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Population Ageing

❖ UNECE was among the first UN bodies to recognize the importance of population ageing as a social, economic and demographic phenomenon. Since the early 1980s it has implemented or coordinated various research and data collection activities aimed at providing an information and knowledge base for well-informed and effective policy-making. Currently, UNECE's work in the field of ageing, carried out mostly by the UNECE Population Activities Unit, includes three components: (1) follow-up to the *Ministerial Conference on Ageing (MiCA)*, held in Berlin in 2002; (2) data collection and research on the status of older persons; and (3) survey on ageing-related research in Europe.

❖ It is recognized that population ageing will have profound economic and social effects in the UNECE region, and that irrespective of the different economic, social and political realities in the region, these implications need to be tackled through a coherent system of policy measures. High-level representatives at MiCA addressed the complex economic, social and other implications of ageing and agreed on the guiding principles for the

development of future national policies in the field. Two forward-looking documents were adopted at the Conference: the Regional Implementation Strategy for the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing 2002, and the Berlin Ministerial Declaration: A Society for All Ages in the UNECE Region. The Conference and the documents that it adopted established a framework for the formulation of national policies in response to population ageing across the UNECE region.

❖ UNECE's efforts are now concentrated on ensuring an adequate follow-up to the Conference. The centrepiece of this is a collaborative arrangement with the Vienna-based European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research. The Centre is working, with funding from the Federal Government of Austria, to assist the UNECE secretariat in the follow-up work, and specifically with the data collection and analysis related to the implementation of the documents adopted by MiCA. A memorandum of understanding between UNECE and the Federal Government of Austria on these arrangements was signed in December 2003.

Project on Population Ageing

The Project on Population Ageing studies the status of older persons in UNECE countries and specifically their economic conditions and living arrangements. One of the main objectives is to assemble a collection of anonymized and cross-nationally comparable micro-data samples based on national population and housing censuses in countries of Europe and North America, and to use these samples to study the social and economic conditions of older persons.

Currently the collection includes only samples from the 1990-round of censuses. Efforts are under way, however, to add also data from the 2000-round, and wherever possible data from pre-1990 rounds of censuses. In this work the PAU is collaborating with a consortium of academic and statistical institutions and data archives from the region.

Survey of Ageing-related Research in Europe

This survey is carried out by the UNECE Population Activities Unit in collaboration with the United States National Institute on Aging. The aim is to take stock of ageing-related research in Europe, to identify innovative research strategies and high-quality survey instruments that can be used throughout the region in future research, and to find out what type of cross-national ageing research should be initiated in Europe during the coming years.

The first such survey was carried out in 1995/96. The second survey has just been completed. Its results will be made available through a searchable on-line database, so as to facilitate the networking and collaboration among European research institutions working in the field.

For more information on the Population Activities Unit visit <http://www.unece.org/ead/pau>

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Generations and Gender Programme

❖ The Generations and Gender Programme (GGP) is an innovative and flexible regional study coordinated by the PAU. Undertaken in response to emerging population trends in the region, the Programme is a cooperative regional research and data collection project. It will provide longitudinal (following the same respondents over time) and cross-sectional data, through a 3-wave panel study with 3-year intervals, covering the resident population aged 18-79 years of both sexes of the participating countries. The study will provide information on the dynamic interrelationship between the economic and demographic processes, progress in poverty alleviation programmes, identification of vulnerable groups and their economic, social and demographic characteristics. The GGP will complement other official statistics and could measure emerging population developments as they occur. The data will also allow establishing progress towards the realisation of the Millennium Development Goals.

❖ GGP will generate a very rich data set, allowing for in-depth and high quality analysis for policy-oriented and scientific research. Descriptive, explanatory, longitudinal and cross-sectional analyses will be possible with a special attention to relationships between the generations and genders. Guidelines for descriptive analyses that are crucial for policy makers can be provided. Countries have indicated that they are particularly interested in the following themes: partnership formation and dissolution, reproductive behaviour, ageing, care for the young and the elderly, the relationship between generations including grandparents and grandchildren, well-being, and reasons for the persistence of below-replacement fertility.

❖ Started in 2000 the GGP has developed the basic instruments for the study and full implementation of the Programme is now under way. In all, 29 countries are interested in carrying out the study.

The consequences of persistent low fertility and increasing ageing for Europe in the next 50 years become evident from the projections prepared by the United Nations Population Division. According to the medium variant projection of its 2002 revision, the world population will increase from 6.1 billion to 8.9 billion. The relative share of the developed countries' population in the world population will decrease from 19.7 % in 2000 to 13.7% in 2050. Europe's share will decrease from 12.0% in 2000 to 7.1% in 2050.

The proportion of the population aged 60+ in the developed countries will increase from around 20% in 2000 to 32.3% in 2050. The increase is more pronounced in Europe, especially from 2020 onwards, than the other developed nations. The proportion of older persons in the population of the developing countries will increase from 7.7% in 2000 to 19.2% in 2050, a level that the developed countries had in 2000.

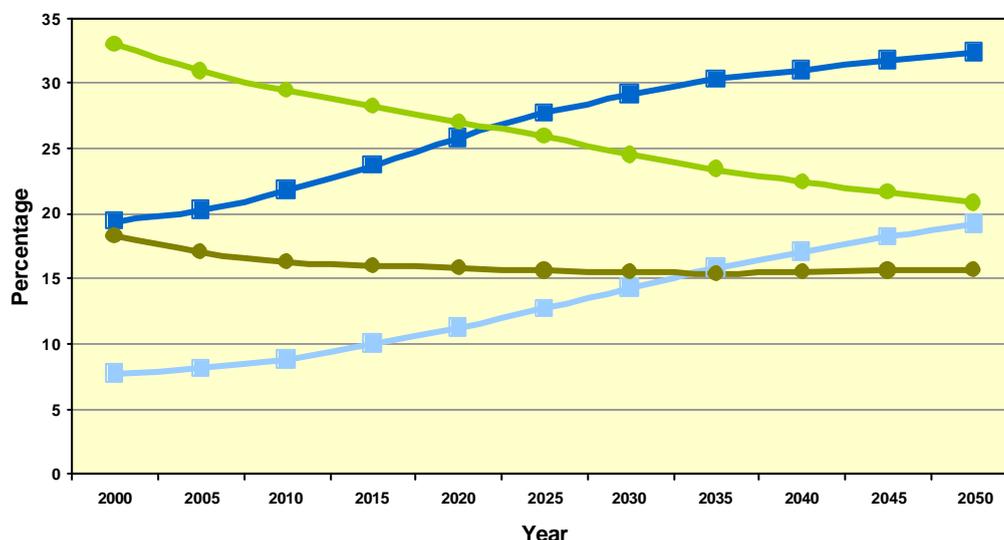
The proportion of young persons aged 0-14 years in the developed countries will slightly decrease from around 18% in 2000 to 14.8% in 2050. The proportion of persons aged 0-14 years in the developing countries will decrease from 33% in 2000 to 20.8% in 2050, considerably higher than the level of that of the developed countries.

Source: United Nations Population Division: World Population Prospects: 2002 revision, New York, 2003

The Programme has attracted attention from outside the region – Japan carried out its first wave in early 2004 while Australia is the process of making the necessary arrangements for its participation.

Up to now the costs of the Programme have been borne by the participating institutions and through grants from the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the Government of Switzerland and the Institut National des Etudes Démographiques (INED) of France.

Percentage of population age 0 - 14 and 60 + years for the developed and developing countries, 2000 - 2050



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