/49/128)*, 1994, p. 5.

²⁶ UNFPA, *How We Work*, 2019; UNFPA, *International Conference on Population and Development Principle of the ICPD*, 2018.

²⁷ UNFPA, *UNFPA Strategic Plan, 2018-2021*, 2018, p. 23.

²⁸ UN General Assembly, *Recurrent Themes and Key Elements Identified during the Sessions of the Commission on Population and Development: Report of the Secretary-General (A/69/122)*, 2014, p. 20.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, *United Nations Handbook 2017-18*, 2017, p. 148.

³¹ UN DESA Population Division, *Compendium of Recommendations on Population and Development: Commission on Population and Development, 1994-2014 (Volume I)*, 2014, p. 5.

³² UN DESA Population Division, *About United Nations Population Division: Overview*, 2019.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ UN DESA Statistics Division, *2017 Demographic Yearbook*, 2018.

³⁵ UN General Assembly, *Report of the International Conference on Population and Development (A/RES/49/128)*, 1994.

³⁶ UN DESA Population Division, *Commission on Population and Development*, 2019.

The Commission holds an annual session in New York City and serves as a forum for Member States to discuss population issues and set international norms and standards.³⁷ The resolutions of these sessions set priorities for the international community on topics of changing demographics and sustainable development challenges.³⁸ CPD raises awareness of population changes and their implications by highlighting the connections among changing age structures and an ageing population.³⁹

As part of its mandate to conduct studies and provide research, CPD can request the Population Division to conduct or continue research on specific topics, such as ageing population growth.⁴⁰ Moreover, CPD can request UNFPA or the Secretary-General to increase research on the aforementioned topics.⁴¹ CPD also has the capability to encourage Member States to collect population data to understand the current situation of population and development in rural and urban areas within a Member State.⁴² Finally, CPD has the ability to request further research to assess the situation in areas such as food security and sustainable development, issues pertaining to population and development that have persisted over decades.⁴³

Recent Sessions and Current Priorities

CPD's 52nd session was held in April 2019 and focused on the global, regional and national implementation of the PoA as well as the continued review of the progress by the PoA towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda.⁴⁴ CPD adopted a political declaration reaffirming the commitment to the *Cairo Programme of Action* by addressing issues of immigration, infant mortality, birth control, gender inequalities, and family planning.⁴⁵ Member States noted the progress made over the past quarter-century and encouraged further collaboration towards achieving the goals of the PoA.⁴⁶ The Commission adopted the "Declaration on the Occasion of the Twenty-fifth Anniversary of the International Conference on Population and Development" by acclamation, which focused on short, action-orientated implementation towards increasing partnerships, the role of the civil society, and the collaboration between public and private sectors to reduce the financial burden.⁴⁷

During the 52nd session, CPD also reviewed the progress of the Population Division of UN DESA.⁴⁸ The Population Division of UN DESA updated all its databases to improve information on fertility and family planning, health and mortality, international migration, global population, urbanization, and population ageing.⁴⁹ The information requires frequent updates to facilitate sustainable development within Member

³⁷ UN CPD, *Member States of the United Nations Note Verbale (18-037 – PC (51))*, 2018; UN General Assembly, *Recurrent Themes and Key Elements Identified during the Sessions of the Commission on Population and Development: Report of the Secretary-General (A/69/122)*, 2014, p. 5.

³⁸ UN General Assembly, *Recurrent Themes and Key Elements Identified during the Sessions of the Commission on Population and Development: Report of the Secretary-General (A/69/122)*, 2014, p. 4.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ UN DESA Population Division, *Compendium of Recommendations on Population and Development: Commission on Population and Development, 1994-2014 (Volume I)*, 2014, p. 5.

⁴¹ Ibid, p. 59.

⁴² UNFPA, *UNFPA Strategic Plan, 2018-2021*, 2018, p. 9; UN General Assembly, *Recurrent Themes and Key Elements Identified During the Sessions of the Commission on Population and Development: Report of the Secretary-General (A/69/122)*, 2014, p. 6.

⁴³ UN DESA Population Division, *Compendium of Recommendations on Population and Development: Commission on Population and Development, 1994-2014 (Volume I)*, 2014, p. 5.

⁴⁴ UN CPD, *Programme of the 52nd Session (E/CN.9/2019/L.3)*, 2019, p. 1.

⁴⁵ UN DGC, *Opening Fifty-Second Session, Population and Development Commission Adopts Political Declaration Reaffirming Commitment to Cairo Programme of Action (POP/1079)*, 2019.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ UN DGC, *Opening Fifty-Second Session, Population and Development Commission Adopts Political Declaration Reaffirming Commitment to Cairo Programme of Action (POP/1079)*, 1 April 2019; UN CPD, *Adoption of the Agenda and Other Organizational Matters (E/CN.9/2019/L.3)*, 2019.

⁴⁸ UN CPD, *Programme Implementation and Progress of Work in the Field of Population in 2018: Population Division, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, (E/CN.9/2019/5)*, 2019.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

States of DESA.⁵⁰ Looking ahead to 2020, CPD's provisional agenda for the 53rd session was set with the general debate focused on population, food security, and sustainable development.⁵¹

The secretariat of CPD recognized and supported the decisions made at the 2019 G20 Summit and related ministerial meetings.⁵² The leaders of the G20 Summit met in Osaka, Japan on 28 – 29 June 2019, to make united efforts towards overcoming economic challenges, ensuring that inequalities are addressed, fostering development and change towards the 2030 Agenda.⁵³ The G20 Summit focused on tackling demographic changes such as population ageing, migration, and varying mortality rates.⁵⁴ The Labour and Employment Ministers' Meeting took a comprehensive approach towards ageing by focusing on policies encouraging later retirement, recruitment without age discrimination, and sustainable pension benefits.⁵⁵ These policies were noted by UN DESA and related issues were discussed in the World Population Prospects of 2019.⁵⁶

Conclusion

CPD, an advisory UN body, reports to ECOSOC and makes recommendations on the international and national level about population and development themes.⁵⁷ Some of the most important themes are ageing population, inclusion of persons of disabilities, food security, and sustainable development.⁵⁸ Due to emerging demographic trends, health care for youth and elderly populations are also gaining greater attention.⁵⁹ To better understand population development, CPD publishes world population trends studies and makes recommendations to help Member States utilize population growth trends, gain greater understanding of population dynamics, and keep up-to-date with changes in population structure.⁶⁰ The CPD has also worked towards increasing inclusivity of persons of disabilities in urban areas such setting a disability development agenda towards 2015 and beyond.⁶¹ Finally, at the end of the 52nd session, CPD discussed working with renewed interest towards accomplishing the goals of the 2030 Agenda by advocating for regional cooperation, technological advancements, and behavioral adaptation in 2020.⁶²

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ UN CPD, *Provisional Agenda for the Fifty-third Session of the Commission*, (E/CN.9/2019/L.2), 2019.

⁵² UN DESA, *In a Historic First, G20 Leaders' Declaration Recognizes the Importance of Promoting a Healthy and Active Ageing Society*, 2019.

⁵³ G20, *G20 Osaka Leaders' Declaration*, 2019.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ G20, *Shaping a Human-Centered Future of Work, G20 Labour and Employment Ministers' Meeting 2019 Ministerial Declaration*, 2019, p. 2-4.

⁵⁶ UN DESA Population Division, *World Population Prospects 2019: Ten Key Findings*, 2019.

⁵⁷ UN DESA, Population Division, *Commission on Population and Development*; UN ECOSOC, *Resolution 3 (III) Population Commission (E/RES/3 (III))*, 1946, p. 1; UN DESA, Population Division, *Commission on Population and Development*, 2018; UN, General Assembly, *Report of the International Conference on Population and Development (A/RES/49/128)*, 1994.

⁵⁸ UN CPD, *Sustainable Cities, Human Mobility and International Migration Report of the Secretary-General (E/CN.9/2018/2)*, 2018; UN CPD, *Actions for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development: Monitoring of Population Programmes, Focusing on Sustainable Cities, Human Mobility and International Migration Report of the Secretary-General (E/CN.9/2018/3)*, 2018; UN CPD, *Changing Population Age Structures and Sustainable Development Report of the Secretary-General (E/CN.9/2017/2)*, 2017; UN CPD, *Monitoring of Population Programmes, Focusing on Changing Population Age Structures and Sustainable Development, in the Context of the Full Implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development Report of the Secretary-General (E/CN.9/2017/3)*, 2017.

⁵⁹ UN General Assembly, *Report of the International Conference on Population and Development (A/RES/49/128)*, 1994; UNFPA, *Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population Development 20th Anniversary Edition*, 2014.

⁶⁰ UN DESA, Population Division. *World Population Ageing 2017 (ST/ESA/SER.A/408)*, 2017.

⁶¹ UN CPD, *Report on the forty-seventh session (E/CN.9/2014/7)*, 2014.

⁶² UN CPD, *Provisional agenda for the fifty-third session of the Commission (E/CN.9/2019/L.2)*, 2019.

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United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division. (2018). *Commission on Population and Development* Retrieved 5 July 2018 from:

<http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/commission/index.shtml>

This webpage provides a clear overview of the Commission's mandate, main functions, and membership. It can also direct delegates to other relevant sources such as previous CPD sessions, resolutions, and decisions. Delegates will find this page useful because it provides a short and comprehensive introduction of CPD. It can serve as the beginning point to start their research about the Commission.

United Nations, General Assembly, Forty-ninth session. (1994). *Report of the International Conference on Population and Development (A/RES/49/128)*. Adopted on the report of the Second Committee (A/49/733). Retrieved 11 August 2018 from: <http://undocs.org/a/res/49/128>

The resolution documents the updated mandate and new name of CPD. The adoption of the ICPD led to the expansion of CPD's mandate to monitor, review, and assess the implementation of the ICPD PoA. This resolution assists delegates to gain a clear understanding of CPD's mandate and the history of the Commission. Moreover, this document also discusses the role of Member States in supporting the implementation of PoA at a national level.

United Nations, General Assembly, Seventieth session. (2015). *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/L.1)*. Retrieved 22 July 2019 from

https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/publications/2030_Agenda_en.pdf

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was adopted by the General Assembly in 2015 and acts as a plan of action for strengthening universal peace, freedom, and prosperity on the planet. The CPD works towards achieving the 2030 Agenda by focusing on the population-related aspects such as goals 5 and 10. The 2030 Agenda works in guiding the work of the CPD by providing a summary of the progress completed so far and identifies future projections of the current trends. Delegates will need to familiarize themselves on how the SDGs should be adapted to according to current population trends and challenges.

United Nations Population Fund. (2014). *Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population Development 20th Anniversary Edition*. Retrieved 20 September 2019 from:

https://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/programme_of_action_Web%20ENGLISH.pdf

The ICPD produced the PoA, which is the steering document for the United Nations Population Fund. The document also defines the mandate of CPD to monitor and access its implementation process. At the ICPD, Member States reached four qualitative and quantitative goals: universal education, reduction of infant and child mortality, reduction of maternal mortality, and access to reproductive and sexual health services. This PoA helps delegates understand the history and mandate of CPD.

Wahlen, C. (2019). *Commission on Population and Development Reflects on 25 Years of Progress*.

Retrieved 15 September 2019 from: <https://sdg.iisd.org/news/cpd-52-reflects-on-25-years-of-progress/>

This press release published by the International Institute for Sustainable Development provides a clear overview of the 52nd session of the CPD. It serves as a guide towards delegates finding the most recent information on the committee. It includes the various statements made by Member States and includes a summary based on regions for each topic. It includes discussions of the session, links towards the official reports, and briefly describes the agenda for the 53rd session of the CPD to be held in 2020.

