

# Population Headliners



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ESCAP

## Sixtieth Commission session to consider population issues

Emerging social issues, as related to population, ageing, disability, migration, gender and health will be among the topics discussed during the Sixtieth session of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP). The Commission is scheduled to be held at the Shanghai International Convention Center (SICC) in Shanghai, China from 22 to 28 April.

Policy issues for the Asian and Pacific region are likely to be at the forefront of discussions, as the selected theme of this year's Commission session is "Meeting the Challenges in an Era of Globalization by Strengthening Regional Development Cooperation". High-level representatives from member and associate member countries of the region will be addressing emerging social issues as part of the third agenda item.

The report of the Committee on Emerging Social Issues on its first session held at Bangkok from 4 to 6 September as well as a paper entitled "Emerging Social Issues: Trends, Issues and Strategies" will provide the basis for discussion in this particular area.

The report of the Committee describes the situation with regard to priority issues concerning socially vulnerable groups and health and development. These issues include the population, poverty and development linkages, support to older persons, the Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons (2003-2012) and gender mainstreaming. The report also reflects discussions on the regional situation concerning HIV/AIDS and severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS), and investment in health.

The upcoming annual Commission session is expected to consider and endorse the Committee's conclusions and recommendations, as described in an earlier issue of *Population Headliners* (No. 296).

Addressing emerging social issues from a rights-based perspective constitutes one of the core messages of the other population-related document to be discussed at the Commission. The paper demonstrates how the rights-based approach is applied to the formulation of policies and programmes in the areas of population, age-



The historic Sixtieth Commission session will be held at Shanghai, China, the birthplace of ESCAP

ing, disability, migration, gender, and health. "There is still a gap between the high priority that people themselves accord to good health and the tendency for Governments to give priority to the economic sector in national investment", the paper reads. "As the Asian and Pacific region

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### Population Headliners gets new look!

After having been around for several decades (since April 1975), *Population Headliners* gets a slight facelift intended to boost its attractiveness and reading comfort. As can be observed from the present issue, a wide range of changes have been made in terms of design, font and colour. Readers are most welcome to send their comments and suggestions by e-mail to [escap-population@un.org](mailto:escap-population@un.org). *Headliners* is also available online at <http://www.unescap.org/esid/psis/population/popheadline/index.asp>

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## European Population Forum calls for recommitment to ICPD

A United Nations-organized conference of European population and reproductive health experts wound up in mid-January with a plea to mobilize the funds needed to achieve the goals of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), which called for gender equality and the universal right to education and development.

The three-day European Population Forum 2004 in Geneva, jointly organized by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), also examined the impact of changing demographic trends in the region.

“Our primary objective must be to protect and save lives and contribute to the conditions under which all people – men, women and children – thrive and lead secure and healthy lives”, UNFPA Executive Director Ms. Thoraya Ahmed Obaid told the closing session. “Stronger political commitment, backed by effective policies grounded in human rights and above all by adequate resources, is the key to realizing our common hopes for humanity”.

More than 350 people took part in the Forum, part of a series of regional meetings marking the tenth anniversary of the ICPD held at Cairo in 1994 (see side-story). The sessions identified lack of adequate resources for population and reproductive health programmes as the primary obstacle to achieving the Cairo objectives, including gender equality and universal access to reproductive health care by 2015.

Participants emphasized the importance of Europe keeping its promises to mobilize resources for population and reproductive health as a key contribution to international development. Annual global assistance for these sectors, they noted, is nearly \$3 billion short of the requirements agreed to at Cairo.

Regional issues discussed included persistent low fertility, ageing populations and declining workforces, migration, and high mortality and morbidity. Special attention was given to the social, economic and health

challenges facing countries in transition in Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia. Other concerns identified included widespread human trafficking and gender-based violence.

The Forum also called for empowering young people to fully enjoy healthy sexual and reproductive lives

as a key priority in a region with rising rates of HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted infections. It emphasized the need to integrate HIV prevention and treatment fully within reproductive health programmes.

