ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC (ESCAP)  
AND  
UNITED NATIONS POPULATION FUND (UNFPA)  

Expert Group Meeting on Monitoring Implementation of the Asian and Pacific Ministerial Declaration on Population and Development  
23-24 September 2019  
Bangkok, Thailand  

REPORT OF THE EXPERT GROUP MEETING ON  
MONITORING IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ASIAN AND PACIFIC MINISTERIAL DECLARATION ON POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT*  

* This report has been issued on 28 October 2019 without formal editing.
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I. Organization

A. Background

1. The Expert Group Meeting on the implementation of the Asian and Pacific Ministerial Declaration on Population and Development was co-organized by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and the United Nation Population Fund (UNFPA), Asia and the Pacific Regional Office. It was held at the United Nations Conference Centre in Bangkok, Thailand from 23 to 24 September 2019. The meeting was organized as a follow-up to the Midterm Review of the Asian and Pacific Ministerial Declaration on Population and Development, held in November 2018. For more information on the Meeting, including its presentations, please see: https://www.unescap.org/events/expert-group-meeting-monitoring-implementation-asian-and-pacific-ministerial-declaration.

B. Objective of the Meeting

2. The objective of the Meeting was 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 a revised monitoring framework, based on ESCAP/APPC/2018/INF/1 in preparation for further consideration by member States in 2020.

C. Attendance

3. The Meeting was attended by government officials, civil society practitioners and academics engaged in producing, analysing and using population data to develop interventions in support of sustainable development. The list of participants is attached as an Annex.

II. Context

4. 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, transit and migrants themselves.

5. 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.

6. 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.

7. 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, ESCAP member States 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 implementation 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.” (ST/ESCAP/2691, OP 209).

8. 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 (ESCAP/APPC/2018/INF/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.

9. Member States welcomed this proposed monitoring framework and requested ESCAP, in cooperation with UNFPA, to develop it further. Recommendation 2 of the
report of the Midterm Review meeting (ESCAP/APPC/2018/5) notes: “The meeting 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.”

III. Proceedings of the Meeting

Monday, 23 September 2019

A. Item 1: Opening

10. Dr. Srinivas Tata, Director, Social Development Division, ESCAP made opening remarks summarising the conclusions of the Midterm Review of the Asian and Pacific Ministerial Declaration on Population and Development. He noted that the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) and the Ministerial Declaration remained highly relevant in the era of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. He recognized that ESCAP member States had reaffirmed their commitment to the implementation of the Programme of Action of the ICPD as part of its 25-year review. He further discussed the recommendation of the Midterm Review to develop a Monitoring Framework for the Ministerial Declaration for further consideration by member States in 2020. Dr. Tata highlighted the role of the monitoring framework as a key element in ensuring the full implementation of population and sustainable development objectives that left no one behind and ensured the successful implementation of the Programme of Action of the ICPD and the Ministerial Declaration. He outlined the principles of ensuring that the framework was practical, comprehensive, placed a minimal burden on member States and that the framework was based on internationally-agreed indicators to ensure wide acceptability. He noted the key role of collaboration between ESCAP and UNFPA in organising the meeting and in supporting member States in the implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action and the Ministerial Declaration in the Asia-Pacific region. He noted further that participants’ inputs would play a direct role in shaping further revisions of the draft framework.

11. Mr. Björn Andersson, Director, Asia-Pacific Regional Office, UNFPA, welcomed participants and noted that the Midterm Review held in 2018 had reiterated the importance of universal access to sexual and reproductive health services, and reminded participants that member States reflected on the continued need to reduce maternal deaths, promote gender equality, ensure youth integration, address population ageing, and to focus on emerging issues such as climate change. Although
progress had been made across the region, the review had shown that further efforts would be needed to ensure that no one was left behind. In this regard, he emphasised the importance of the monitoring framework as a means of ensuring accountability and identifying areas needing special attention. Mr. Andersson reminded participants that 2019 was the 25th anniversary of the ICPD Programme of Action and stressed that this document remained relevant as it had articulated a transformative vision of development underpinned by human rights and gender equality, addressing interlinkages between population, development and human rights. Ultimately the Programme of Action was a key milestone towards the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in its holistic vision of development. The monitoring framework could provide a means to introduce a new generation of policymakers to the ICPD Programme of Action and its vision of rights and choices as a foundation for sustainable development.

12. Ms. Sabine Henning, Chief, Sustainable Demographic Transition Section, ESCAP stated that ESCAP serves as the United Nations’ regional development arm, promoting cooperation among countries to achieve inclusive and sustainable development. ESCAP’s intergovernmental work, coupled with its convening power, research and analysis and its policy advisory services, capacity building and technical assistance to governments aimed to support countries’ sustainable and inclusive development ambitions. ESCAP’s work focused on social, economic and environmental issues.

13. Because Asia-Pacific was home to 60 per cent of the world’s population; what happened in the region mattered everywhere. Demographic megatrends, such as the transition from youthful to ageing populations; urbanization; high levels of international migration; and climate-related migration affected all countries in the region.

14. The region had a long history of discussing population and development concerns, starting with the first Asian and Pacific Population Conference in 1963. This expert group meeting was held in follow-up to the 2018 Midterm Review which had requested ESCAP and UNFPA to further develop a monitoring framework for the Programme of Action of the ICPD and the Asian and Pacific Ministerial Declaration on Population and Development.