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https://g20.org/en/documents/final_g20_osaka_leaders_declaration.html

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I. Improving Accessibility and the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Urban Areas

“Together, we can remove barriers and raise awareness, so that people with disabilities can play a full part in every sphere of society, around the world.”⁶³

Introduction

The United Nations (UN) Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) data shows that in 2018, 55% of the world’s population resided in urban areas.⁶⁴ By 2050, this proportion will rise further to 68%, or approximately 6.25 billion people.⁶⁵ At the same time, according to statistics from the World Health Organization (WHO), today 1.5 billion people are living with some form of disability, among which 80% live in developing countries according to the UN Development Programme.⁶⁶ The *United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* (CRPD) article 1 defines persons with disabilities as “those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.”⁶⁷ The World Bank Group states that accessibility and inclusion are two key factors for individuals with disabilities to participate fully in society.⁶⁸ CRPD defines accessibility as the quality of ensuring that “on an equal basis with others,” persons with disabilities, “in both urban and rural areas,” have access to all public facilities and services, including the physical environment, transportation, information and communications technologies and systems.⁶⁹ Ensuring accessibility aims to enable persons with disabilities to acquire independence and full participation in all aspects of life.⁷⁰ In response to the UN Secretary-General’s Executive Committee decision 2018/20 on the inclusion of persons with disabilities, the UN Department of General Assembly and Conference Management developed the *United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy*, which defines disability inclusion as “the meaningful participation of persons with disability in all their diversity, the promotion of their rights, and the consideration of disability-related perspectives in compliance with [the CRPD].”⁷¹

With more than half of the world’s population currently living in urban areas, making cities and human settlements accessible and inclusive for all, including for persons with disabilities, will be essential for further sustainable urban development.⁷² However, the rapid urbanization processes have narrowly focused on economic benefit, and more often than not, paid little attention to “civil, economic, political, cultural and social rights” to persons with disability.⁷³ Lack of accessibility and inclusion in urban settings can contribute to persons with disabilities being disadvantaged and vulnerable in various situations.⁷⁴ These situations can arise from a combination of physical, environmental, technical, and social barriers prompting inadequate education, poorer health outcomes, or lower levels of employment, all of which lead to disproportionately higher rates of poverty, deprivation, and exclusion among persons with disabilities.⁷⁵

⁶³ UN Secretary-General, *Remarks to the 11th session of the Conference of State Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*, 2018.

⁶⁴ UN DESA, *World Urbanization Prospects, The 2018 Revision*, 2018, p. xix.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ WHO, *World Report on Disability*, 2011; WHO, *Disability and Health*, 2018.

⁶⁷ UN General Assembly, *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (A/RES/61/106)*, 2006.

⁶⁸ World Bank Group, *Accessibility and Inclusion: Two Key Factors for Individuals with Disabilities*, 2018.

⁶⁹ UN General Assembly, *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (A/RES/61/106)*, 2006.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ UN DESA, *United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy*, 2019, p. 26.

⁷² UN DESA, *Realization of the Sustainable Development Goals by, for and with Persons with Disabilities*, 2018, p.219.

⁷³ OHCHR, *Urbanization and Human Rights*.

⁷⁴ UN DESA, *Disability, Accessibility and Sustainable Urban Development*.

⁷⁵ Ibid; World Bank Group, *Disability Inclusion*, 2019.

Persons with disabilities are both agents and beneficiaries of promoting economic and social progress towards a peaceful and prosperous world for all.⁷⁶ UN Secretary-General António Guterres indicated that only with the full participation of everyone, including persons with disabilities, can the international community achieve the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (2030 Agenda) and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).⁷⁷

International and Regional Framework

At the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), 179 countries adopted a Programme of Action (PoA) that serves “as a comprehensive guide to people-centred development progress.”⁷⁸ The PoA affirmed the rights of persons with disabilities.⁷⁹ Chapter V of the PoA calls for governments to provide assistance and socio-economic support to persons with disabilities and families caring for family members with disabilities.⁸⁰ Chapter VI recognizes “persons with disabilities constitute a significant proportion of the population,” and calls for governments at all levels to make efforts in meeting needs, realizing rights, and promoting social and economic integration of persons with disabilities.⁸¹ The PoA also calls for the participation of persons with disabilities in health policy planning and appeals to governments to raise public awareness around discrimination and combat stigma against persons with disabilities.⁸² Chapter XV also recognizes the contribution of organizations led by persons with disabilities to enhancing programs for this group.⁸³

CRPD was adopted by the General Assembly on 13 December 2006.⁸⁴ The Convention is a landmark instrument to ensure the participation of persons with disabilities and their equal enjoyment of universal human rights.⁸⁵ CRPD also provides a comprehensive framework for national policies and legislation for building inclusive societies.⁸⁶ Article 3 recognizes accessibility, as well as “full and effective participation and inclusion in society” as two principles of the Convention.⁸⁷ Article 4 includes accessible information on all forms of assistance and support services and facilities to persons with disabilities as a general obligation of State parties in designing, developing, and accessing new technologies.⁸⁸ Article 9 addresses accessibility by calling for State parties to apply measures to ensure accessibility for persons with disabilities in both urban and rural areas.⁸⁹ Article 19 emphasizes the full inclusion of persons with disabilities in their communities by ensuring persons with disabilities have equal opportunity and access to public facilities and services.⁹⁰

In September 2015, the UN General Assembly adopted the 2030 Agenda that aims to “end all forms of poverty, fight inequalities and tackle climate change.”⁹¹ The agenda sets 17 SDGs for the international community towards a peaceful, prosperous, and disability-inclusive world pledging to “leave no one

⁷⁶ UN DESA, *Realization of the Sustainable Development Goals by, for and with Persons with Disabilities*, 2018.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ UNFPA, *Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population Development, 20th Anniversary Edition*, 2014.

⁷⁹ UNFPA, *Report of the Secretary-General: Framework of Actions for the follow-up to the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development Beyond 2014*, 2014, p. 9.

⁸⁰ UNFPA, *Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population Development, 20th Anniversary Edition*, 2014, pp. 41-43.

⁸¹ Ibid, pp. 56-57.

⁸² Ibid, pp. 81, 111, & 126.

⁸³ Ibid, p. 166.

⁸⁴ UN General Assembly, *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (A/RES/61/106)*, 2006.

⁸⁵ UN DGC, *Landmark UN Treaty on Rights of Persons with Disabilities Enters into Force*, 2008.

⁸⁶ UN DESA, *Realization of the Sustainable Development Goals by, for and with Persons with Disabilities*, 2018, p. 27.

⁸⁷ UN General Assembly, *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (A/RES/61/106)*, 2006, p. 5.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Ibid, p. 9.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ UN DESA, *The Sustainable Development Agenda*.

behind.”⁹² The SDGs particularly highlight disability and persons with disabilities 11 times.⁹³ For instance, SDG 4 (quality education) emphasizes equal and accessible education by building inclusive learning environments and providing any necessary assistance for persons with disabilities.⁹⁴ SDG 8 (decent work and economic growth) promotes inclusivity and full and productive employment for persons with disabilities to fully access the job market.⁹⁵ SDG 10 (reduced inequalities) emphasizes the social, economic, and political inclusion of persons with disabilities.⁹⁶ SDG 11 (sustainable cities and communities) emphasizes the creation of sustainable cities for all, including transport systems, and universal access to safe, inclusive, accessible, and green public spaces.⁹⁷

The *New Urban Agenda*, adopted at the Third UN Conference on Housing and Sustainable Development (Habitat III) in October 2016, underlined the connection between the urban development agenda and the 2030 Agenda, particularly SDG 11.⁹⁸ The *New Urban Agenda* provides guidance for a wide range of actors that can contribute to more accessible and inclusive urban development for persons with disabilities.⁹⁹

Role of the International System

At the 45th session of CPD in 2012, CPD adopted a resolution urging Member States to promote equal opportunities for all, including young persons with disabilities.¹⁰⁰ At the 47th session in 2014, CPD adopted a resolution stressing that full implementation of the ICPD PoA was integral to global efforts to eradicate poverty and achieve sustainable development, including addressing the needs of persons with disabilities in both urban and rural areas.¹⁰¹ Further, a resolution adopted at the 49th session of CPD also stresses the importance of the collection, analysis, dissemination, and utilization of population data and statistics that can be disaggregated by various dimensions, including disability.¹⁰² This analytical ability is essential to identify and address the specific needs of different populations and “leave no one behind.”¹⁰³ The 52nd session of CPD highlighted disability as one of the key components when collecting and analyzing population data.¹⁰⁴

The Secretariat for CRPD falls within the Division for Inclusive Social Development of UN DESA.¹⁰⁵ Since 2013, the Division for Social Policy and Development (DSPD) of UN DESA has launched the DESA/DSPD Forum on Disability and Development.¹⁰⁶ In collaboration with the African Union Commission, the African Disability Forum, and around 60 experts on urban planning and disability issues, UN DESA and the UN Human Settlement Programme (UN-Habitat) co-organized a three-day DESA/DSPD Forum on Disability Inclusion and Accessible Urban Development in 2015.¹⁰⁷ The forum reviewed situations on current urban policies and practices on disability in Africa, the Americas, Asia and

⁹² UN General Assembly, *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*, 2015.

⁹³ UN DESA, *#Envision2030: 17 Goals to Transform the World for Persons with Disabilities*.

⁹⁴ UN General Assembly, *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*, 2015.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

⁹⁸ UN DESA, *Realization of the Sustainable Development Goals by, for and with Persons with Disabilities*, 2018, p. 29.

⁹⁹ CBM, *Habitat III and the Inclusion Imperative: Achieving “Cities for All”*, 2016.

¹⁰⁰ UN CPD, *Report on the Forty-fifth Session (E/CN.9/2012/8)*, 2012, p. 7.

¹⁰¹ UN CPD, *Report on the Forty-seventh Session (E/CN.9/2014/7)*, 2014, p. 12.

¹⁰² UN CPD, *Report on the Forty-ninth Session (E/CN.9/2016/9)*, 2016, p. 27.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁴ UN CPD, *Contribution by the 52nd Session of the Commission on Population and Development to the 2019 High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development*, 2019, p. 4

¹⁰⁵ UN DESA, *About us: Secretariat for the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*.

¹⁰⁶ UN DESA, *DESA DSPD Forum on Disability and Development*.

¹⁰⁷ UN DESA, *Report on UN DESA Forum on Disability Inclusion and Accessible Urban Development*, 2015, p. 2.

the Pacific, Europe, and Western Asia.¹⁰⁸ The 2015 report on DESA/DSPD listed recommendations on accessible and inclusive urban development for persons with disabilities.¹⁰⁹ In 2016, the forum continued to address disability and urban development in response to the zero draft of the *New Urban Agenda*.¹¹⁰ The 2016 DESA/DSPD Forum, “Towards a Disability Inclusive and Accessible New Urban Agenda,” contributed to inform the Habitat III processes.¹¹¹ UN DESA also promotes effective implementation of international normative frameworks on disabilities and development.¹¹² In 2016, UN DESA collected and published a set of resource materials entitled *Good Practices of Accessible Urban Development: Making Urban Environment Inclusive and Fully Accessible to all*.¹¹³ This document includes 24 cases on improving accessibility and inclusion of persons with disabilities in urban areas, demonstrating examples on policy-making, city planning, universal design, and inclusive management to make urban development accessible and inclusive for all.¹¹⁴ During the 28th International Day of Persons with Disabilities that took place on 3 December 2018, UN DESA launched the first *UN Flagship Report on Disability and Development: Realization of Sustainable Development Goals by, for and with Persons with Disabilities*.¹¹⁵ The report promotes the realization of the SDGs for persons with disabilities making recommendations based on reviewed data, policies, and programs.¹¹⁶ The report also notes that persons with disabilities are still facing challenges and barriers to their full inclusion and participation in all spheres of society, including in urban areas.¹¹⁷

In 2016, DSPD developed a Toolkit on Disability for Africa, providing practical tools to all those with an interest in the inclusion of persons with disabilities in social development.¹¹⁸ The toolkit also offers examples of good practices from the African region.¹¹⁹ The UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) published the *Report on Building Disability-Inclusive Societies in Asia and the Pacific: Assessing Progress of the Incheon Strategy* in 2018.¹²⁰ This report proposes recommendations to advance disability-inclusive implementation on both international and national levels and to uphold the rights of persons with disabilities across all sectors of society, as well as to enhance disability data collection and analysis and statistics.¹²¹ The multi-stakeholder network, Global Network on Disability Inclusive and Accessible Urban Development published *The Inclusion Imperative: Toward Disability-inclusive and Accessible Urban Development* in 2016.¹²² The publication offered recommendations and practical steps to ensure that the *New Urban Agenda* and the Habitat III process incorporated the perspectives of persons with disabilities.¹²³

Needs for Housing, Mobility, and Public Spaces and Services for Persons with Disabilities

Adequate, Safe, and Affordable Housing

The Global Strategy for Shelter to the Year 2000 considers adequate housing to contain adequate privacy, space, security, lighting, ventilation, basic infrastructure, and location with regard to work and

¹⁰⁸ UN DESA, *Report on UN DESA Forum on Disability Inclusion and Accessible Urban Development*, 2015.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

¹¹⁰ UN DESA, *Forum on Ways Forward Towards a Disability Inclusive and Accessible New Urban Agenda*, 2016.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹¹² UN DESA, *The United Nations and Disability: 70 Years of the Work Towards a More Inclusive World*, 2018, p. 25.

