



Seventh Asian and Pacific Population Conference

BANGKOK, 15–17 NOVEMBER 2023

Seventh Asian and Pacific Population Conference

Agenda item 3. Thematic discussion on achievements, challenges, gaps and emerging issues in the implementation of the Asian and Pacific Ministerial Declaration on Population and Development, as well as of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the key actions for its further implementation in Asia and the Pacific

Thursday, 16 November 2023 (14:00-15:30 UTC+7)
Bangkok and online

Round table 3: Inequalities and social exclusion, and rights

CONCEPT NOTE

1. Introduction

Asia and the Pacific has made considerable progress in socioeconomic development. The region now faces new and continuing challenges, such as shrinking labour forces, population ageing, climate change impacts and increased internal and international migration. Many people face persistent socioeconomic inequalities (including gender inequalities), human rights violations and ageism. Inequalities and vulnerabilities have been exacerbated by climate change, disasters, conflicts, the COVID-19 pandemic and digital transformations. Existing inequalities have been further deepened and exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Strengthening the rights of persons in vulnerable situations is crucial for their empowerment to address persisting inequalities.

The Asian and Pacific Ministerial Declaration on Population and Development emphasises a people-centered, rights-based, gender-sensitive, and non-discriminatory approach to tackle these myriad challenges. It upholds the principles of international law, including human rights, as a cornerstone for addressing inequalities, social exclusion, and the root causes of poverty. As the Ministerial Declaration makes clear, these issues are inextricably linked with the realisation of social, cultural, economic, civil, and political rights for all, without any form of discrimination, stigma, or violence.

This round table aims to critically examine these complexities. Specifically, it focuses on persons in vulnerable situations with regard to education, work and overall living conditions. It will explore actionable strategies to address the underlying inequalities as well as their underlying causes. Gender considerations, as well as reflections regarding technology and the availability of data and statistics, will be mainstreamed in the discussion.

2. Objectives

The round-table discussion is expected to guide delegations and provide insights into progress and challenges with regard to population dynamics, sustainable development and climate change. The round table will:

1. Discuss the current state of social inequalities and exclusion in Asia and the Pacific and how they have disproportionately affected various population groups and their rights.
2. Discuss the roles of intersecting factors such as age, gender, and disability in generating and perpetuating social inequalities and exclusion.
3. Identify how inequalities and vulnerabilities have been exacerbated by climate change, disasters, conflicts, the COVID-19 pandemic and digital transformations.
4. Identify the extent of progress and gaps in the implementation of gender-sensitive, rights-based approaches towards population and development issues.
5. Identify actionable strategies and effective mechanisms to address the structural causes of inequalities and social exclusion in the region and share good practices and lessons learned to address them.

3. Content and format

The round-table discussion will consist of a moderated discussion among panellists, Q&A with meeting participants and concluding remarks by the panellists. The following guiding questions will be addressed:

1. Who experiences inequalities and social exclusion in Asia and the Pacific and how is this experienced? What are the underlying factors that contribute to this?
2. In what ways have climate change, disasters, conflicts, the COVID-19 pandemic and digital transformations exacerbated inequalities and social exclusion?
3. What policies and approaches have been successful in addressing inequalities and social exclusion, including the intersecting factors of gender, age, and other factors?

During the Q&A, Conference participants will be invited to speak from the floor and provide comments and any further reflections. The recording of the round-table discussion will be posted on the meeting website. A summary of the round-table discussion will be included in the Chair's summary of the meeting.

4. Agenda

14:00-14:05	Welcome and opening remarks, moderator
14:05-14:25	First round of questions, panellists
14:25-14:45	Second round of questions, panellists
14:45-15:15	Q&A
15:15-15:25	Concluding remarks, panellists
15:25-15:30	Closing remarks, moderator

5. Organizing team

The round table is being organized by ESCAP in collaboration with UNFPA Asia-Pacific Regional Office.

6. Background

According to resolution 74 (XXIII) of 17 April 1967 of the Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East, the Asian Population Conference was established as a statutory organ of the Commission, to be convened every ten years synchronizing with the decennial population and related censuses, for the consideration of all aspects of population questions and of their impact on economic and social development. Since its first session in 1963, the Asian and Pacific Population Conference has been convened six times. The sixth Conference was held from 16 to 18 September 2013 at ESCAP, and members and associate Members adopted the Asian-Pacific Ministerial Declaration on Population and Development by vote.¹

In 1994, United Nations Member States adopted the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in Cairo, Egypt. The Programme of Action, which was extended by the General Assembly in 2010 beyond 2014 (resolution 65/234),² undertook a people-centered and rights-based approach to sustainable development. It emphasizes that achieving sustainable development requires that interrelationships between population, resources, the environment and social and economic development are fully recognized, properly managed and brought into a harmonious and dynamic balance. Population dynamics are both drivers and outcomes of sustainable development at national and sub-national levels, but also at regional and global levels. In order to achieve sustainable

¹ Report of the Sixth Asian and Pacific Population Conference (16-20 September 2013, Bangkok)
<https://www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/Report%20of%20APPC%202013.pdf>

² Resolution adopted by the General Assembly (65/234 Follow-up to the International Conference on Population).
A/RES/65/234
https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/generalassembly/docs/globalcompact/A_RES_65_234.pdf.

development and a higher quality of life for all people, policies, including population-related policies, should be developed and implemented in order to meet the needs of current generations without compromising the needs of future generations. Since 1994, the Commission on Population and Development, a functional commission of the United Nations Economic and Social Council, has reviewed and appraised the implementation of the Programme of Action in regular intervals.

In 2022, the Commission decided that the theme of the 57th session in 2024 would be “Assessing the status of implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and its contribution to the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development during the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development.”³ Thus, the Commission will undertake another review and appraisal of the implementation of the Programme of Action at the global level in 2024.

7. Suggested reading

- Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP). (2014). [Report of the Sixth Asian and Pacific Population Conference \(16-20 September 2013, Bangkok\)](#).
- United Nations. (1995). [Report of the International Conference on Population and Development, Cairo, 5-13 September 1994](#) (Sales No. E.95.XIII.18, chap. I, resolution 1, annex).
- [Review of progress made towards the implementation of the Asian and Pacific Ministerial Declaration on Population and Development, as well as of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the key actions for its further implementation in Asia and the Pacific](#) (ESCAP/APPC(7)/2)
- [The impacts of climate change on population and development in Asia and the Pacific](#) (ESCAP/APPC(7)/3)
- [Implementation of the Asian and Pacific Ministerial Declaration on Population and Development, as well as of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the key actions for its further implementation in Asia and the Pacific: a summary of the outcomes of stakeholder consultations](#) (ESCAP/APPC(7)/INF/1)
- [Implementation of the Asian and Pacific Ministerial Declaration on Population and Development, as well as of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the key actions for its further implementation in Asia and the Pacific: a summary of the results of voluntary national surveys reported by member States](#) (ESCAP/APPC(7)/INF/2)
- [Gender equality and universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights in Asia and the Pacific](#) (ESCAP/APPC(7)/INF/3)

³ E/2022/25-E/CN.9/2022/7.

8. Contact persons

Napaphat Satchanawakul, Social Affairs Officer, Sustainable Demographic Transition Section, Social Development Division, ESCAP (napaphat.satchanawakul@un.org)

Simon Graham, Population Development Fellow, UNFPA, Asia-Pacific Regional Office (sgraham@unfpa.org)
