



Expert Group Meeting on Monitoring implementation of the
Asian and Pacific Ministerial Declaration on Population and Development

23 and 24 September 2019
Bangkok

Concept Note

1. Background

Population and Development in the Asia-Pacific region

In the Asia-Pacific region, home to 60 per cent of the world's population, major population changes with significant impacts for achievement of sustainable development are underway. These include decreasing fertility and mortality, leading to slower population growth and population ageing; urbanization, with the growth of both small- and medium-sized cities and megacities; and internal and international migration, affecting places and countries of origin, destination and migrants themselves.

These trends are playing out at different speeds and with different timings within the region. Some countries are already ageing rapidly due to below-replacement fertility rates, while fertility in other regions is falling slowly; some countries have populations that remain primarily rural while others are experiencing significant rural to urban migration. Also, international migration is affecting countries in the region differently. Many people – particularly women and girls – face challenges in fully enjoying their human rights, and notably their reproductive rights. Access to sexual and reproductive health-care services remains limited for many, especially for those belonging to marginalised groups, and full recognition of the needs for and rights to these services is not universal.

The impacts of these population dynamics have significant implications for the achievement of internationally agreed development goals, including the 1994 Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) and more recently the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Monitoring of population levels and trends, their drivers and their impacts on development is therefore needed to inform policymaking.

The ICPD Programme of Action and the Asian and Pacific Ministerial Declaration on Population and Development

Since 1994, action to address the relationship between population and development has been guided by the Programme of Action of the ICPD and its subsequent global and regional reviews. At the 20-year Asia-Pacific regional review of the Programme of Action held in 2013, member States of ESCAP adopted the Asian and Pacific Ministerial Declaration on Population and Development as the outcome of the Sixth Asian and Pacific Population Conference. This Declaration serves as region-specific guidance on population and development in the context of the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and in continuation of the

Programme of Action of the ICPD. The Declaration also requested to “conduct regular monitoring and evaluation by relevant national authorities of progress towards the continuing implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and its related follow-up outcomes, as well as the recommendations contained in the present Declaration, and reflect, as appropriate, the findings in national and regional policies and programmes.” (Op 209).

In 2018, ESCAP and UNFPA organised the Midterm Review of the Asian and Pacific Ministerial Declaration on Population and Development, to enable member States to review progress on the priority actions and policy directions of the Ministerial Declaration. During this meeting, a proposed indicator framework for monitoring progress, developed jointly by ESCAP and UNFPA, was presented.¹ Based on existing SDG indicators and targets, this framework proposed to support regular monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the commitments of the Ministerial Declaration without imposing additional reporting burdens on member States.

Member States welcomed this proposed monitoring framework and requested ESCAP, in cooperation with UNFPA, to develop it further:

Recommendation 2 (ESCAP/APPC/2018/5):

“Stresses the importance of a region-specific monitoring framework and recommends that the secretariat, in cooperation with the United Nations Population Fund, further develop a regional monitoring framework to monitor the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the Asian and Pacific Ministerial Declaration on Population and Development, as appropriate, in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; it further recommends that the framework be submitted to the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific for its consideration before the sixth session of the Committee on Social Development.”

2. Objective

To further support the development of a regional framework to monitor the implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the Asian and Pacific Ministerial Declaration on Population and Development, as appropriate, by undertaking a peer review of the monitoring framework proposed in ESCAP/APPC/2018/INF/1 (see annex) in preparation for its submission to the Sixth session of the Committee on Social Development for adoption in 2020.

3. Strategy

In order to develop the framework further, ESCAP and UNFPA will co-organize a meeting from 23-24 September 2019 to solicit inputs from member States and experts to guide the revision of the framework. Following the workshop, and after further consultation with member States, the monitoring framework will be presented at the 75th session of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific for endorsement.

Upon endorsement, the monitoring framework can be used for future reporting on the Programme of Action of the ICPD and the Ministerial Declaration, in particular in preparation for the 7th Asian and Pacific Population Conference and the Commission on Population and Development. The monitoring framework will also support member States in preparing statements to be presented under agenda item 3 of the annual session of the Commission on

¹ See <https://www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/ESCAP-APPC-2018-INF1.pdf>

Population and Development where countries report on the further implementation of the Programme of Action at the global, regional and national levels². In addition, it will inform voluntary national reviews by member States to the Asia-Pacific Forum for Sustainable Development and the high-level political forum. Thus, the monitoring framework will harness synergies between the 2030 Agenda, the Programme of Action of the ICPD and the Ministerial Declaration to provide the evidence base for member States to review and revise their policies focusing on population and development interactions.

4. Format

The workshop will be organized by ESCAP and UNFPA, Asia-Pacific Office.

The meeting will take the form of several moderated panel discussions with country inputs to discuss general issues related to the monitoring framework, followed by detailed group work to refine the proposed monitoring framework. It is suggested to use a “World Café” methodology in order to maximise engagement and focus discussions effectively around clusters of indicators during the working group discussions.

For the working group discussions, the following questions will be discussed:

- i. How appropriate are the indicators? Are they relevant to the national context? Are there any which should be dropped or amended?
- ii. Which widely gathered, internationally comparable indicators which do not exist within the SDG framework but respond directly to priority actions of the Asian and Pacific Ministerial Declaration may be added to the monitoring framework?
- iii. Can we define different levels of indicators, recognizing that some are more relevant for the purpose of this undertaking than others?
- iv. Do sufficient data exist to respond to the indicators, or are they likely to exist by the time the Seventh Asia-Pacific Population Conference will be held (by about 2022/2023)?
- v. What capacity gaps must be filled before data for all indicators can be collected?

5. Expected outcome

A revised draft monitoring framework based on the framework proposed in ESCAP/APPC/2018/INF/1 according to comments from participants and research from an expert consultant.

² According to Economic and Social Council resolution 2016/25, agenda item 3 of the general debate of the annual session of the Commission on Population and Development contains two sub-items, one focusing on actions for the further implementation of the Programme of Action at the global, regional and national levels, and one focusing on the special theme of the Commission (see E/RES/2016/25).