¹¹³ UN DESA, *Good Practices of Accessible Urban Development: Making Urban Environments Inclusive and Fully Accessible to All*, 2016.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁵ UN DESA, *Realization of the Sustainable Development Goals by, for and with Persons with Disabilities*, 2018.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁸ UN DESA, *Toolkit on Disability for Africa*, 2016.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹²⁰ UN ESCAP, *Building Disability-Inclusive Societies in Asia and the Pacific: Assessing Progress of the Incheon Strategy*, 2018.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 58-59.

¹²² UN-Habitat III, *Launch of a new Publication: “The Inclusion Imperative: towards Disability-inclusive and Accessible Urban Development”*, 2016.

¹²³ DIAUD, *The Inclusion Imperative: towards Disability-inclusive and Accessible Urban Development*, 2016.

basic facilities, which are all at a reasonable cost.¹²⁴ UN-Habitat estimates that 1.6 billion people are living in inadequate housing globally, of which 1 billion are living in slums and informal settlements.¹²⁵ The rate of new home construction lags far behind the rate of urban population growth – approximately 1.84% per year.¹²⁶ With estimated 240 million persons with disabilities living in inadequate housing, UN-Habitat notes that solving the issue of adequate housing for persons with disabilities is a first step to also supporting their realization of other rights.¹²⁷ Persons with disabilities are more likely to encounter additional challenges such as vulnerability to homelessness, lack of financial means for adequate housing, lack of indoor sanitation in available housing, and insufficient and insecure accommodation.¹²⁸ CRPD has significantly contributed to the understanding of the right to adequate housing for persons with disabilities in all spheres of society.¹²⁹ However, UN DESA's Disability and Development report indicates that there are still barriers to adequate housing for persons with disabilities, including lower economic status, inadequate accesses to facilities and services, and a lack of policies and monitoring mechanisms.¹³⁰ According to the report, to make cities and communities inclusive and sustainable for persons with disabilities, Member States need to implement inclusive policies and laws to raise awareness on disability, to share knowledge and good practices, and to build capacity for monitoring and evaluation of policy implementation.¹³¹

Urban Mobility, Public Spaces, and Services

Data collected in UN DESA's Disability and Development report indicates that in some countries more than 30% of persons with disabilities find that transportation and public spaces and services are not accessible during the process of urban development.¹³² Lack of efficient transportation and public services further leads to less opportunities for education, reduced access to health care, and limited ability to participate in communal life, all of which hinder inclusive and sustainable development.¹³³ Lack of access to businesses and public places like banks, shops, and post offices can also be a challenge for persons with disabilities.¹³⁴ Accessibility via mobile phones, the Internet, televisions, computers, electronic kiosks, and other online applications and services is essential to the inclusion of persons with disabilities in society.¹³⁵ Being excluded from information and communication technologies implies being left out not only from the information society, but also from accessing essential public services, as well as from the opportunity of living an independent life.¹³⁶

In addition to these challenges, article 25(a) of the CRPD further emphasizes equal access to sexual and reproductive health care services and reproductive rights, in accordance with SDG targets 3.7 on universal access to sexual and reproductive health care services and 5.6 of ensuring universal access to

¹²⁴ UN Rule of Law Unit, *Fact Sheet No.21, The Human Right to Adequate Housing*.

¹²⁵ UN-Habitat, *World Cities Report*, 2016.

¹²⁶ UN CPD, *Review and Appraisal 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 (E/CN.9/2019/2)*, 2019, p. 14; WHO, *Urban Population Growth*.

¹²⁷ UN-Habitat, *The Right to Adequate Housing for Persons with Disabilities Living in Cities – Towards Inclusive Cities*, 2015, p. xii.

¹²⁸ UN DESA, *Realization of the Sustainable Development Goals by, for and with Persons with Disabilities*, 2018, pp. 221-224.

¹²⁹ UN Habitat, *The Right to Adequate Housing for Persons with Disabilities Living in Cities – Towards Inclusive Cities*, 2015, p. viii.

¹³⁰ UN DESA, *Realization of the Sustainable Development Goals by, for and with Persons with Disabilities*, 2018, pp. 221-224.

¹³¹ *Ibid*, p. 37.

¹³² *Ibid*, 2018, p. 14.

¹³³ Frye, *Disabled and Older Persons and Sustainable Urban Mobility: Thematic Study Prepared for Global Report on Human Settlements 2013*, 2013, p. 16.

¹³⁴ UN DESA, *Realization of the Sustainable Development Goals by, for and with Persons with Disabilities*, 2018, p. 228.

¹³⁵ ITU et al., *The ICT Opportunity for a Disability-inclusive Development Framework*, 2013, p. vi.

¹³⁶ *Ibid*.

sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights.¹³⁷ The PoA and the outcome documents of its review conference also highlight the importance of access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights.¹³⁸ Reproductive health care services may be unavailable or inaccessible to persons with disabilities due to income disparities, lack of skilled health workers, and negative attitudes by health workers towards mothers with disabilities, among other factors.¹³⁹

Ensuring Economic Participation of Persons with Disabilities in Urban Areas

UN DESA's Disability and Development report notes that urban sprawl directly impacts persons with disabilities who face long commutes to work.¹⁴⁰ This impact may directly hinder persons with disabilities from entering the job market.¹⁴¹ Both in developed and developing countries, working-age persons with disabilities experience significantly lower employment rates and much higher unemployment rates than persons without disabilities.¹⁴² Statistics show that 80% to 90% of persons with disabilities of working age are unemployed in developing countries, and 50% to 70% in industrialized countries.¹⁴³ UN DESA indicates that unemployment is mainly because persons with disabilities are frequently not considered by employers due to bias and prejudice.¹⁴⁴ Focusing on skills, the International Labour Organization (ILO) Global Business and Disability Network published the first edition of the *Disability in the Workplace: Employers' Organizations and Business Networks* report in 2016, sharing employment opportunity examples from 14 organizations that address disability inclusion in the workforce.¹⁴⁵ The UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) published a non-exhaustive reference list of non-governmental organizations and UN agencies assisting persons with disabilities.¹⁴⁶ The document listed organizations promoting employment opportunities, providing direct services, training on self-employment, as well as offering vocational employment for persons with disabilities.¹⁴⁷

Despite efforts and emphasis made by the international community on addressing rights of persons with disabilities to access employment and decent work, obstacles remain.¹⁴⁸ There is a lack of regulation and supervision mechanisms to address the lack of accessible workplaces and reasonable accommodation, lack of assistive technology, and prevailing stigma and discrimination.¹⁴⁹ When persons with disabilities are employed, they tend to earn lower wages than employees without disabilities.¹⁵⁰ Additionally, persons with disabilities are also more likely to be self-employed or employed in the informal sector, which often lacks the oversight and employee protections that labor laws and regulations may provide.¹⁵¹

Conclusion

Persons with disabilities make up 15% of the world population and are, in essence, the world's largest minority.¹⁵² Improving accessibility for and the inclusion of persons with disabilities in urban areas is a

¹³⁷ UN DESA, *Realization of the Sustainable Development Goals by, for and with Persons with Disabilities*, 2018, p. 88; UN DESA, *SDG Indicators*.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*

¹³⁹ UN DESA, *Realization of the Sustainable Development Goals by, for and with Persons with Disabilities*, 2018, p. 89.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 225.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁴² WHO, *World Report on Disability*, 2011, p. 235.

¹⁴³ UN DESA, *Disability and Employment*.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁵ ILO Global Business and Disability Network, *Disability in the Workplace: Employers' Organizations and Business Networks*, 2016.

¹⁴⁶ UNHCR, *NGOs and UN Agencies Assisting Persons with Disabilities*, 2008.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁸ ILO, *The Right to Decent Work of Persons with Disabilities*, 2003.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*; WHO, *World Report on Disability*, 2011, pp. 239-240.

¹⁵⁰ UN DESA, *Realization of the Sustainable Development Goals by, for and with Persons with Disabilities*, 2018, p. 10.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 155.

¹⁵² WHO, *World Report on Disability*, 2011.

cross-cutting issue essential to urbanization, sustainable development, and the implementation of all 17 SDGs.¹⁵³ Since the 1994 ICPD, human rights of persons with disabilities have been better promoted and emphasized.¹⁵⁴ Bearing in mind the principle of “leaving no one behind,” the ICPD PoA guides global thinking on population and development and focuses on reaching specific demographic targets and individual needs, aspirations, and rights.¹⁵⁵ Only by meeting their needs and protecting their rights with increased accessibility and a higher degree of inclusion, can persons with disabilities actively participate as agents of change in urban society and sustainable development.¹⁵⁶

Further Research

Delegates should consider the following questions as they continue research on this topic: What actions can CPD take to improve the accessibility of physical environment and social rights of persons with disabilities in urban areas? What measures can developed and less developed countries take in their urban areas to improve accessibility for and the inclusion of persons with disabilities? How does civil society impact persons with disabilities during urban development and how can they work with CPD? What role do persons with disabilities play in urbanization and economic development planning? How can the international system work in a more integrated way to achieve the SDGs and include persons with disabilities as one of the driving factors? How can the international community work with local governments or partners to identify and address the needs of persons with disabilities?

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United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. (2016). *Good Practices of Accessible Urban Development: Making Urban Environments Inclusive and Fully Accessible to All*. Retrieved 21 July 2019 from:

https://www.un.org/disabilities/documents/desa/good_practices_in_accessible_urban_development_october2016.pdf

This DESA publication highlights key experiences and lessons learned from 24 case studies, contributing to the ongoing discourse around accessible urban development in light of Habitat III and the New Urban Agenda. It also provides specific recommendations to advance inclusive urban development for all. It illustrates and encourages more initiatives and concrete actions from both developing and developed countries to advance urban development to be accessible and inclusive to all, including persons with disabilities and other special needs. This document will provide delegates with cases addressing this topic in both developed and less developed countries.

United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. (2018). *Realization of the Sustainable Development Goals by, for and with Persons with Disabilities*. Retrieved 21 July 2019 from:

<https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/wp-content/uploads/sites/15/2018/12/UN-Flagship-Report-Disability.pdf>

During the International Day of Persons with Disabilities on 3 December 2018, UN DESA launched the first UN Flagship Report on Disability and Development. The report demonstrates how disability-based discrimination has severe effects on transport, cultural life, and access to public places and services, and thus, the report leads with a push to change urban environments to make them more accessible. Delegates may find this report very useful when considering the connections between SDGs and this topic.