(Source: United Nations News Service, 14 January)

## First event to mark tenth anniversary of ICPD

The International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) held at Cairo in 1994 was a milestone in the history of women’s reproductive rights. The Programme of Action that was adopted by 179 countries, by consensus, is a forward-looking 20-year plan. While the Programme of Action is comprehensive and calls for action at various levels, the strategic focus of the recommendations is for action at the national level.

The first five-year review of the implementation of the Programme of Action (PoA) was conducted by the General Assembly in 1999 which adopted, by consensus, the *Key Actions for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development*. The review showed that the ICPD goals are still valid and that much progress had been made in advancing them.

The year 2004 marks the mid-point of the 20-year Programme of Action, and as one reaches this tenth anniversary, there is much to celebrate and look forward to.

As explained in UNFPA’s website, ICPD at 10 ([www.unfpa.org/icpd/](http://www.unfpa.org/icpd/)), “many countries have been able to translate the commitments they made at Cairo into policies and action programmes designed to transform the lives of women and men. But much remains to be done”.

“At this point in time, most member states, UNFPA, and other partners believe that the best way to commemorate ICPD is by doing a pragmatic and constructive country-by-country analysis of achievements, of constraints and of lessons learned and to feed back the results so as to enrich and acceler-



The ICPD Programme of Action is a milestone in the history of women’s reproductive rights.

ate the implementation of the ICPD PoA. The tenth Anniversary is also an opportunity to reflect on the ICPD goals, and demonstrate how achieving these goals will contribute to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals”.

The European Population Forum 2004 was the first event of the year to mark the tenth anniversary of ICPD. Throughout 2004, numerous activities are scheduled to take place at the national, regional and global levels.

As much as possible, over the course of 2004, the bimonthly *Population Headliners* will report on major events taking place in relation to this event, also known as ICPD+10.

For more details on the activities scheduled, visit the above-cited website.



## UNESCAP-UNFPA to pursue rewarding collaboration

While attending the 42<sup>nd</sup> session of the United Nations Commission for Social Development convened in New York from 4 to 13 February, Ms. Thelma Kay, Chief, Emerging Social Issues Division, UNESCAP met with the newly appointed Director of the Asia and the Pacific Division of UNFPA, Mr. Sultan Aziz and his colleagues. During the meeting held on 4 February, they discussed issues of mutual interest and exchanged views on UNESCAP's proposal for the UNFPA Regional Programme 2004-2007 which would focus on emerging and persistent population and development challenges in the Asian and the Pacific region.

UNESCAP and UNFPA will forge a synergistic partnership in order to combat poverty and advance the implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development



*Mr. Sultan Aziz, Director APD, UNFPA*

(ICPD) as well as the Millennium Development Goals in the region. The two partners will continue to pursue the rewarding collaboration which they have had for the past several decades. Mr. Aziz and Ms. Kay also agreed to further strengthen the active collaboration between UNESCAP and UNFPA Country Offices in Asia and the Pacific to ensure that the activities carried out at the regional level effectively complement those of the country programmes.

### FROM PAGE 1

approaches the mid-point of the third decade of the HIV/AIDS pandemic, its epicenter is fast shifting from Africa to this region. Over 8 million people are living with HIV/AIDS in Asia and the Pacific".

Prepared by the Emerging Social Issues Division of ESCAP, the paper provides an overview of the demographic dynamics at play in Asia and the Pacific, highlighting the region's impressive achievements in reducing population growth rates, lowering mortality rates and increasing life expectancy. It highlights the significance of the Fifth Asian and Pacific Population Conference convened in December 2002, recalling the Conference's first two recommendations as contained in the Plan of Action on Population and Poverty and its focus on gender equality, equity and the empowerment of women.

Population ageing is another issue highlighted in the paper, which stresses that "most developing countries have yet to put in place pension and other social protection systems for a majority of older persons". "For at least the next twenty years, the proportion of the ESCAP population in the working age span of 15-64 years will continue to expand", the paper reads. Issues related to

internal and international migration are also raised as "80 per cent of the increase in population size between 2000 and 2010" is predicted to occur in urban areas. The paper warns about imminent additional stress on local governments and infrastructures and calls for proper planning in order to make the projected growth of the urban population of 2.3 per cent a year over the next decade become "manageable". "Urbanization presents an opportunity to accelerate the pace of social and economic development".