15. The two-day meeting would focus on country experiences in monitoring population-related goals and targets followed by discussions on a revised monitoring framework. The objectives of the meeting were to share experiences on assessing implementation of population and development goals and targets; to strengthen partnerships of different stakeholder in the room; to provide feedback on the revised monitoring framework; and ultimately revise the monitoring framework for further consideration by ESCAP member States in 2020.
B. Item 2: Leaving no one behind – monitoring population and development for achievement of ICPD and Agenda 2030

16. The session was moderated by Mr. Gavin Jones, Professor Emeritus, Australian National University.

17. The session took the form of a panel discussion consisting of Mr. Mohammad Mainul Islam, Chairman, Department of Population Sciences, University of Dhaka; Ms. Sai Jyothirmai Racherla, Programme Director, Asian-Pacific Resource and Research Centre for Women; Ms. Aishath Shahuda, Chief Statistician, National Bureau of Statistics, Maldives; Mr. Benuel Lenge, Director, Civil Registration and Vital Statistics, Vanuatu.

18. Mr. Islam emphasised the need for up-to-date, high-quality accurate and reliable data for monitoring. It was necessary for data to be disaggregated by multiple factors, such as age, sex, income, race, ethnicity, disability status, geographic location, migratory status and other criteria relevant in national contexts. Assessing the situation of Bangladesh in regards to meeting this need, he noted that there had been good progress in the Millennium Development Goals, and main sources of population data included censuses, and surveys on issues such as sample vital statistics, labour force surveys, demographic and health surveys, multi-indicator cluster surveys, maternal and health surveys, urban health surveys and special surveys on issues such as violence against women, and household income and expenditure.

19. Data showed progress on issues such as decreased total fertility rates, increased use of contraception, decreased unmet need for contraception and increased life expectancy, with Bangladesh showing the potential to enjoy a demographic window of opportunity until around 2035. However, progress was uneven, with challenges including regional variations in access to services; high levels of unmet need for contraception among adolescents; continuing high levels of child marriage, early pregnancy, maternal mortality, childhood stunting, and intimate partner violence; and emerging issues such as non-communicable diseases, climate change and the large inflow of refugees that Bangladesh had experienced. Mr. Islam further noted that demographic trends were diverging, with population ageing increasing while a large number of youth remained without education, employment or training.

20. Mr. Islam highlighted that good policies were in place, including policies relating to population, health, gender equality, older persons, youth, and ending child marriage. However, implementation remained a challenge, exacerbated by a lack of data. There was great need for disaggregating data and data for a large number of indicators were still lacking. Other challenges in this area remained, such as meeting international standards, lack of baselines for many data points, and the need for funding and technical support in order to make use of new technologies and methodologies, and to improve the timely release of data and analysis. He closed by
noting that there was a need for acceleration of progress, with the deadline for achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development rapidly approaching.

21. Ms. Racherla addressed key priorities related to SDG indicators from a civil society perspective. She noted that there had been progress in moving indicators from Tier I to Tier II, related to gender equality and sexual and reproductive health and rights. Disaggregation of data was a key dimension of leaving no one behind and ensuring full implementation of commitments by enabling an understanding of where gaps remained and the design of policies to fill these gaps. She stressed this in relation to maternal mortality, where disaggregation was necessary to enable better understanding of the causes and develop responses; as well as adolescent birth rates as an indicator of which groups faced inequality, lack of bodily autonomy, and unmet need for contraception.

22. Ms. Racherla emphasised the need for data to be managed in line with principles of privacy and confidentiality, with analysis also taking these principles into account. Addressing gender in voluntary national reviews of the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development was very important, yet relatively few countries had reported progress on key gender issues such as violence against women, despite having identified them as priorities. This was caused in part due to lack of data to measure these issues. National statistical offices played an important role as key data producers and their role as focal points for data collection, dissemination and analysis had to be strengthened. International organizations had a further responsibility to collaborate with national statistical offices, and civil society could also play a role in gathering data necessary for the achievement of the goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

23. Ms. Shahuda noted that the issues faced by the Maldives were similar to those faced by Bangladesh, explaining that while most of the population of the country was concentrated, a significant proportion of the population was dispersed on outer islands. Data showed that the population growth rate in the Maldives was slowing as the total fertility rate had dropped to near-replacement level, but a large proportion of the population was foreign-born, most of whom were men. In general, the country was in a demographic window of opportunity and moving towards an ageing population.

24. She noted challenges in gathering data in the Maldives, such as the difficulty of travel across a dispersed archipelago and the small populations on many islands, and the fact that small differences could lead to large fluctuations due to the small overall population size. Overall, there was an urgent need to strengthen migration data in the Maldives, in particular through the collection of comprehensive migration data through regular censuses and surveys that covered the entire country and contained migration-related questions and through administrative data systems and report-generation. There were also difficulties in producing timely data from the vital statistics system, and efforts were underway to strengthen the existing system.
25. Ms. Shahuda outlined forthcoming reforms, including making the 2021 census more inclusive of migrant workers, making use of additional data from other sources to adjust data and including better data on disability, and undertaking a pilot initiative on big data for civil registration and vital statistics using mobile phones. She noted that Demographic and Health Surveys and Household Income and Expenditure Surveys played an important role in providing intercensal data, even if they were expensive. Overall, there was need for technical support and capacity building on data and analysis.