¹⁵³ UN DESA, *Realization of the Sustainable Development Goals by, for and with Persons with Disabilities*, 2018, p. 2.

¹⁵⁴ UNFPA, *Report of the Secretary-General: Framework of Actions for the follow-up to the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development Beyond 2014*, 2014, p. 58.

¹⁵⁵ UNFPA, *Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population Development, 20th Anniversary Edition*, 2014.

¹⁵⁶ UN DESA, *Realization of the Sustainable Development Goals by, for and with Persons with Disabilities*, 2018, p. 30.

United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. (2019). *United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy*. Retrieved 21 July 2019 from: https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/wp-content/uploads/sites/15/2019/03/UNDIS_20-March-2019_for-HLCM.P.pdf

The United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy represents a comprehensive strategy to ensure that the UN system is fit for purpose in relation to disability inclusion. It provides a foundation for sustainable and transformative progress on disability inclusion throughout all pillars of the UN's work. The strategy includes an accountability framework for monitoring progress and addressing challenges, and focuses on critical areas including leadership, strategic planning, accessibility, participation, programming, and procurement. It also calls for the UN to recruit more persons with disabilities, and to support them better. Delegates may find this strategy very helpful to understand how the UN system addresses issues of persons with disabilities.

United Nations, General Assembly. (2006). *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (A/RES/61/106)*. Retrieved 21 July 2019 from: <https://undocs.org/A/RES/61/106>

The CRPD was envisaged from the very beginning as the instrument for inclusive development and for the realization of the universal human rights of persons with disabilities. It adopts a broad categorization of persons with disabilities and reaffirms that all persons with all types of disabilities must enjoy all human rights and fundamental freedoms. It explicitly makes provisions on accessibility and inclusion of persons with disabilities. This Convention is essential for delegates to understand the definition of key sections of this topic.

United Nations, Human Settlements Programme. (2015). *The Right to Adequate Housing for Persons with Disabilities Living in Cities – Towards Inclusive Cities*. Retrieved 20 August 2019 from: <https://unhabitat.org/books/the-right-to-adequate-housing-for-persons-with-disabilities-living-in-cities/>

This technical report outlines major barriers that persons with disabilities face when searching for housing, and identifies trends in relation to policy and legal framework and national and sub-national solutions to the realization of the rights of persons with disabilities. The report takes a human rights-based approach to development of human settlements that offer equal opportunities to persons with disabilities. Delegates may find it helpful that the report offers three case studies that highlight some good practices and topics worthy of further inquiry.

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II. Supporting a Growing Population of Older Persons in Rural Areas

“Population ageing can no longer be ignored.(...) the social and economic implications of this phenomenon are profound, extending far beyond the individual older person and the immediate family, touching broader society and the global community in unprecedented ways.”¹⁵⁷

Introduction

Between 1980 and 2017, the number of older persons in the world aged 60 or above has more than doubled from 382 million to 962 million and is currently projected to continue increasing to 2.1 billion by 2050, or approximately 20% of the estimated world population.¹⁵⁸ Persons aged 80 or above are projected to increase at an even faster rate, from 137 million in 2017 to 425 million in 2050.¹⁵⁹ Between 2000 and 2015 people in rural areas aged 60 or above increased by 25%.¹⁶⁰ Although the international community does not have an established threshold to define someone as being of old age, the United Nations (UN) currently uses the expression “persons over the age of 60” to refer to older persons.¹⁶¹ Declining birth rates relative to the population result in increases in the proportion of the population aged 60 or above, which results in “ageing in place” — the ability of older persons to continue living comfortably in their current residence without relocating.¹⁶² Older persons generally want to age in place but this can be difficult in rural areas due to the lack of social services, poor physical infrastructure, and inadequate healthcare available to support the needs of an ageing population.¹⁶³

Older persons have to deal with numerous ageing-related health issues such as hypertension, dementia, depression, social isolation, and physical impairments, which can further compound the problems of ageing in place in rural areas.¹⁶⁴ Rural areas also have lower employment opportunities than urban areas and rural retirees find that they may not be able to access socio-economic programs, like pensions or social security, which result in inadequate funds to cover basic cost-of-living expenses.¹⁶⁵ Women are particularly impacted by ageing in rural places as they have a longer average lifespan than men and are subject to dealing with ageing-related issues for a longer period of time.¹⁶⁶ As a result of unequal employment opportunities, uncompensated or underpaid care work, and social restrictions on women’s freedoms, older women in rural areas face ageing challenges such as affording healthcare and accessing services.¹⁶⁷ Given these challenges, the United Nations (UN) Commission on Population and Development (CPD) aims to review the increasing challenges faced by a growing population of older persons in rural areas.¹⁶⁸

International and Regional Framework

In 1982, the UN held the World Assembly on Ageing (WAA) in Vienna and adopted the *Vienna International Plan of Action on Ageing*, which outlines 62 strategies to address the needs of older

¹⁵⁷ UNFPA, *Ageing in the Twenty-First Century: A Celebration and A Challenge*, 2012, p. 9.

¹⁵⁸ UN DESA, *Growing at a Slower Pace, World Population is Expected to Reach 9.7 billion in 2050 and Could Peak at Nearly 11 Billion around 2100*, 2019; UN DESA, *World Population Ageing*, 2017, p. 2.

¹⁵⁹ UN DESA, *World Population Ageing*, 2017, p. 2.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

¹⁶¹ WHO, *Proposed Working Definition of an Older Person in Africa for the MDS Project*, 2019.

¹⁶² WHO, *World Report on Ageing and Health*, 2015, p. 36; UN DESA, *World Population Ageing*, 2017, p. 4.

¹⁶³ Anderson et al., *Should I Stay or Go: Rural Ageing, a Time for Reflection*, 2018, p. 1.

¹⁶⁴ WHO, *World Report on Ageing and Health*, 2015, pp. 55-65.

¹⁶⁵ UN DESA, *Promoting Social Inclusion through Social Protection: Report on the World Situation 2018*, 2018, pp. 50-56.

¹⁶⁶ UN DESA, *World Population Ageing*, 2017, p. 18.

¹⁶⁷ UN DESA, *Promoting Social Inclusion through Social Protection: Report on the World Situation 2018*, 2018, pp. 18-19; UN DESA, *Economic Inequalities in Old Age*, 2016, p. 7.

¹⁶⁸ UN DESA, *Speech by Director of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division at the 50th Session of the Commission on Population and Development on 3 April, 2017, in New York*, 2017.

persons.¹⁶⁹ Recommendations 19 through 22 encourage governments to facilitate the development of housing that supports older persons with their special needs as well as to create more older person-friendly outdoor spaces, especially for those coming from disadvantaged populations including older persons living in isolated, rural areas.¹⁷⁰ Recommendations 35 to 40 recognize the need for older persons to have adequate access to pensions or social security networks as well as to appropriate employment opportunities that allow them to afford cost-of-living expenses.¹⁷¹

In 1991, the UN General Assembly adopted the *United Nations Principles for Older Persons*, which include 18 living standards for all older persons, such as age-appropriate housing, work opportunities, and healthcare infrastructure to address their distinct health issues.¹⁷² In 1992, the UN General Assembly also adopted the *Proclamation on Ageing* which identifies the need to account for older women's undervalued work in local economies around the world as well as ensuring that populations are involved in society and cared for at all stages in life.¹⁷³ In 2002, the WAA met for its second meeting in Madrid and adopted the *Political Declaration and Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPAA)*, which specifically calls for the economic empowerment of older persons in rural areas through improving finance for older farmers; leveraging microloans to incubate economic development; protecting older women's economic rights; and calling for the provision of basic entitlements, programs, and services for older persons.¹⁷⁴

In 2015, the UN General Assembly adopted resolution 70/1, *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (2030 Agenda), which identifies 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to ensure equitable, environmentally-friendly goals for all persons.¹⁷⁵ Four of these goals: SDG 3 (good health and well-being), SDG 5 (gender equality), SDG 8 (decent work and economic growth), and SDG 11 (sustainable cities and communities) address the needs of older persons in rural areas as they pertain to the issues of inadequate healthcare, gender inequity, underemployment, and age-exclusive communities that afflict older persons in rural communities.¹⁷⁶

In 2016, the World Health Organization's (WHO) sixty-ninth meeting of its World Health Assembly adopted the *Global Strategy and Plan of Action on Ageing and Health*, which identifies five central strategies Member States should prioritize during a five-year period from 2016-2020 for addressing gaps in meeting the needs of the world's ageing population.¹⁷⁷ Strategy 2 calls upon Member States to create "age-friendly environments" which relates to the lack of services and infrastructure in rural areas for ageing rural populations.¹⁷⁸ Strategy 5 emphasizes the lack of consistent data collection and reporting among members of the international community and encourages Member States to use longitudinal research methods to enhance the monitoring of ageing populations, especially women and other disadvantaged groups.¹⁷⁹

Regionally, the Organization of American States (OAS) in 2015 adopted the *Inter-American Convention on Protecting the Human Rights of Older Persons* which lists a number of rights OAS Member States agree to improve the standard of living for their ageing populations, with particular focus on ensuring the

¹⁶⁹ UN World Assembly on Ageing, *Vienna International Plan of Action on Ageing*, 1982.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid*, pp. 67-68.

¹⁷¹ UN World Assembly on Ageing, *Vienna International Plan of Action on Ageing*, 1982, pp. 71-73.

¹⁷² UN General Assembly, *United Nations Principles for Older Persons (A/RES/46/91)*, 1991.

¹⁷³ UN General Assembly, *Proclamation on Ageing (A/RES/47/5)*, 1992.

¹⁷⁴ UN World Assembly on Ageing, *Vienna International Plan of Action on Ageing*, 2002, pp. 13-14.

¹⁷⁵ UN General Assembly, *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*, 2015.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid*, pp. 16-22.

¹⁷⁷ WHO, World Health Assembly, *Global Strategy and Plan of Action on Ageing and Health (A69/17)*, 2016.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid*, pp. 12-15.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid*, pp. 20-24.

equality of access to work, educational, and health care opportunities and services in both urban and rural populations.¹⁸⁰

Role of the International System

At its 50th meeting in 2017, CPD called on the international community to deflect the imminent impacts of ageing societies by reforming pension programs to ensure access and long-term viability, creating new work opportunities specifically for ageing populations, and paying women who provide uncompensated care for older family members, challenges that are faced by ageing populations in rural areas.¹⁸¹

The 2015 and 2017 World Population Ageing reports published by the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) found that even though ageing is accelerating faster in urban areas, older persons in rural areas are faring worse as a result of lower pension coverage, inadequate education for older persons, and social isolation.¹⁸² The 2015 report recommends that governments should use technology to help bridge the social services accessibility gap for older persons in rural areas.¹⁸³ In 2018, UN DESA published *Promoting Inclusion through Social Protection*, which examines the urban-rural disparities among social security and pension accessibility and effectiveness for older persons.¹⁸⁴ Furthermore, during its 10th session in April 2019, the Open-Ended Working Group on Ageing, tasked with overseeing the rights of older persons around the world, produced a list of entitlements that Member States should provide to older persons such as accessibility to low cost healthcare and affordability of other social services.¹⁸⁵

The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean held its Fourth Intergovernmental Conference on Ageing and the Rights of Older Persons in Latin America and the Caribbean in June 2017, which adopted a report on the “Challenges to the Autonomy and Interdependent Rights of Older Persons.”¹⁸⁶ This report identifies key rural-urban disparities in ageing such as long travel times and distances for older persons seeking medical services as well as higher economic participation rates among rural men aged 60 or over relative to the female population of the same age.¹⁸⁷

In 2017, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) published “Addressing the Challenges of Population Ageing in Asia and the Pacific, a regional follow-up report on MIPAA for ESCAP’s Member States.”¹⁸⁸ The report notes that rural areas among ESCAP’s Member States have high levels of poverty due to low employment opportunities and low levels of social program enrollment.¹⁸⁹ Through the report, ESCAP recommended that Member States reform social programs, like pensions, to cover workers in both the formal and informal economy to ensure ageing rural populations are able to support themselves.¹⁹⁰ The UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) published a policy brief in March 2017 providing global case studies of rural communities that had taken actions in response to healthcare inaccessibility, isolationism, and ageing in place for their ageing populations and highlights

¹⁸⁰ OAS, *Inter-American Convention on Protecting the Human Rights of Older Persons*, 2015, p. 5, 16, 18; WHO, *Inter-American Convention on Protecting the Human Rights of Older Persons*, 2015.