The paper calls for attention to the steadily expanding volume of international migration in the region, particularly for employment. "As an international labour market in a number of occupations has developed in East and South-East Asia, certain basic rights, benefits and standards should apply across economies in the region", the paper notes. It draws attention to the fate of women migrants, being "often vulnerable to exploitation and abuse".

The Sixtieth session of the Commission will be held in Shanghai as this city is the birthplace of ESCAP. ESCAP grew out of the Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East (ECAFE) which was established in Shanghai in March 1947. ECAFE was moved to Bangkok in June 1949 and changed its name to ESCAP in 1974.

## People in the headlines

Effective from January 2004, **Mr. Shu-Yun Xu**, Director of the Asia and the Pacific Division (APD) of UNFPA since 2001, has joined the Division of Arab States and Europe as UNFPA Representative a.i. in Russia. Mr. Xu has had a long and rewarding career with APD, beginning in 1983 and spanning a range of field and headquarters positions, including UNFPA Representative in Bangladesh and the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Following Mr. Xu's new appointment and effective from January 2004, **Mr. Sultan A. Aziz** joined UNFPA as Director of the Asia and the Pacific Division. A development economist with a wide range and wealth of experience, Mr. Aziz is not new to Asia nor to the United Nations. Most recently, Mr. Aziz had been the Senior Advisor to the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General to Afghanistan.

In the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF), **Ms. Nina Puri** has been appointed as IPPF President and Chairperson of Governing Council starting from December 2003. Most recently, Ms. Puri was the President of the Family Planning Association of India.

## Nepal's population to reach 35 million by 2021

According to a report titled "Population Projections for Nepal, 2001-2021" published by the Ministry of Population and Environment of Nepal, the current population of 25 million is set to increase to 35 million by 2021". The report also projected the total fertility rate to go down to 2.8 in 2021 from 4 in 2001.

The National Census-2001 conducted by the Government of Nepal estimated the country's total population at 23 151 423, while the country's annual population growth rate was 2.24 per cent for the decade from 1991 to 2001.

(Sources: *Push Journal*, 5 February via news@ippf.org; *Population Projections for Nepal*)



## Migration moving to forefront of population policy discussion

The large flow of illegal migrants, the sometimes difficult conditions they face in host countries and the "lucrative but troubling" human trafficking market have brought migration policies to the forefront of population discussions, a United Nations expert said recently.

The numbers of migrants needed by developed receiving countries and the potential numbers willing to leave poorer sending countries are out of balance, Mr. Joseph Chamie, the Director of the Population Division in the United Nations' Department of Economic and Social Affairs, told a press briefing at the United Nations Headquarters.

Japan and most of Europe have been facing labour shortages, population ageing and decline, and fertility rates well below replacement levels. "These have significant implications for pension schemes, health care, educational programmes and housing", he said.

On the other side of the demographic coin, migrants have been leaving sending countries because of

difficulty finding employment at home, but "the supply of the potential migrants who are free to leave their homelands simply exceeds manifold the demand which is set by the receiving countries", he said.

Drawing a contrast, he said population growth in the 15 member countries of the European Union was 300,000 for 2003 but in India, a similar population increase of 294,000 took just seven days.

In Europe in the past, most migrants moved north from southern Europe. Today the migrants, especially those entering illegally, are not only less well-educated and skilled than the native population, but are often vastly different ethnically, raising concerns about integration and assimilation, he said, adding that recent successes of the European right-wing have been based on opposition to such migration.

The 9/11 attacks on the United States of America, as well as attacks elsewhere, have caused a tightening of entry procedures in several countries. Mr. Chamie



Migration has taken on greater importance in recent years

noted that the Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Air and Sea, a supplement to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, had just entered into force, giving Governments a legal tool against traffickers.