26. Mr. Lenge presented an overview of population and development trends in Vanuatu. Population growth remained high, with intense rural-urban migration and a continuing youthful population age structure. Major improvements in infant mortality had been noted, and access to services had been increased. However, maternal mortality remained high along with unmet need for contraception, especially in rural areas.

27. Mr. Lenge outlined the frameworks for responding to population and development challenges in Vanuatu, including the Vanuatu National Population Policy launched in 2011, the National Sustainable Development Plan 2016-2030, the Vanuatu National Strategy for the Development of Statistics, efforts to improve civil registration and vital statistics, and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Responding to these frameworks had required data, which were now collected through a national sustainable development survey to guide the sustainable development plan, and the development of a national indicators database.

28. Mr. Lenge highlighted the importance of partnerships and innovations in achieving the goals set out by strategies and policies but noted that there were still gaps in laws. Efforts were underway to review laws and address these gaps and to ensure data availability, access, use and dissemination.

29. Subsequent discussions focused on considering older persons in data disaggregation; data collection on persons with disabilities in relation to gender-based violence and sexual and reproductive health and rights; addressing climate change risks; inclusion of migrants in data; the use of administrative data in supporting continuous monitoring and reporting; avoiding the politicisation of data on sensitive topics; and the need for domestic resource mobilisation to support capacity-building on data. A key concern that was raised was whether it was advisable to make decisions on the basis of data, knowing that they were not fully accurate, or to not have data at all. Several participants reported on initiatives to include data on groups such as persons with disabilities and migrants including through making use of special surveys or administrative data.
C. Item 3: The need for a monitoring framework for the Asian and Pacific Ministerial Declaration on Population and Development

30. The session was moderated by Ms. Alexandra Johns, Executive Director, Asia-Pacific Alliance for Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights.

31. The session took the form of a panel, consisting of Ms. Sabine Henning, Chief, Sustainable Demographic Transition Section, ESCAP; Dr. Juan Antonio Perez III, Under-Secretary and Executive Director, Commission on Population and Development, the Philippines; and Ms. Neha Chauhan, Senior Technical Advisor, Advocacy and Accountability - South Asia Regional Office, International Planned Parenthood Federation.

32. Ms. Henning discussed the history of addressing population and development in the Asia-Pacific region, noting that the Asian and Pacific Population Conferences had fed into the ICPD process and supported its follow-up and review, most recently in the 2018 Midterm Review. At that meeting, member States had recommended that ESCAP and UNFPA further develop a monitoring framework for the implementation of the Asian and Pacific Ministerial Declaration on Population and Development, itself adopted through the Asia-Pacific process and providing region-specific guidance on population and development.

33. Ms. Henning reflected on the experience of other regions, which had already adopted monitoring frameworks based on their respective priorities. In the Asia-Pacific context, no such framework had been developed yet. She suggested that certain principles should guide the development of the Asia-Pacific framework. It should not impose reporting burdens, should be based on existing indicators, and data had to be widely available, and be sustainable going forward. The outcome of the current meeting would be submitted for further consideration by member States in 2020. She requested guidance from participants on the indicators presented, to see if they were suitable, if there were any which should be added or dropped, and if there would be a benefit of a modular approach to the framework, bearing in mind the respective capacities of member States.

34. Dr. Perez III highlighted progress on population and development in the Philippines, noting that despite progress, some key indicators had not been met, such as increasing access to contraception for vulnerable groups. However, there had been progress in integrating consideration of the demographic dividend in the national sustainable development plan which sought to build human resource capacities, improve employment and build resilience to climate change impacts. Further issues that were being addressed included managing the capacities of cities to manage urbanization, addressing the issues of older persons and indigenous people, and achieving the full implementation of the Reproductive Health law.
35. Dr. Perez noted that the Philippines’ recently-adopted universal health coverage law had implications for scaling up services rapidly. It was important to focus on gender equality and increasing the engagement of men in reproductive health and family planning, and initiatives such as the “Magna Carta for women” should be highlighted in supporting further progress.

36. Dr. Perez highlighted the potential role of administrative data in supporting monitoring of progress towards population and development objectives, noting that it enabled data to be available in a timely fashion. Further disaggregation of data would make it more relevant for policy development. Reviews of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development should be more frequent at the regional level to facilitate acceleration of progress.

37. Ms. Chauhan raised the question of the purpose of the framework, noting that its value could lie in bringing additional depth to existing use of the indicators. Qualitative data was an additional source of information that could complement quantitative data and provide richer detail on why interventions were succeeding or not, and such data could also address the quality of services, such as antenatal care. It was difficult to assess the effectiveness of measures, and changes to laws did not always translate to action on the ground. Unfortunately, much necessary data remained unavailable.

38. Ms. Chauhan stressed the importance of national statistical offices acting as focal points for data collection, and further noted that civil society organizations played an important role as custodians of data. She called for the use of big data, citizen participation and new technologies to make more data available. Bringing parliamentarians into data discussions was important and ICPD focal points should coordinate their work with focal points in other government agencies responsible for SDG achievement. Additional disaggregation of existing indicators should be considered as well.