¹⁸¹ UN DESA, *Commission on Population and Development: Report on the Fiftieth Session (15 April 2016 and 3-7 April 2017)*, 2017, pp. 4-5.

¹⁸² UN DESA, *World Population Ageing*, 2015, p. 70.

¹⁸³ *Ibid*, p. 101.

¹⁸⁴ UN DESA, *Promoting Social Inclusion through Social Protection: Report on the World Situation 2018*, 2018, pp. 18-22.

¹⁸⁵ UN, Open-Ended Working Group on Ageing, *Substantive Inputs in the form of Normative Content for the Development of a Possible International Standard of the Focus Areas “Autonomy and Independence” and “Long-term and Palliative Care” (A/AC.278/2019/CRP.4)*, 2019.

¹⁸⁶ UN ECLAC, *Challenges to the Autonomy and Interdependent Rights of Older Persons*, 2017.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid*, pp. 44, 61.

¹⁸⁸ UN ESCAP, *Addressing the Challenges of Population Ageing in Asia and the Pacific, Implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing*, 2017.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid*, p. v.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid*, p. vi.

recommended strategies such as community programs involving older persons, remote healthcare services, and specialized transit services that other communities can implement to address ageing in place for rural older persons.¹⁹¹

Safe and Dignified Ageing for Rural Women

The informal economy refers to products or services, such as street vending, subsistence agriculture, that are produced by low-skilled, low-income or unpaid wage workers or small groups of workers who are not officially registered as businesses or companies.¹⁹² It is estimated that 77% of the world's workforce over the age of 65 is informally employed and 98% of women over the age of 65 in developing countries are informal workers.¹⁹³ Furthermore, the International Labor Organization (ILO) finds that 80% of the world's rural workforce is informally employed.¹⁹⁴ Women are more likely than men to be informally employed due to lower rates of education, gendered domestic duties, and socio-legal restrictions on women's ability to own property or land.¹⁹⁵ As a result of women's higher rates of informal employment, they are less likely to participate in social security, unemployment savings, and insurance schemes which means they have less savings in old age.¹⁹⁶ Even among formal employment, women are over-represented and paid less in careers, such as social work or education, than industries traditionally dominated by men, such as engineering or research which impacts women's ability to save for retirement.¹⁹⁷ Women also generally have longer lifespans, which means that they accumulate more expenses in old age compared to men.¹⁹⁸ Further, women's provision of unpaid or undercompensated care work is generally performed throughout their lives into old age.¹⁹⁹ For rural women, local economic challenges, places further strains in existing shortages in lifelong savings, resulting from lower employment opportunities in rural areas.²⁰⁰

Health issues, such as hypertension, diabetes, obesity, skin cancer, or alcohol dependency, are reported to be higher among older rural women than older women who live in cities which can result from risks or stress from informal occupations, smaller selections of nutritious food, social isolation, and fewer opportunities for women-specific health screenings.²⁰¹ There are also fewer choices of health clinics, services, and healthcare practitioners available and older rural women pay more for medical services compared to older women in urban areas.²⁰² Older women in rural areas are also at higher risk of abuse either from their age, their gender, or both, and may find it difficult to protect themselves due to limited access to social services, legal services, transportation networks, isolation, or dependence on other family members.²⁰³

In rural northern British Columbia in Canada, the provincial government allocated CAD 3 million to purchase more transportation vehicles to increase transportation accessibility, reduce reported safety risks to local women, and to fund bus operator training programs for underemployed indigenous local residents, which helps address limited mobility and employment among older rural women.²⁰⁴ In rural

¹⁹¹ UNECE, *Policy Brief: Older Persons in Rural and Remote Areas*, 2017.

¹⁹² WIEGO, *Informal Workers and the Work They Do*, 2019; ILO, *Rural Women at Work: Bridging the Gaps*, 2018, p. 1.

¹⁹³ WIEGO, *Counting the World's Informal Workers: A Global Snapshot*, 2018, p. 2.

¹⁹⁴ ILO, *Women and Men in the Informal Economy: A Statistical Picture*, 2018, p. 26.

¹⁹⁵ ILO, *Rural Women at Work: Bridging the Gaps*, 2018, p. 1; UN-Women, *Progress of the World's Women 2015-2016: Transforming Economies, Realizing Rights*, 2015, pp. 97-98.

¹⁹⁶ UN DESA, *Promoting Social Inclusion through Social Protection: Report on the World Situation 2018*, 2018, pp. 18-19.

¹⁹⁷ UN-Women, *Progress of the World's Women 2015-2016: Transforming Economies, Realizing Rights*, 2015, p. 98.

¹⁹⁸ UN DESA, *Economic Inequalities in Old Age*, 2016, p. 5.

¹⁹⁹ Overseas Development Institute, *Older Women's Economic Empowerment*, 2018, pp. 13-15.

²⁰⁰ Ibid.

²⁰¹ ALSWH, *Health in Rural and Remote Areas of Australia*, p. 2, 5; National Rural Health Association, *Rural Women's Health*, 2013, pp. 2, 4-5.

²⁰² ALSWH, *Health in Rural and Remote Areas of Australia*, p. 4.

²⁰³ Ibid, p. 7.

²⁰⁴ *Highway of Tears gets \$3M for transportation safety plan*, CBC, 2015.

Virginia in the United States, researchers helped facilitate community workshops to develop action plans and resources for older women in rural communities experiencing intimate partner violence, including the writing of staff training manuals to brief social workers on older women's needs, redesigning women's shelters to be age-inclusive, and implementing telephone hotlines where older women can call in to request help and ask about emergency programs.²⁰⁵ In India, a labor union representing 1.5 million female informal employees provides microinsurance to ensure that informal workers are able to protect themselves against health risks and provides cash payments to any relative who is hospitalized to absorb the costs of the unpaid care work its members perform for their families.²⁰⁶

Age-Inclusive Social Programs, Communities, and Infrastructure

Rural employment opportunities are less consistent and long-term than those found in urbanized areas, and as a result, older persons have less reliable income to cover basic cost-of-living expenses as well as less opportunity to participate in social insurance schemes, like pensions and unemployment savings accounts.²⁰⁷ Additionally, palliative care services, which help older persons manage pain and terminal conditions, are generally unavailable or difficult to access in rural areas.²⁰⁸ Furthermore, older persons who do not qualify for state-provided healthcare or long-term care programs and who have not been able to accumulate sufficient retirement savings must either continue working or rely upon their social security or pensions to cover high medical costs.²⁰⁹ WHO recommends that healthcare systems move from treatment-centric approaches towards palliative care for older persons and UN DESA recommends that healthcare be made affordable for all older persons to increase access.²¹⁰

As a result of lower overall employment opportunities in rural communities, nearly eight out of every ten countries exhibit a higher degree of pension coverage in cities versus rural areas, leaving older persons in rural areas at a disadvantage.²¹¹ The most popular funding models for pension systems around the world include tax-financed pensions, mandatory employee contributory pensions, and voluntary pensions.²¹² A tax-financed pension is the only model that does not require employment in order to receive benefits, though some are only distributed to older persons meeting certain poverty income thresholds.²¹³ Older persons who do not classify within the state-defined thresholds find they are ineligible for benefits and must continue working beyond retirement age to support themselves.²¹⁴ Several countries have converted from employee contributory pension models to universal, tax-financed models with marked declines in poverty and increases approaching 100% pension coverage among older persons, including those in rural areas.²¹⁵ An ILO analysis in 2014 finds that countries that fund a greater portion of their older population's income with public transfers experience lower rates of poverty among their older persons.²¹⁶

The lack of age-inclusive infrastructure and programs in rural areas results in an increase in health issues for older persons, such as obesity and malnutrition, since the places where older persons live are often

²⁰⁵ Roberto et al., *Violence Against Rural Older Women: Promoting Community Awareness and Action*, 2013, p. 11.

²⁰⁶ World Bank, *Mainstreaming Gender and Targeting Women in Inclusive Insurance: Perspectives and Emerging Lessons A Compendium of Technical Notes and Case Studies: VimoSEWA—An Insurance Cooperative for, with and by Women*, 2017, pp. 1-10.

²⁰⁷ UN DESA, *Promoting Social Inclusion through Social Protection: Report on the World Situation 2018*, 2018, p. 21; UN DESA, *Economic Inequalities in Old Age*, 2016, p. 6.

²⁰⁸ WHO, *Integrated Care for Older People*, 2018, p. 4; Pesut et al., *Feasibility of a Rural Palliative Supportive Service*, 2015, p. 1.

²⁰⁹ UN ESCAP, *Addressing the Challenges of Population Ageing in Asia and the Pacific, Implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing*, 2017, p. 67.

²¹⁰ WHO, *Integrated Care for Older People*, 2018, p. 10; UN DESA, *Health Inequalities in Old Age*, 2018, p. 6.

²¹¹ UN DESA, *Promoting Social Inclusion through Social Protection: Report on the World Situation 2018*, 2018, p. 21.

²¹² *Ibid.*, p. 51.

²¹³ *Ibid.*

²¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 52.

²¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 57.

²¹⁶ UNDP, *Ageing, Older Persons, and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, 2017, p. 18.

distant from commercial, community, and medical centers with few transportation links.²¹⁷ Additionally, the lack of paved pedestrian pathways combined with the presence of challenging terrain in rural areas raises the risks that older persons living in these areas may experience accidents, which may lead to a disability or even death.²¹⁸ Specifically, there is an estimated 15-fold risk that older persons experience and die from an accident as a pedestrian than through any other mode of mobility.²¹⁹ For instance, Denmark and Lithuania have utilized technology to allow healthcare workers to perform home visits to older persons in rural settlements while remotely accessing virtual records of the patients' medical history or using remote monitoring equipment to examine patients.²²⁰ Another example of action taken is the Australian government's efforts to fund the education and training of indigenous health practitioners to deal with high number dementia affecting the older peoples in Aboriginal rural communities within their unique socio-cultural context.²²¹ Member States may reduce transportation risks by planning and implementing transportation infrastructure that is safe and accessible for all ages.²²² Lincolnshire County in the United Kingdom instituted an on-demand paratransit service for residents living in sparsely-populated areas with discounts for older users, aged 60 years or above.²²³

Conclusion

As global ageing is expected to accelerate into the mid-21st century, CPD is positioned to study and recommend population policies for UN Member States to implement in order to assist their rural ageing population.²²⁴ CPD should address the lack and inadequacy of existing social protection schemes and pensions and the lack of age-inclusive transportation infrastructure in rural communities.²²⁵ It should also engage with gender-based economic inequality and healthcare inaccessibility disparities that ageing women encounter.²²⁶ Using the precedents and standards established by international and regional agreements, such as the WAA's MIPAA, the WHO's *Global Strategy and Plan of Action on Ageing and Health*, and OAS's *Inter-American Convention on Protecting the Human Rights of Older Persons*, CPD can advise various how the UN DESA should monitor and report on these issues in 2021.²²⁷

Further Research

In advancing their understanding of the topic, delegates may consider the following questions: How can the UN and the international system build upon the already existing work and agreements to reduce inequality between working-age and retired older persons in rural areas? What specific actions can CPD recommend to improve monitoring and reporting procedures of the living conditions of older persons in rural areas? How can the UN better coordinate with civil society organizations to better fulfill the needs of older persons in rural areas? How do existing rural-urban divides exacerbate the problems faced by older persons? What specific or niche challenges do women and other subpopulations of the older persons living in rural areas encounter? What can Member States do to complete the Five-Year Plan of Action period for the WHO's *Global Strategy and Plan of Action on Ageing and Health*? Furthermore, to which

²¹⁷ Durazo et al., *The Health Status and Unique Health Challenges of Rural Older Adults in California*, 2011, pp. 2-3; Morken, & Warner, *Planning for the Ageing Population: Rural Responses to the Challenge*, 2012, pp. 2-3; WHO, *World Report on Ageing and Health*, 2015, p. 91.