(Source: United Nations News Service, 28 January)

## PUBLICATION

### Population, Space and Place; old newcomer...

Starting from January 2004, the *International Journal of Population Geography* (in print since September 1995) has been re-launched as *Population, Space and Place*. The new bimonthly journal intends to explore all aspects of geographical population research, including theoretical, empirical and policy-relevant studies. It will focus especially on variations across space and place. The journal will cover developed as well as less developed countries and review and evaluate the significance of recent research findings, facilitating debate on issues of policy relevance.

A refereed journal, *Population, Space and Place* will aim at providing a high quality forum for population researchers to assess and apply philosophical and methodological developments in the social and behavioural sciences, and discuss the future course of population research. The new journal aims to build upon the excellence of its predecessor in

informing population researchers of the best theoretical and empirical research on topics related to population, space and place.

Several reasons are behind this re-launch (as explained by the editors of the journal in a press release dispatched on 20 January). The majority of papers submitted to the former *International Journal of Population Geography* were, as the name would suggest, from population geographers. However, the potential for interesting and relevant results from other disciplines was recognized and the editors thus decided to broaden the scope of contribution and readership. The new title was designed to attract submissions from all those interested in population issues and how they vary over space and place.

In addition to widening the disciplinary focus of the publication, the editors also hope to attract different types of studies. While the former journal had developed a



reputation for publishing leading edge research, much of which tended to be quantitative, the editors of the new journal would also welcome more qualitative studies from a range of theoretical perspectives.

The first issue (January 2004) is available online as a free sample copy at:  
<http://www.interscience.wiley.com/journal/psp>.

For further information, please contact Jaida Harris on +44 1243 770674 or by email at: [fharris@wiley.co.uk](mailto:fharris@wiley.co.uk).



## Study: Investing in sexual health pays benefits

The long-term development benefits of investment in sexual and reproductive health were highlighted in a report published recently. The report "Adding it Up", a joint publication between the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the Allan Guttmacher Institute (AGI) was launched in early February at London by Dr. Steven Sinding, Director General of the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) and Dr. Sharon Camp, director of AGI.

In her speech, Dr. Camp emphasized how providing reproductive health services for the 200 million women around the globe who need them would cost about USD3.9 billion but could prevent 1.5 million maternal and infant deaths each year. It would also avert 52 million unintended preg-

nancies and prevent 505,000 children from losing their mothers.

In an interview, she pointed out how this development impact could only be realized if rich countries, particularly the United States of America live up to the financial promises made at the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD). At the moment this is not happening. "As a result we are actually losing ground in some countries", Dr. Camp added.

The report is the first study of its kind to synthesize all the research of the last 25 years on the economic return on investment in sexual and reproductive health programmes. Developed countries are committing only about half of what they promised at the Cairo meeting a decade ago.

Meanwhile, demand for the services, which include providing contraceptives, prevention of sexually transmitted diseases including HIV/AIDS and maternal and infant health care, is growing.

The report proves that there is a link between fulfilling sexual and reproductive rights and economic development. Keeping women healthy and providing contraceptives to delay childbirth and allow couples to have smaller families also contribute to economic growth and equality.

Ms. Thoraya A. Obaid, Executive Director of UNFPA said "Money invested in sexual and reproductive health services will be repaid many times over".

(Source: *Push Journal*, 3 February via news@ippf.org)

## Cambodia launches national population policy

The Government of Cambodia launched its first national population policy recently. The launching ceremony was held in early February at Phnom Penh in the presence of Prime Minister Hun Sen and an assembly of government officials, diplomatic corps and representatives from national and international organizations.

According to a report released by the Government of Cambodia, the goal of the policy is to induce changes in population trends in order to bring the size, composition and distribution of the population in line with the needs of sustainable development for poverty alleviation and improvement of the quality of life of Cambodian citizens.

At the core of the policy is the right for all couples and individuals to decide freely and responsibly the

number, spacing and timing of their children.

Cambodia, with a population of more than 13 million, remains one of the poorest countries in South-East Asia. However, Cambodia has one of the highest population growth rates among ASEAN countries at 2.49 per cent. This rate is likely to translate into an increase of the size of population by 50 per cent over the next 20 years.