39. Subsequent discussion focused on potential guidance to accompany the framework which could help address nuances and assist analysis of data collected; means to assist the move from survey to administrative data, and to make survey data more timely; risks of political involvement in data collection and analysis; the differences between national and global data; the different levels of data gathering and analysis, from local to international; financing of data collection exercises; lack of communication within governments hindering the sharing of data; and the need for citizen involvement in data gathering and use.

D. Item 4: Country experiences in monitoring population and development, and lessons learned

40. The session was moderated by Ms. Saleshni Santu Naidu, Director, Poverty Monitoring Unit, Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation, Fiji.
41. The session consisted of a panel comprising Datuk Dr. Narimah Awin, Chairperson, National Population and Family Development Board, Malaysia; Ms. Yoon-Jeong Shin, Research Fellow, Korea Institute for Health and Social Affairs, Republic of Korea and Mr. Sonam Wangdi, Senior Planning Officer, Policy and Planning Division, Ministry of Health, Bhutan.

42. Dr. Awin discussed the case of Malaysia noting that data availability in the country was generally strong, with almost all births and deaths registered. However, data on causes of death were poor. She identified that there was potential for greater use of census data. Turning to SDG indicators, she highlighted that data for indicators related to SDG 3 were poorly available, despite the importance of this goal for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as well as the ICPD Programme of Action.

43. Dr. Awin noted that in addition to gaps in data availability, there were challenges related to the accuracy, comparability, frequency, timeliness and reliability of data. When collecting data, lack of clarity on key concepts, and uniform definitions, legal constraints (such as not counting irregular migrants), lack of disaggregation of data and inadequately trained personnel affected the quality of the data. New technologies, such as geographic information systems, handheld devices, online databases, big data and self-enumeration and scanning offered the potential to make survey processes more efficient. Such innovations could have major impacts on the data collected and the analysis undertaken, including the collection of confidential inquiries into maternal deaths with the privacy of the family protected. In Malaysia, 20 October had been designated as MyStats Day to raise awareness for data collection and analysis as the basis for informed decision-making.

44. Dr. Awin noted the importance of increasing understanding of marginalised groups and taking a human rights approach to data collection, strengthening the link between policy and data, improving collaboration between stakeholders, adherence to international covenants and more research and development. She called for focus on the principles of quality, equity and accountability in data collection, use and analysis and tracking of government and domestic investment in SDG monitoring.

45. Ms. Shin discussed data availability in the Republic of Korea. Progress on several areas was strong, with maternal and infant mortality low and access to education high. However, gaps with regards to vulnerable groups remained. Data for several key indicators were not available; for others, data were available but not analysed; and in other cases, only sample data were available which were not representative and therefore not accepted by the government.

46. A number of policies were in place to address priority actions of the Asian and Pacific Ministerial Declaration, and the Republic of Korea’s Statistical Information
System gathered SDG-related data on its website. More work was needed to improve the representativeness of data to ensure its use by the Government.

47. Mr. Wangdi outlined that the Bhutanese health system was driven by a primary health care model, with maternal and child health being integral to the system. He noted that the Bhutanese model of Gross National Happiness (GNH) provided an enabling environment for investment in health, as it was a core component of GNH, and noted Bhutan’s adherence to international commitments related to health, including those identified in the Programme of Action of the ICPD. Bhutan had set a target of 100 per cent institutional delivery on SDGs and had a mandate to provide free health care.

48. Mr. Wangdi explained that Bhutan was catching up in terms of building its health care system and it was investing in emergency obstetrics and newborn care and had begun to investigate maternal and neonatal deaths to understand causes and take action. A target for eight antenatal care visits had been set and reducing postpartum haemorrhaging had been prioritised. A whole-of-society approach had been undertaken bringing together local health workers in villages, community action groups and all sectors of the government. Other initiatives targeted literacy among older persons, improved transport and communication and reducing poverty. However, inequities in access to services remained, while data on adolescent pregnancy and pre-term death and infertility were not gathered regularly.

49. Subsequent discussion focused on the need to focus on the quality of data; and the potential added value of CSO data, including data from older persons’ associations.

Tuesday, 24 September 2019

E. Item 5: Proposed monitoring framework for the Asian and Pacific Ministerial Declaration on Population and Development

50. The session consisted of a panel comprising Ms. Galanne Deressa, UNFPA; Ms. Jessica Gardner, consultant; Ms. Sharita Serrao, Statistical Affairs Officer, ESCAP; and Mr. Paul Tacon, Social Affairs Officer, ESCAP.

51. Ms. Deressa provided an overview of the previous day’s discussion. She reiterated the underlying mandate for the framework and highlighted key discussion points, such as the added-value of bringing a population-focused lens to SDG discussions and enabling policy monitoring and evaluation, as well as the question of who would be responsible for using the framework. Positive examples had been provided by countries concerning data collection and monitoring of SDG indicators as well as objectives of the ICPD Programme of Action. Challenges that were highlighted concerned the quality, accuracy, timeliness, disaggregation and availability of data, as well as limited coverage of issues such as migration and persons with disabilities. The
discussion that had taken place so far focused on the use of administrative data, strengthening of national statistical offices, using new sources of data and the importance of the regional platform for taking progress on population and development forward. In relation to the discussions for the second day, she highlighted key questions such as ensuring that the framework captures the intersectionality of issues, and the need to address emerging or evolving contexts.