²¹⁸ Durazo et al., *The Health Status and Unique Health Challenges of Rural Older Adults in California*, 2011, pp. 2-3; Rosenbloom, *Meeting Transportation Needs in an Ageing-Friendly Community*, 2009, p. 36; WHO, *Falls*, 2019.

²¹⁹ Rosenbloom, *Meeting Transportation Needs in an Ageing-Friendly Community*, 2009, p. 36.

²²⁰ UNECE, *Policy Brief Older Persons in Rural and Remote Areas*, 2017, p. 8.

²²¹ Alzheimer's Australia, *Dementia: A Major Health Problem for Indigenous People*, 2007, p. 6.

²²² UN DSDG, *Mobilizing Sustainable Development for Transportation*, 2016, p. 40.

²²³ UNECE, *Policy Brief: Older Persons in Rural and Remote Areas*, 2017, p. 16.

²²⁴ UN DESA, *World Population Ageing*, 2017, p. 2.

²²⁵ UN DESA, *Promoting Social Inclusion through Social Protection: Report on the World Situation 2018*, 2018, p. 51; Rosenbloom, *Meeting Transportation Needs in an Ageing-Friendly Community*, 2009, p. 40.

²²⁶ Ibid.

²²⁷ UN World Assembly on Ageing, *Report of the World Assembly on Ageing*, 2002; WHO World Health Assembly, *Global Strategy and Plan of Action on Ageing and Health (A69/17)*, 2016; OAS, *Inter-American Convention on Protecting the Human Rights of Older Persons*, 2015.

specific actions should the Member States of the UN commit and prioritize to ensure the success of the Decade of Healthy Ageing from 2020 to 2030?

Annotated Bibliography

Overseas Development Institute. (2018). *Older Women's Economic Empowerment*. Retrieved 23 August 2019 from: <https://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/resource-documents/12510.pdf>

This literature review prepared by the Overseas Development Institute (ODI), a global think tank, examines ageing issues affecting older women around the world relating to economic inequality. The primary focus of the review is on the paid versus the unpaid work women are expected to perform for their families. Section 5 presents case studies that delegates will find useful in understanding what kinds of policies they can propose to address economic inequality among rural ageing women.

United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. (2016). *Economic Inequalities in Old Age*. Retrieved 22 August 2019 from: https://www.un.org/development/desa/ageing/wp-content/uploads/sites/24/2016/08/Briefing-Paper_Economic-Inequalities_Final.pdf

This policy brief prepared UN DESA looks at the impacts of economic inequalities on older persons around the world. The brief focuses on pensions, accessibility to employment, and financial services and then outlines some policy recommendations to address these deficiencies. The section pertaining to pensions and employment discusses how the rural-urban divide results in lower employment opportunities and pension accessibility than experienced by urban-dwelling older persons. Delegates will find this brief useful for understanding the role the urban-rural divide plays in income inequality for older persons.

United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. (2018). *Promoting Social Inclusion through Social Protection: Report on the World Situation 2018*. Retrieved 20 July 2019 from: <https://www.un.org/development/desa/dspd/wp-content/uploads/sites/22/2018/07/1-1.pdf>

This report prepared by UN DESA aims to examine the ways to include vulnerable and disadvantaged groups in the SDGs. Section IV of the report examines the disparities and equality gaps that older persons in rural areas encounter such as pension inadequacy, gender-based pension coverage disparities, and the effectiveness of different pension models. Delegates who want to understand the role that tax-financed pension schemes play in rural ageing should consult this document.

United Nations, Economic Commission for Europe. (2017). *Policy Brief: Older Persons in Rural and Remote Areas*. Retrieved 15 July 2019 from: https://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/pau/age/Policy_briefs/ECE-WG1-25.pdf

This policy brief published by the Economic Commission for Europe contains case studies of Member States around the world where rural communities have taken action to address ageing-related issues. Examples of such case studies include transportation and mobility for rural older persons, age-inclusive community centers, and information communication technologies to fill the healthcare accessibility gap. This will be useful for delegates' understanding of how to address rural ageing at the regional level.

World Health Organization, World Health Assembly, Sixty-ninth session. (2016). *Global Strategy and Plan of Action on Ageing and Health: Report by the Secretariat (A69/17)*. Retrieved 15 July 2019 from: http://apps.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf_files/WHA69/A69_17-en.pdf?ua=1

This is a summary document that outlines the five main principles of the Global Strategy and Action Plan on Ageing and Health. The summary document provides key definitions to help readers understand the terminology of the Strategy and Action Plan. Each of the five principles of the Plan has a bulleted list of key actions Member States can implement to address each of the principles. The principle of gender equality and non-discrimination relates to the aspect of dignified ageing for rural women.

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III. Population, Food Security, Nutrition, and Sustainable Development

Introduction

The work of the international community to fight hunger and malnutrition and support the sustainable development of global food systems, has contributed to a consistent decline in the number of hungry people worldwide throughout the past decades.²²⁸ However, in the report on the *State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2019*, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) found that the declining number of people suffering from hunger, classified as “the prevalence of undernourishment,” has stagnated and the absolute number of people suffering from global hunger is once again on the rise.²²⁹ More than 820 million people today are considered undernourished, and over two billion people worldwide face moderate to severe food insecurity.²³⁰

The international system’s definition of food security has evolved alongside the global understanding of food insecurity since the 1940s.²³¹ The 1996 *World Food Summit Plan of Action* adopted the following definition: “Food security exists when all people at all times have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life.”²³² The 2009 *Declaration of the World Summit on Food Security* reaffirmed this definition and added the word “social” to include dimensions of access to food that may be affected by an individual’s socio-cultural situation.²³³ The UN Secretary-General’s High-Level Task Force on Global Food and Nutrition Security concluded in 2015 that food security depends on the viability of and access to sustainable food systems, which encompass “all the elements (environment, people, inputs, processes, infrastructure, institutions, markets and trade) and activities that relate to the production, processing, distribution and marketing, preparation and consumption of food and the outputs of these activities, including socio-economic and environmental outcomes.”²³⁴

Nutrition security is an additional term that has been used in discussions of food security that involve population dynamics.²³⁵ The 2010 World Bank framework, *Scaling-Up Nutrition: A Framework for Action* declares nutrition security as being “achieved when secure access to an appropriately nutritious diet is coupled with a sanitary environment, adequate health services and care, to ensure a healthy and active life for all household members.”²³⁶ Nutrition is linked to population development.²³⁷ Key population indicators of fertility and mortality rates factor into a population’s ability to nourish itself.²³⁸ Many studies have shown that good nutrition reduces maternal, neonatal, and child mortality, and particular attention to nutrition in a child’s first 1000 days (three years of life) has shown to alleviate stunted growth and other health problems that affect large segments of populations that are affected by food insecurity.²³⁹

²²⁸ FAO et al., *State of Food Insecurity in the World 2019*, 2019.

²²⁹ Ibid.

²³⁰ Ibid.

²³¹ FAO, *An Introduction to the Basic Concepts of Food Security*, 2008; Simon, *Food Security: Definition, Four Dimensions, History*, 2012.

²³² FAO, *World Food Summit Plan of Action*, 1996.

²³³ FAO, Committee on World Food Security, *Coming to Terms with Terminology (CFS 2012/39/4)*, 2012; FAO, *World Summit on Food Security*, 2009.

²³⁴ Huang, *Population Growth and Food Insecurity*, 2015; UN Secretary-General’s High-Level Task Force on Global Food and Nutrition Security, *Compendium – Final Report of Zero Hunger Challenge Working Groups: All Food Systems are Sustainable*, 2015.

²³⁵ FAO, *An Introduction to the Basic Concepts of Food Security*, 2008.

²³⁶ World Bank, *Scaling Up Nutrition: A Framework for Action*, 2010.

²³⁷ Figueroa & Rodriguez-Garcia, *Nutrition and Population*, 2002; Huang, *Population Growth and Food Insecurity*, 2015.

²³⁸ Figueroa & Rodriguez-Garcia, *Nutrition and Population*, 2002; UN DESA Population Division, *World Population Prospects 2019: Highlights*, 2019.

²³⁹ Figueroa & Rodriguez-Garcia, *Nutrition and Population*, 2002.

Population growth is often seen to be a driver of food insecurity.²⁴⁰ The regions of the world with highest fertility rates and rates of population growth often have the highest rates of food insecurity as well, increasing the challenge of meeting the nutritional needs of all.²⁴¹ Food insecurity can be exacerbated by other population dynamics such as the stress of rapid urbanization and inadequate infrastructure, population ageing and impacts on the agri-workforce, and other vulnerabilities caused by climate change, conflict, economic downturns, migration and internal displacement, and widespread health issues.²⁴²

International and Regional Framework

International discourse on the concept of food security originated at the Hot Springs Conference of 1943, which discussed the future of food and agriculture amidst the food shortages and starvation occurring as a result of World War II.²⁴³ The first priority to attain the universal goal of “freedom from want” was decided to be “freedom from hunger,” and thus, the conference resulted in the creation of the predecessor of FAO.²⁴⁴ Over the past 75 years, global understanding of food security has evolved from a conceptual phenomenon into a universal necessity for sustainable development.²⁴⁵ The UN system has produced a series of documents, treaties, and agreements that together make up a human rights framework considering food security, in its many dimensions, as an essential component of life for the entire global population.²⁴⁶ The *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (UDHR) (1948) recognizes the right to food as part of the right to an adequate standard of living.²⁴⁷ Article 11 of the legally binding *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights* (ICESCR) (1966) enshrines food security as a human right in the context that all human beings “have the right to adequate food and the right to be free from hunger.”²⁴⁸ States parties to the ICESCR must take any measures needed “to improve methods of production, conservation and distribution of food by making full use of technical and scientific knowledge, by disseminating knowledge of the principles of nutrition... [and]... ensure an equitable distribution of world food supplies in relation to need.”²⁴⁹ The international food crisis of the early 1970s challenged the international system to implement policies to realize the human right to adequate food and nutrition.²⁵⁰ At the 1974 World Food Conference, the international community for the first time recognized that food security was a common concern for all nations.²⁵¹ The *Universal Declaration on the Eradication of Hunger and Malnutrition*, first adopted at this conference and later endorsed by the 29th session of the UN General Assembly, further incorporated the importance of nutrition within discussions of food security and human rights for global human development.²⁵²

The International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in Cairo, Egypt, in 1994 linked the role of population dynamics and sustainable development, reflecting the growing awareness that “population, poverty, patterns of production and consumption and the environment are so closely interconnected that none of them can be considered in isolation.”²⁵³ Rather than focusing on reaching specific demographic targets, the conference’s outcome document, the *ICPD Program of Action*,

²⁴⁰ FAO, *The Future of Food and Agriculture: Alternative Pathways to 2050*, 2018.