"The National Population Policy is a prerequisite tool for designing development programme through ensuring accurate data on population", the Minister of the Council of Ministers declared in his opening address.

(Source: Xinhua News Agency, 4 February)

## "Poverty increases risk of maternal mortality"

A woman's risk of dying during or soon after pregnancy increases the poorer she is, according to a study published in the *Lancet*, *Reuters Health* reports of 3 January. Dr. Wendy Graham and colleagues from the University of Aberdeen in the United Kingdom examined data from 11 household surveys in 10 diverse developing countries to formulate percentage distributions of women according to their poverty-related characteristics and survival status. The

researchers used a new method called the "familial technique" to analyse the responses. The analysis showed significant association in the countries between women's poverty status and maternal survival. As poverty increased, the percentage of women dying from non-maternal causes increased generally and women dying from maternal causes increased consistently.

(Source: Kaisernetwork.org, 6 January)

## New tool for sharing population and health information

Through a grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the Washington-based Population Reference Bureau has recently established a new tool for accessing and sharing research findings relevant to less developed countries. Entitled "InfoShare", this electronic library will consist of documents supplied by an ever-growing list of partner organizations worldwide working in reproductive and child health, HIV/AIDS and population. Already more than 60 such organizations provide input to InfoShare, among which are the United Nations Population Fund, Family Health International, Johns Hopkins Center for Communication Programs, and Population Council.

Readers interested in the latest research in the field of population and health can visit InfoShare's website at ([www.phishare.org](http://www.phishare.org)) and browse through numerous recently published reports organized by topic, country, region, language and partner organization. It is also possible to subscribe to InfoShare's monthly e-mail news alert. For more information, contact by e-mail [phishare@prb.org](mailto:phishare@prb.org)



## New guidelines on HIV counseling and testing launched

The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) recently published new guidelines for programme planners, managers and service providers on "Integrating HIV Voluntary Counseling and Testing (VCT) Services in Reproductive Health Settings".

The results from two different projects, conducted in Côte d'Ivoire and India, indicate that integrating VCT into sexual and reproductive health services has exponential benefits: it reduces stigma associated with HIV/AIDS, strengthens awareness of healthy sexual behaviour, and increases access to and utilization of services.

Voluntary counseling and testing provides an effective means of preventing HIV transmission and an important entry point for treatment of HIV-related illnesses, prevention of mother-to-child transmission, tuberculosis control, and psychosocial and legal support.

The new guidelines reflect the experiences of these sites, as well as those of sites in Kenya, Rwanda and Ethiopia. They were developed in

*Two small boys in Lesotho orphaned by AIDS (Picture of USAID)*



collaboration with a broad range of partners, and draw on international literature of best practices.

The guidelines provide practical information on integrating VCT for HIV/AIDS within sexual and reproductive health services, using a stepwise approach that shows how to effectively plan, implement, monitor and evaluate an integrated service.

The guidelines are available in English, French and Spanish, and can be downloaded through the IPPF and UNFPA websites ([www.ippf.org](http://www.ippf.org) and [www.unfpa.org](http://www.unfpa.org)).

(Source: IPPF Press Release, 17 February)

## UNFPA launches APD Newsletter

As part of the ongoing UNFPA effort to improve communications and information exchange between its headquarters, field offices and partner agencies, the Asia and the Pacific Division (APD) of the Fund has launched a quarterly Newsletter starting from February 2004.

Titled *Asia and Pacific Division News*, the electronic Newsletter covers major events taking place at headquarters and in the region. It also discusses achievements, challenges and successes of some country offices.

In each edition, country reports will be selected in alphabetical order. The first issue of the Newsletter covers activities undertaken by UNFPA in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Cambodia, China and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. It also includes a short report on the Fund's emergency relief work for Iran earthquake victims.

In addition to the Newsletter, an Asia and the Pacific Division website ([www.unfpa.org/asiapacific](http://www.unfpa.org/asiapacific)) will be launched in early March.

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