52. Ms. Gardner, who had been tasked with revising the draft monitoring framework of the Asian-Pacific Ministerial Declaration on Population and Development, presented the revised monitoring framework. She outlined the underlying principles of the framework and compared it to frameworks in other regions, notably Europe and Latin America and the Caribbean. The framework would focus on the well-being of people, according to the Ministerial Declaration, and indicators would correspond to the areas and priority actions of the Ministerial Declaration, the objectives and actions of the Programme of Action of the ICPD and the goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda. In order to respond to the call of the 2030 Agenda “to leave no one behind”, disaggregation of the data, where possible and applicable, would be a guiding principle. Relying mostly on SDG indicators would ensure that there would not be an added reporting burden on member States and the framework would be self-sustaining. The revision of the framework was intended to be inclusive and participatory with input from all participants.

53. By using international frameworks and building on agreed concepts and capacity-building initiatives, the reporting burdens on member States would be reduced. Rearranging SDG indicators around priority areas of the Asian and Pacific Ministerial Declaration could help collate information through an ICPD lens, support disaggregation, and build linkages between the 2030 Agenda and the Programme of Action of the ICPD. Ms. Gardner then showed a possible template for reporting on the different indicators noting that there were potentially different avenues of reporting on the data, and that beyond presenting a list of indicators, consideration of data flow, analysis, quality, and the statistical production cycle was also important.

54. Ms. Serrao presented on “SDG monitoring: Where are we now and what are the implications for monitoring the Asia-Pacific Ministerial Declaration on Population and Development?”. She informed participants about the comprehensive review being undertaken by the interagency expert group on Sustainable Development Goal indicators, as mandated by General Assembly resolution 71/313. The ongoing review would suggest the refinement and adjustment of existing indicators, the addition of new indicators, under exceptional circumstances, as well as the deletion of existing indicators. She stressed that the current review of the SDG indicators should be kept in mind when developing the Monitoring Framework, as several indicators were likely to be revised or deleted in the coming months, with a revised list of indicators to be presented to fifty-first session of the Statistical Commission in March 2020.
55. Ms. Serrao further presented an analysis of the existing proposed indicators for the monitoring framework following the Tier classification of the SDG indicators, noting that 22 had sufficient data, a further 22 had insufficient data, and 15 had no data. There could be value in retaining indicators with no values as a means of advocating for more efforts to gather these data. Overall, she strongly suggested using indicators that followed internationally agreed definitions and had an established methodology. At times, it would be necessary to weigh whether regularly produced indicators (with sufficient coverage to track progress over time) should be included or whether indicators that were not yet regularly produced, but addressed priority issues, should be included in order to accelerate their methodological development and to support their collection at the national level.

56. Mr. Paul Tacon presented on the basis for the proposed monitoring framework. He reiterated the mandate for monitoring the implementation of the Asian and Pacific Ministerial Declaration in the Declaration itself, and outlined the process preceding the Midterm review and following it, noting that a 2017 expert group meeting had called for voluntary national reviews of implementation for the Midterm Review and that the monitoring framework had grown from guidance to member States in implementing this review. He explained that this was the first time that experts were asked to provide input on the draft monitoring framework after the 2018 Midterm Review. He further outlined the methodology for the review during the subsequent session. He suggested that the following key questions should guide the discussion:

   a. How appropriate are the indicators? Are they relevant to the national context? Are there any which should be dropped or amended?
   b. 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?
   c. Can we define different levels of indicators, recognizing that some are more relevant for the purpose of this undertaking than others?
   d. 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?
   e. What capacity gaps may need to be filled before all indicators can be responded to?
F. **Item 6: Review of the proposed monitoring framework**

57. During the review, the meeting secretariat followed a world café methodology. Participants were divided into groups and discussed the indicators, which had been broken up into four groups. The groups were as follows:

   a. Priority areas A-C of the Asian and Pacific Ministerial Declaration on Population and Development: poverty eradication and employment; health; sexual and reproductive health, services and rights
   b. Priority areas D-F: education; gender equality and women’s empowerment; and adolescents and young people
   c. Priority areas G-I: ageing; international migration; urbanization and internal migration
   d. Priority areas J-K: population and sustainable development; and data and statistics

58. The results of these discussions were presented under agenda item 8 (see below).

G. **Item 7: Leaving no one behind – communicating population issues and data needs**

59. The session was moderated by Mr. Paul Bunsell, Chief, Strategic Communications and Advocacy Section, Office of the Executive Secretary, ESCAP.

60. The session took the form of a panel discussion comprising: Mr. Peter Janssen, Journalist; Mr. Eduardo Klien, Regional Director, HelpAge International; Ms. Aishath Shahuda, Chief Statistician, National Bureau of Statistics, Ministry of National Planning and Infrastructure, Maldives; and Mr. Roy Wadia, Regional Communications Adviser, UNFPA Asia and the Pacific Regional Office.

61. Ms. Shahuda focused on issues of intergenerational dialogue, engaging with users, including the general public and politicians, and ensuring the presentation of a human story to ensure effective communication. She noted that social media could be an effective tool to reach out to young people, who could spread messages further within households.

62. Mr. Janssen noted the power of comparison in engaging audiences in stories. This was difficult in the context of the United Nations but was effective for journalists in crafting impactful stories. He further emphasised the importance of finding new angles, or new facts, or phenomena that do not appear normal. Statistics were important as a means of ensuring the credibility of a story, but the most important aspect was to ensure that the story was interesting.