²⁴¹ Population Action International, *Why Population Matters to Food Security*, 2011; UN ECOSOC, *World Demographic Trends*, 2018.

²⁴² FAO, *The State of Food Security in the World: The Multiple Dimensions of Food Insecurity*, 2013.

²⁴³ Simon, *Food Security: Definition, Four Dimensions, History*, 2012.

²⁴⁴ Ibid.

²⁴⁵ UN OHCHR, *Fact Sheet No. 34: The Right to Adequate Food*, 2010; Bindraban, et al., *Food Security at Different Scales: Demographic, Biophysical and Socioeconomic Considerations*, 1998.

²⁴⁶ UN OHCHR, *Fact Sheet No. 34: The Right to Adequate Food*, 2010.

²⁴⁷ UN General Assembly, *Universal Declaration of Human Rights (A/RES/217 A (III))*, 1948.

²⁴⁸ UN General Assembly, *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (A/RES/2200 (XXI))*, 1966.

²⁴⁹ Ibid.

²⁵⁰ UN ECLAC, *Key Conference Outcomes on Food*, 2003

²⁵¹ Ibid; Dag Hammarskjöld Library, *Food Security and Nutrition: A Global Issue*, 2019.

²⁵² Dag Hammarskjöld Library, *Food Security and Nutrition: A Global Issue*, 2019; World Food Conference, *Universal Declaration on the Eradication of Hunger and Malnutrition*, 1974.

²⁵³ UN DCG, *ICPD '94: Summary of the Programme of Action*, 1995.

promotes human development by holistically integrating human rights and considerations for quality of life of men and women into population and development strategies.²⁵⁴ The right to adequate food is included as a component of the second guiding principle of the *ICPD Programme of Action*.²⁵⁵ The *ICPD Programme of Action* acknowledges that investment in food systems can be difficult for economies that are facing rapidly growing populations, but recommends that governments should take measures to improve food, nutrition, and agricultural policies that create and strengthen food security.²⁵⁶ The *ICPD Programme of Action* also calls for research to expand global understanding of methods to develop and improve sustainable food production, crop, and livestock systems.²⁵⁷

The 1996 World Food Summit provided a high-level forum for debate on eradicating world hunger.²⁵⁸ The World Food Summit's new definition of food security outlined four dimensions of food security: availability, access, stability, and utilization, recognizing both food and care-related aspects of nutrition (such as nutrition while breastfeeding) in food system policies.²⁵⁹ Over 170 Heads of State and high-level representatives adopted the *Rome Declaration on World Food Security* and the *World Food Summit Plan of Action*, which calls upon Member States to adopt a national implementation strategy that is tailored to their own specific economic situations and cultural contexts.²⁶⁰ While food security remains a global concern, this language empowers each Member State to implement national food security policies and harness their own sovereign resources, capabilities, and cultural awareness to achieve food security goals.²⁶¹

In 1999, the UN General Assembly convened the 21st Special Session to discuss progress toward the implementation of the *ICPD Programme of Action*.²⁶² The Special Session's *Key Actions for Further Implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action* informed part of the Millennium Development Goals of 2000 and the UN Secretary-General's Zero Hunger Challenge, launched at the 2012 Rio+20 Conference on Sustainable Development.²⁶³ There, the FAO Committee on World Food Security sought to build consensus on common terms to use across international organizations when discussing food security and nutrition.²⁶⁴ The final document defined nutrition security as existing when "all people at all times consume food of sufficient quantity and quality in terms of variety, diversity, nutrient content and safety to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life, coupled with a sanitary environment, adequate health, education and care."²⁶⁵ This multi-faceted definition impacted the international community's approach to nutrition, taking a holistic approach to this sustainable development topic factoring in the importance of environment, health, education, and care.²⁶⁶ The global community continues this work by focusing on the wide-reaching Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) set out in the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (2030 Agenda) (2015).²⁶⁷ SDG 2 (zero hunger), aims to "end hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture" by the

²⁵⁴ UNFPA, *Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population Development: 20th Anniversary Edition*, 2014.

²⁵⁵ UNFPA, *Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population Development: 20th Anniversary Edition*, 2014; UN DESA, *Commission on Population and Development*, 2019.

²⁵⁶ Ibid.

²⁵⁷ UN DCG, *ICPD '94: Summary of the Programme of Action*, 1995.

²⁵⁸ FAO, *World Food Summit*.

²⁵⁹ FAO, *Rome Declaration on World Food Security*, 1996; FAO Committee on World Food Security, *Coming to Terms with Terminology (CFS 2012/39/4)*, 2012.

²⁶⁰ ECLAC, *Key Conference Outcomes on Food*, 2003; FAO Committee on World Food Security, *Coming to Terms with Terminology (CFS 2012/39/4)*, 2012.

²⁶¹ FAO Committee on World Food Security, *Coming to Terms with Terminology (CFS 2012/39/4)*, 2012; UN CESCR, *General Comment No. 12: The Right to Adequate Food*, 1999.

²⁶² UNFPA, *ICPD+5 Review*, 1999.

²⁶³ Ibid; FAO et al., *The Zero Hunger Challenge: United for a Sustainable World*, 2015.

²⁶⁴ FAO Committee on World Food Security, *Coming to Terms with Terminology (CFS 2012/39/4)*, 2012.

²⁶⁵ Ibid.

²⁶⁶ Ibid.

²⁶⁷ UN General Assembly, *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*, 2015.

year 2030.²⁶⁸ SDG 2 brings an integrated awareness of population, economic considerations, environment, and other dynamics into actions on food insecurity and poverty reduction.²⁶⁹

Role of the International System

CPD adopted a resolution in its 43rd session in 2010 on “Health, Morbidity, Mortality and Development” that reaffirmed the importance of nutrition in sustainable development plans and declared an additional need for nutritional support for women and children, to prevent morbidity and malnutrition later in life.²⁷⁰ CPD additionally discussed food security at its 48th session in 2015, “Realizing the Future We Want: Integrating Population Issues Into Sustainable Development, Including in the Post-2015 Development Agenda.”²⁷¹ At the 52nd session in 2019, the Commission approved the theme, “Population, food security, nutrition and sustainable development,” for its 53rd session in 2020.²⁷² The UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) convened an expert group meeting in preparation for the upcoming session in September 2019, which examined new evidence and analysis that implicate population linkages to topics such as growth, consumption and sustainability, “transformation of rural economies and employment as a driver of population movements,” “urban food security and urban-rural linkages in food systems,” and “land degradation, water scarcity and biosphere impacts (biodiversity, GHG emissions, climate change).”²⁷³ Based on the expert group’s findings, the UN Secretary-General is expected to publish a topical report on the current state of population, food security, nutrition, and sustainable development, as well as a review of CPD-supported population programs that focus on these issues.²⁷⁴

FAO is the Specialized UN Agency that leads research, policy development, and system capacity building for the international understanding of and action on food, agriculture, and natural resources.²⁷⁵ The World Food Programme additionally provides both on-the-ground humanitarian aid in times of crisis and immediate post-conflict, and longer-term capacity building programming to support sustained community nutrition and resilience.²⁷⁶ The World Health Organization (WHO) is the foremost UN actor to produce scientific evidence-based action guidance on global health and nutrition.²⁷⁷ Successful partnerships between CPD and these UN bodies on nutrition and food security have been based on knowledge-sharing and policy coordination, but recent efforts surrounding the implementation of the SDGs prompt programmatic support that will likely be discussed at the 53rd session of CPD in 2020.²⁷⁸

The UN System Standing Committee on Nutrition (UNSCN) serves as a space for UN agencies to synergize positions and establish cooperative global approaches on nutrition issues.²⁷⁹ It brings together FAO, WHO, and other UN agencies by facilitating open dialogue and knowledge-sharing among UN system actors working in or adjacent to nutrition and food security dynamics.²⁸⁰ CPD is represented on the UNSCN via the membership of UN DESA.²⁸¹ The UNSCN also serves as a coordinating mechanism for the UN Decade of Action on Nutrition, 2016-2026.²⁸² Guided by the research agenda of FAO and

²⁶⁸ UN DESA, *Goal 2: Zero Hunger*, 2015.

²⁶⁹ Ibid.

²⁷⁰ UN CPD, *Health, Morbidity, Mortality, and Development (E/2010/25)*, 2010.

²⁷¹ UN DESA, *Commission on Population and Development Forty-Eighth Session*, 2015.

²⁷² UN ECOSOC, *Provisional Agenda for the Fifty-Third Session of the Commission on Population and Development*, 2019; CPD, *Commission on Population and Development Fifty-Third Session*, 2019.

²⁷³ UN DESA, UN Expert Group Meeting on Population, Food Security, Nutrition and Sustainable Development, *Concept Note*, 2019.

²⁷⁴ UN CPD, *Commission on Population and Development Fifty-Second Session*, 2019.

²⁷⁵ FAO, *About FAO*, 2019.

²⁷⁶ WFP, *Overview: World Food Programme*, 2019.

²⁷⁷ WHO NHD, *About Nutrition*, 2019.

²⁷⁸ UN ECOSOC, *Future Organization and Methods of Work of the Commission on Population and Development (E/RES/2016/25)*, 2016.

²⁷⁹ UNSCN, *What We Do: The Decade of Action on Nutrition 2016-2025*, 2019.

²⁸⁰ UNSCN, *Strategic Plan 2016-2020*, 2016.

²⁸¹ UNSCN, *Who We Are*, 2019.

²⁸² UNSCN, *What We Do: The Decade of Action on Nutrition 2016-2025*, 2019.

WHO, the decade aims to increase sustainability of global nutrition gains by developing a program of work to achieve the global nutrition targets set in SDG 2 of the 2030 Agenda.²⁸³

On a regional level, the African Union Commission and African Development Bank recently launched the Africa Food Security Leadership Dialogue with a high-level meeting in August 2019.²⁸⁴ Leaders at this meeting agreed to prioritize building population resilience for climate-related food insecurity to meet the nutritional needs of all by the time the continent's population reaches 2 billion in 2050.²⁸⁵ Member States formally committed to joint regional coordination to implement the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Program, part of the African Union's Agenda 2063 long-term development trajectory for the continent, which includes priorities such as strengthening linkages between regional economic communities and transforming investment in rural areas to help rural populations reach their potential for human development.²⁸⁶

Feeding 9 Billion+ by 2050

The *2019 UN Population Prospects* estimate the world population will grow to 9.7 billion people by 2050, with over 2 billion people on the African continent.²⁸⁷ Many countries in Africa and throughout the developing world have not seen sustained growth in their economies to support the nutritional needs of their current population and may struggle to meet the needs of a potentially larger and denser population in the future.²⁸⁸ Global demand for food is expected to rise as middle classes grow and emerging economies eventually become wealthier and expectant of richer diets including more meat and dairy.²⁸⁹ Food security is expected to remain a challenge at local, household, and individual levels, particularly in countries facing great wealth disparity and declining agricultural production due to climate change.²⁹⁰ The report of the UN Secretary-General on "Integrating population issues into sustainable development, including in the post-2015 development agenda" found that substantial improvement to food production and distribution systems will be needed over the next 15 years in order to meet the nutritional needs of all.²⁹¹

To assess potential global options for feeding the growing world population, FAO convened in 2009 the High-Level Expert Forum on How to Feed the World in 2050.²⁹² The forum discussed topics such as food system challenges in the Sub-Saharan African region including natural resource management and reforms needed to strengthen state institutions for agriculture, continued care and nutrition for populations with HIV/AIDS and other diseases, barriers to global market entry and dependency on imports, gaps in technology adoption and availability, and environmental vulnerability among populations in a variety of climates.²⁹³ The *2018 Global Nutrition Report* provides an overview of significant recent progress within and outside of the UN system to address global malnutrition.²⁹⁴ The report states that solutions to global nutrition issues exist and the international system has more data than ever before on what people eat and

²⁸³ WHO & FAO, *Driving Commitment for Nutrition within the UN Decade of Action on Nutrition*, 2018; WHO, *UN Decade of Action on Nutrition*, 2016.