63. Mr. Klien discussed the communication of messages around ageing, persuading governments that ageing was a fact of life and that strategies were needed to ensure that it would be managed effectively. Positive messaging was very useful,
with ageing being presented as an outcome of positive trends, helping governments understand that changes were required. This message could then be related to the urgently needed push for reform of health systems to manage non-communicable diseases, as these were more common among older persons.

64. Mr. Wadia discussed the evolution of communication among United Nations agencies, explaining how agencies such as UNICEF had learned to use human stories to promote reports and to promote engagement with their work. There was need for more effective use of social media, but this also required methodologies to break through filter bubbles and algorithms. He provided the example of a campaign which had been effective in building a movement, drawing from data to ask a key question that moved beyond its original context to start a broader conversation about harassment of women. A key element of success was starting small and then broadening discussions to address interconnections.

65. Subsequent discussions focused on how to expand outreach beyond traditional outlets; how to reach influencers on social media; the need to focus more on storytelling as a means of capturing people’s interest; and the implications of these trends for the United Nations, civil society organizations, and others.

**H. Item 8: Results of the working group discussions**

66. The session was moderated by Dr. Annette Robertson, Deputy Regional Director Asia-Pacific Office, UNFPA.

67. The facilitators of each working group under session 6 presented the results of the discussions on the indicators. In general, participants agreed on the need for a monitoring framework and felt that it would add value in achieving the goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Asian and Pacific Ministerial Declaration. A monitoring framework could further assist in defining success; strengthening the focus on rights and leaving no one behind; addressing interlinkages; and facilitating accountability and experience-sharing as well as consolidating monitoring. Participants agreed that there could be value in having a core and additional set of indicators (i.e. modular approach) Additional disaggregation to existing indicators could be of great value, especially for the 10-14 and 65 or above age groups. Beyond the SDG framework, additional indicators could be included from other United Nations frameworks.

68. Additional indicators were suggested, while groups emphasised the importance of disaggregation and capturing data on mortality and causes of death and inclusion of older persons and migrants.

69. In particular, for the discussion for priority areas A-C, key conclusions addressed the following:
a. In relation to poverty eradication and employment, participants suggested adding SDG indicators on inequality to complement monitoring poverty; addressing multidimensional poverty; monitoring women’s labour force participation, unpaid care and unemployment.

b. In relation to health, participants indicated that further guidance could help define who would be the most disadvantaged populations mentioned under SDG indicator 3.8.1 and what might be considered as essential services; the value of measuring maternal morbidity and “near-misses” in addition to maternal mortality; disaggregation of data related to mortality by non-communicable diseases and skilled birth attendance; guidance to include the human papilloma virus vaccination as part of national vaccine programmes; addressing sexually-transmitted infections in addition to HIV; and how to address mental health and the coverage of older persons by health care systems.

c. In relation to sexual and reproductive health, services and rights, participants noted the importance of strengthening data collection on indicators 5.6.1 (proportion of women of reproductive age making informed choices regarding sexual relations, contraceptive use and reproductive health care) and 5.6.2 (countries with laws and regulations that guarantee full and equal access to women and men aged 15 years and older to sexual and reproductive health care, information and education); adding indicators on cervical cancer incidence and infertility from World Health Organization data; the need for more qualitative data relating to contraceptive usage and method mix.

70. For the discussion of priority areas D-F, participants identified the need to strengthen the production of timely administrative data sources in line ministries and creating linkages between data systems held by different ministries, including through making use of new technologies. Participants also highlighted the benefits of integrating data collected by NGOs and the capacity to analyse data. Participants further suggested that all SDG indicators related to adolescents and youth should be added to the monitoring framework, and suggested that the following SDG indicators should also be considered for inclusion in the framework: 4.1.1; 4.3.1; 4.a.1; 5.1.1; 5.2.1; 5.2.2; 5.3.1; and 5.c.1.2.

71. For the discussion of priority areas G-I, participants had the following key conclusions:

a. In relation to population ageing, participants suggested that the topic be considered a cross-cutting issue. It should include income security;

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2 Information of SDG indicators can be found at [https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/metadata/](https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/metadata/)
healthy life expectancy at age 60; and social inclusion, including access to long-term care. Addressing the quality of life of older persons was identified as a priority, requiring qualitative indicators. In relation to specific SDG indicators, participants suggested further disaggregation of SDG indicator 1.3.1 on social protection floors by pension coverage and to gather data on older persons not receiving pensions, especially those unable to work, and legislation on older persons. They suggested that data on intimate partner violence and victims of violence be disaggregated by age to capture elder abuse; and capturing the housing conditions of older persons.

b. In relation to international migration, participants suggested that SDG target 8.8.1 could benefit from additional information to understand the support received by migrant workers who have been victims of injuries. It was suggested that SDG indicator 1.3.1 on social protection floors could be disaggregated by migratory status, as well as access to sexual and reproductive health services for women. Indicators could capture legislation on coverage of migrants by health insurance, mechanisms to address trafficking in persons, and remittances-to-GDP ratio using World Bank data.

c. In relation to internal migration and urbanization, participants emphasised the need to capture access of population groups in different areas to services, including informal settlements. It was suggested to add SDG indicator 11.2.1 on access to public transport, SDG indicator 11.7.2 on sexual harassment; and to use data on government-provided housing where data on slums were unavailable. Further qualitative indicators could provide information on quality of life in slums and rural areas.

72. For the discussion of priority areas J-K, participants came to the following key conclusions:

a. In relation to population and sustainable development, indicators related to food security could include sustainable fisheries as well as sustainable agriculture to capture the context of small island developing states. Guidance could be provided to help understand the priorities for sustainable development education (SDG indicator 12.8.1) and to clarify the nature of reporting under SDG indicator 13.2.1. Additional indicators from the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction could be integrated into the framework to benefit from the good level of disaggregation, especially for persons with disabilities, in the framework. A need for further data, linking climate change and migration was also highlighted.
b. In relation to data and statistics, it was suggested that SDG indicator 16.9.1 could be further disaggregated to capture registration of births within the first five years of life to more accurately capture births. It was further suggested to use data from WHO to capture cause of death, and it was suggested to work with processes on civil registration and vital statistics to exploit synergies.

73. Subsequent discussions focused on the need to distinguish ideal and practical data requirements; the possibility of adding additional disaggregation to existing SDG indicators; the importance of tailoring data gathering to country contexts; the need for investment in capacity-building; and the underlying importance of ensuring that the monitoring framework upholds the value, dignity and rights of all people.

I. Closing

74. Dr. Annette Robertson, UNFPA Asia and the Pacific Regional Office thanked participants and noted that the framework should enable all stakeholders to gather more and more relevant data in support of the Asian and Pacific Ministerial Declaration. Countries would have further opportunities to input and reiterated the importance of ensuring the monitoring framework left no one behind.

75. Dr. Srinivas Tata, ESCAP, thanked participants, and emphasized that all inputs would be considered, while balancing idealism and pragmatism, vision, reality and capacity. The expertise of participants had benefitted the discussions, and he thanked them for their active engagement. He concluded by expressing appreciation to the colleagues from UNFPA and the Social Development Division who so ably had prepared for and serviced this meeting.

J. The way forward

76. Participants at the Expert Group Meeting found that there was a benefit to having a Monitoring Framework on the Asian and Pacific Ministerial Declaration on Population and Development and agreed that the proposed monitoring framework provided a good basis for this framework, taking into account the modifications proposed. In particular, in order to support policymaking that left no one behind, it was important to promote disaggregation across all indicators.

77. Following the meeting, the framework will be revised taking into consideration the comments received in session 6 and 8 and presented to member States for further consideration next year. It may then serve as a means of supporting voluntary national reviews at the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, regular reporting on the further implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action by countries at the annual sessions of the Commission on Population and Development and an input for country reporting to forthcoming 7th Asian and Pacific Population Conference.
Annex

Expert Group Meeting on Monitoring implementation of the
Asian and Pacific Ministerial Declaration on Population and Development
23 and 24 September 2019
Bangkok
Meeting Room H, UNCC

Programme

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<tr>
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<tr>
<td><strong>08:30 - 09:00</strong></td>
<td><strong>Registration</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>09:00 - 09:30</strong></td>
<td><strong>Session 1: Opening</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Welcome remarks, Dr. Srinivas Tata, Director, Social Development Division, ESCAP</td>
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<td>• Opening remarks, Mr. Björn Andersson, Director, UNFPA Asia and the Pacific Regional Office</td>
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<td>• Presentation on objectives and programme of the Expert Group Meeting, Ms. Sabine Henning, Chief, Sustainable Demographic Transition Section, Social Development Division, ESCAP</td>
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<td><strong>09:30 - 09:45</strong></td>
<td><strong>Refreshment break and group photo</strong></td>
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<td><strong>09:45 - 11:45</strong></td>
<td><strong>Session 2: Leaving no one behind – monitoring population and development for achievement of ICPD and Agenda 2030</strong></td>
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<td>Moderator: Mr. Gavin Jones, Professor Emeritus, Australian National University</td>
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<td>Panel discussion:</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Professor Dr. Mohammad Mainul Islam, Chairman, Department of Population Sciences, University of Dhaka</td>
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<td>• Ms. Sai Jyothirmai Racherla, Programme Director, Asian-Pacific Resource and Research Centre for Women,</td>
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<td>• Ms. Aishath Shahuda, Chief Statistician, National Bureau of Statistics, Maldives</td>
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<td>• Mr. Benuel Lenge, Director, Civil Registration and Vital Statistics, Port Vila</td>
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<td>Q&amp;A and discussion</td>
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<td><strong>11:45 – 13:00</strong></td>
<td><strong>Luncheon</strong></td>
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<td><strong>13:00 – 14:45</strong></td>
<td><strong>Session 3: The need for a monitoring framework for the Asian and Pacific Ministerial Declaration on Population and Development</strong></td>
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<td>Moderator: Ms. Alexandra Johns, Executive Director, Asia-Pacific Alliance for Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights</td>
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<td>14:45 – 15:00</td>
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<td>15:00 – 17:00</td>
<td><strong>Session 4: Country experiences in monitoring population and development, and lessons learned</strong></td>
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<td>Moderator: Ms. Saleshni Santa Naidu, Director, Poverty Monitoring Unit, Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation, Fiji</td>
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<td>• Datuk Dr. Narimah Awin, Chairperson, National Population and Family Development Board, Malaysia</td>
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<td>• Dr. Yoon-Jeong Shin, Research Fellow, Korea Institute for Health and Social Affairs, Republic of Korea</td>
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<td>• Mr. Sonam Wangdi, Senior Planning Officer, Policy and Planning Division, Ministry of Health, Bhutan</td>
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<td>Q&amp;A and discussion</td>
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**Tuesday, 24 September 2019**