²⁸⁴ AU Commission et al., *About the Africa Food Security Leadership Dialogue Initiative*, 2019; UN DGC, *Help African Farmers Cope with Climate Change Threats*, UN Food Agency Urges, 2019.

²⁸⁵ UN DGC, *Help African Farmers Cope with Climate Change Threats*, UN Food Agency Urges, 2019.

²⁸⁶ AU Commission et al., *About the Africa Food Security Leadership Dialogue Initiative*, 2019; AU, *Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want*, 2013.

²⁸⁷ UN DESA, Population Division, *World Population Prospects 2019: Highlights*, 2019.

²⁸⁸ FAO et al., *State of Food Insecurity in the World 2019*, 2019.

²⁸⁹ UN CPD, *Report of the Secretary-General on Integrating population issues into sustainable development, including in the post-2015 development agenda (E/CN.9/2015/3)*, 2015.

²⁹⁰ Ibid.

²⁹¹ Ibid.

²⁹² FAO, *About the High Level Expert Forum*, 2009.

²⁹³ FAO High Level Expert Forum on How to Feed the World in 2050, *Issue Brief: The Special Challenge for Sub-Saharan Africa*, 2009.

²⁹⁴ UNICEF, *2018 Global Nutrition Report Reveals Malnutrition is Unacceptably High and Affects Every Country in the World, but There is Also an Unprecedented Opportunity to End It*, 2018.

how diets need to be improved to overcome malnutrition.²⁹⁵ Interventions such as national programs to combat rising obesity, support programs for nutrition among elderly populations, and programs that deliver nutritional education for expectant mothers need to be adopted to scale in order to affect segments of the population who could benefit the most.²⁹⁶

Ageing, Labor, and the Future of Food Production

The world currently produces enough food to feed the entire global population, though global disparities in consumption and barriers to access continue to uphold levels of moderate to severe food insecurity for over 820 million people worldwide.²⁹⁷ With a growing population, the demand for food and, therefore, food production will increase, especially if current patterns of overconsumption continue in developed countries.²⁹⁸ Additionally, the world has seen a large outflow of migration from rural to urban areas over the past several decades, impacting the agriculture workforce and food production capacity of several of rural areas.²⁹⁹ In 1990, approximately 43% of the world population lived in cities and urban areas, while today urban inhabitants include over 55% of the world population.³⁰⁰ This number is expected to rise to 66% by 2050, which will cause disruption to rural farming communities and an increased need for urban farming and access to agricultural products for city dwellers.³⁰¹

Due to migration to urban areas, an increase in rural economic opportunities outside of agriculture, and more environmental challenges than ever before, young people in many communities around the world are less likely to continue family and regional traditions of rural farming.³⁰² Climate change-related challenges such as gradual weather pattern changes, an increase in drastic climate events, desertification, and other environmental phenomena are leading to lower yields in many regions and are causing great discontent among rural farmers.³⁰³ Traditional farming relies heavily on a young workforce but rural youth today face particular constraints in areas such as access to land, access to finance, gender norms, and capacities and skills to adapt techniques to the digital era.³⁰⁴ Trends in population ageing may add further disruption to farming in parts of the world where farmers are growing older and young people are few or likely to migrate to urban areas.³⁰⁵ These agricultural systems could be in jeopardy without a sustained entry of people into the agri-workforce.³⁰⁶

The international system is attempting to support rural farmers and agriculture workers in a variety of ways.³⁰⁷ FAO and the International Fund for Agricultural Development recently launched the *United Nations Decade of Family Farming 2019-2028: Global Action Plan*, which outlines a set of collective actions the international community must take to support future generations of farmers and agriculture workers such as promoting gender equality and empowering women as leaders in rural agriculture,

²⁹⁵ Ibid.

²⁹⁶ Global Nutrition Report, *Global Nutrition Report 2018*, 2018.

²⁹⁷ FAO et al., *State of Food Insecurity in the World 2019*, 2019; UNEP, *The Critical Role of Global Food Consumption Patterns in Achieving Sustainable Food Systems and Food for All*, 2012.

²⁹⁸ IPCC, *Climate Change and Land: an IPCC special report on climate change, desertification, land degradation, sustainable land management, food security, and greenhouse gas fluxes in terrestrial ecosystems*, 2019.

²⁹⁹ UN DESA Population Division, *World Urbanization Prospects*, 2014; FAO et al., *The Linkages between Migration, Agriculture, Food Security and Rural Development*, 2018.

³⁰⁰ UN DESA Population Division, *World Urbanization Prospects: 2018 Revision*, 2019.

³⁰¹ UN DESA Population Division, *World Urbanization Prospects*, 2014; Beeler, *UN Compact Recognizes Climate Change as Driver of Migration for First Time*, 2018.

³⁰² Hosnedlova, *Farming's Ageing and Negativity Problem*, 2018; UN DESA Population Division, *World Urbanization Prospects*, 2014; FAO et al., *The Linkages between Migration, Agriculture, Food Security and Rural Development*, 2018.

³⁰³ Ekekwe, *How Digital Technology is Changing Farming in Africa*, 2017; IFPRI, *Food Security*, 2019.

³⁰⁴ IFAD, *Creating Opportunities for Rural Youth: 2019 Rural Development Report*, 2019; Hosnedlova, *Farming's Ageing and Negativity Problem*, 2018.

³⁰⁵ Hosnedlova, *Farming's Ageing and Negativity Problem*, 2018.

³⁰⁶ HelpAge International, *The Ageing of Rural Populations: Evidence on Older Farmers in Low- and Middle-Income Countries*, 2014; Hosnedlova, *Farming's Ageing and Negativity Problem*, 2018.

³⁰⁷ FAO et al., *The Linkages between Migration, Agriculture, Food Security and Rural Development*, 2018.

promote social innovations for sustainable food systems to combat rural poverty, and strengthen family farmers' organizations to ensure knowledge-sharing and civil society representation.³⁰⁸ Although institutions in rural areas frequently lack capacity to provide access to farmers for services readily available in urban areas, progress of SDG 17 (partnerships for the goals) and SDG target 17.19 (capacity building), is encouraging partnerships and support to strengthen these institutions, improve rural infrastructure, and implement national-level social protection systems.³⁰⁹ As a result of these and other capacity building initiatives, rural populations could see increased access to public services, the lack of which can be a main driver of out-migration.³¹⁰

Conclusion

As the global population will likely surpass 9 billion by 2050, it will be crucial for policymakers and the international community to take into consideration demographic mega-trends of population growth, global migration, urbanization, and population aging when looking at sustainable development and food security.³¹¹ Empowered by its mandate to follow up on and ensure implementation of the *ICPD Programme of Action*, CPD is in a unique position to contribute to the global discourse and action on food security.³¹² With the agenda item of "Population, food security, nutrition and sustainable development" confirmed for its 53rd session in 2020, CPD will build upon previous work on population dynamics of global health and nutrition to further contribute to the goal of attaining Zero Hunger for a sustainable future of the global population, for generations to come.³¹³

Further Research

Moving forward, delegates may want to consider questions such as: How can the implementation of the ICPD Program of Action work in collaboration or in parallel with efforts to reach the SDGs? In what ways could CPD's population-centered data analysis and statistical development support research for global food security needs? What policies should Member States establish in order to create sustainable food systems for the growing world population? How can the international community support farmers in both urban and rural environments, especially as they age? What measures can be taken by international organizations and non-governmental organizations to support populations vulnerable to food insecurity due to environmental conditions?

Annotated Bibliography

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. (2012). *Coming to Terms with Terminology (CFS 2012/39/4)*. Retrieved 19 July 2019 from: <http://www.fao.org/3/MD776E/MD776E.pdf>

This report discusses the history of global food security and the history of linguistic semantics referencing these issues. It provides an opportunity for delegates to learn about the evolution of thought and understanding around food security as we know it today. While it sheds light on past work on food issues and problems, the document provides essential context for delegates to understand current issues surrounding food insecurity, including considering population growth as a driver of this phenomenon

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations et al. (2019). *State of Food Insecurity in the World 2019*. Retrieved 19 July 2019 from: <http://www.fao.org/publications/sofi/en/>

³⁰⁸ FAO & IFAD, *United Nations Decade of Family Farming 2019-2028: Global Action Plan*, 2019.

³⁰⁹ UN DESA, *Capacity-Building*; FAO et al., *The Linkages between Migration, Agriculture, Food Security and Rural Development*, 2018.

³¹⁰ Ibid.

³¹¹ UN DESA, UN Expert Group Meeting on Population, Food Security, Nutrition and Sustainable Development, *Concept Note*, 2019.

³¹² Ibid.

³¹³ UN ECOSOC, *Provisional Agenda for the Fifty-Third Session of the Commission on Population and Development*, 2019; CPD, *Commission on Population and Development Fifty-Third Session*, 2019.

This publication is put together each year by several of the major policy-making, research, and implementing bodies that work on issues pertaining to food systems and security in the international system. It serves to synthesize the latest trends and news on food security broadly, including any major progress or failures over the past year. Delegates will find this 2019 version and other predecessors helpful to their research, as it provides up-to-date high-level overviews of key areas such as worldwide malnutrition statistics and recent progress towards an integrated understanding of food security and nutrition in relation to health and well-being. In addition, the report provides an annual deep dive into one major sub-issue, which in 2019 covered “Safeguarding against economic slowdowns and downturns.”

United Nations, Commission on Population and Development. (2019). *Commission on Population and Development Fifty-Second Session*. Retrieved 20 July 2019 from:

<https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/commission/sessions/2019/index.asp>

This webpage provides an event overview of the 52nd session of the CPD. Delegates will find it useful to read the published documents that the Commission agreed to, in addition to summaries of work and the Provisional Agenda for the 53rd Session of CPD, which will discuss this topic as primary theme. Background guides, research papers, and reports of the UN Secretary-General will be posted here ahead of CPD53.

United Nations, Commission on Population and Development. (2019). *Commission on Population and Development Fifty-Third Session*. Retrieved 25 October 2019 from:

<https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/commission/sessions/2020/index.asp>

This webpage provides an event overview of the 53rd session of the CPD. Delegates will find it useful to view the written statements by Commission Members and ECOSOC-accredited NGOs that will be published shortly before the 53rd session commences in March 2020. The Expert Group Meeting event website, linked to this page, will give delegates a real-time insight into the most current updates from CPD on this topic, as it has published a concept note on the 53rd Session’s theme, several background readings, and a full agenda with presentations included.

United Nations, Economic and Social Council. (2018). *World Demographic Trends*. Retrieved 20 July 2019 from: <https://undocs.org/en/%20E/CN.9/2018/5>

This annual report includes the most updated, internationally recognized synthesis of population and world demographic trends, led by CPD. While it does not often expressly discuss food security, delegates will find this useful to further understand the linkages between population trends, sustainability, and food security, with reference to many major recent developments in areas such as changing population age structures, urbanization, and international migration.

United Nations, Dag Hammarskjöld Library. (2019). *Food Security and Nutrition: A Global Issue*. Retrieved 19 July 2019 from: <http://research.un.org/en/foodsecurity>

This research guide is one of many published by the Dag Hammarskjöld Library, the leading research and information services provider for delegates of Permanent Missions and UN Secretariat staff at UN Headquarters in New York. The guide provides a broad and extensive overview of the history of food security within the UN system. It provides access to the most relevant foundational documents that have shaped the way the international system discusses food, food security, and population aspects of food security. Delegates will find particularly useful the links to relevant UN resolutions, the outline of actors, and the summarized history of food security, which will leave them with an interdisciplinary and global understanding of this topic.

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