**09:00 - 09:15**  
*Wrap-up of day 1*  
• Ms. Galanne Deressa, Programme Specialist, UNFPA Asia and the Pacific Regional Office

**09:15 - 09:45**  
**Session 5: Proposed monitoring framework for the Asian and Pacific Ministerial Declaration on Population and Development**  
Presentations:  
• Mr. Paul Tacon, Sustainable Demographic Transition Section, Social Development Division, ESCAP  
• Ms. Jessica Gardner, Statistical Consultant, Social Development Division, ESCAP  
• Ms. Sharita Serrao, Statistician, Population and Social Statistics Section, Statistics Division, ESCAP

**09:45 – 11:45**  
**Session 6: Review of the proposed monitoring framework**  
Chair: Mr. Paul Tacon, Sustainable Demographic Transition Section, Social Development Division, ESCAP  
**Objective:** To review the proposed framework with the following questions in mind:  
* i. How appropriate are the indicators for assessing the implementation of the Asian-Pacific Ministerial Declaration on Population and Development? 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 may need to be filled before all indicators can be responded to?

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<th>11:45 – 12:45</th>
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<td><strong>Session 7: Leaving no one behind – communicating population issues and data needs</strong>&lt;br&gt;Moderator: Mr. Paul Bunsell, Chief, Strategic Communications and Advocacy Section, Office of the Executive Secretary, ESCAP&lt;br&gt;Panel discussion:&lt;br&gt;• Mr. Peter Janssen, Journalist&lt;br&gt;• Mr. Eduardo Klien, Executive Director, HelpAge International&lt;br&gt;• Ms. Aishath Shahuda, Chief Statistician, National Bureau of Statistics, Ministry of National Planning and Infrastructure, Maldives&lt;br&gt;• Mr. Roy Wadia, Regional Communications Adviser, UNFPA Asia and the Pacific Regional Office&lt;br&gt;Q&amp;A and discussion</td>
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| 14:00 – 15:30 | Session 6: Review of the proposed monitoring framework (continued) |
| 15:30 – 15:45 | Refreshment break |
| 15:45 – 16:30 | Session 8: Results of the working group discussions<br>Moderator: Dr. Annette Sachs Robertson, Deputy Director, UNFPA Asia and the Pacific Regional Office<br>Presentation by Meeting Secretariat |
| 16:30 – 17:00 | Session 9: Next steps<br>Chair: Chief, Sustainable Demographic Transition Section, Social Development Division, ESCAP<br>• Closing remarks, Dr. Annette Sachs Robertson, Deputy Director, UNFPA Asia and the Pacific Regional Office<br>• Closing remarks, Dr. Srinivas Tata, Director, Social Development Division, ESCAP |
LIST OF PARTICIPANTS
(alphabetical order)

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Ms. Sumie Ishii, Chairperson, Japanese Organization for International Cooperation in Family Planning, Tokyo, Japan

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Ms. Alexa Johns, Executive Director, Asia-Pacific Alliance for Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights, Bangkok, Thailand

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Mr. Eduardo Klien, Executive Director, HelpAge International, Chiang Mai, Thailand

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Ms. Gloria Mathenge, Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Advisor, The Pacific Community, Noumea, New Caledonia

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Mr. Wang Zhili, Associate Research Fellow, China Population and Development Research Center, Beijing, China

UNITED NATIONS SECRETARIAT

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC (ESCAP)

Dr. Srinivas Tata
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Ms. Sabine Henning
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Mr. Paul Bunsell
Chief, Strategic Communications and Advocacy Section, Office of the Executive Secretary

Ms. Vanessa Steinmayer
Population Affairs Officer, Sustainable Demographic Transition Section, Social Development Division
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<th>Name</th>
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<tr>
<td>Mr. Marco Roncarati</td>
<td>Social Affairs Officer, Sustainable Demographic Transition Section, Social Development Division</td>
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<td>Ms. Jeon-Kyoung Cha</td>
<td>Expert on Social Policy, Sustainable Demographic Transition Section, Social Development Division</td>
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<td>Ms. Ebony Verbunt</td>
<td>Intern, Sustainable Demographic Transition Section, Social Development Division</td>
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<td>Ms. Ciara Tollan</td>
<td>Intern, Sustainable Demographic Transition Section, Social Development Division</td>
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**UNITED NATIONS FUNDS AND PROGRAMMES**

**UNITED NATIONS POPULATION FUND (UNFPA)**

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<td>Deputy Regional Director, Asia and the Pacific Regional Office</td>
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<td>Ms. Ingrid Fitzgerald</td>
<td>Technical Adviser Gender and Human Rights, Asia and the Pacific Regional Office</td>
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<td>Ms. Chuluundorj Oyuntsetseg</td>
<td>Interim Monitoring and Evaluation Adviser, Asia and the Pacific Regional Office</td>
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<td>Mr. Roy Wadia</td>
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