

**CONFERENCE ON  
STATUS OF THE OLDER POPULATION: PRELUDE TO THE 21<sup>st</sup> CENTURY**  
Sion, Switzerland,  
13-15 December 1999

**DESCRIPTION OF SESSIONS**

1. *Population Aging: Current Demographic Setting and the Future.* This session is intended to provide a review of the demographic situation with regard to both population aging and the changing composition of the older populations in the ECE member states at the point in which the 1990 round of censuses were conducted, as well as through the end of the decade, and in the future. This broad review will focus on growth rates for the total population, the aged population, and the oldest old, as well as fertility, mortality, and migration trends that produce population aging and affect the changing composition of the older population.

2. *Aging Societies: Changing Economic, Social, and Political Contexts.* The decade of the 1990s has been a period of significant political, social and economic changes that bear on population aging and influence the lives of older persons. The upheavals in the former Soviet Union, eastern and central Europe, the maturation of the European Union, the evolution of the welfare state, and immigration issues are but a few of these changing situations. The effect of these broader contextual factors on older persons is the focus of this session.

3. *Geographic Distributions and Redistributions of Older Persons.* The spatial distribution and redis-tribution of older persons in national populations is of major importance in resource allocation and planning. Yet relatively little empirical research has examined cross-nationally the population distributions by rural and urban settlements, regions, etc. The role of cohort succession and migration patterns affecting these population distributions is of particular importance. Census data are especially suited for analyses of geographic concentrations and migration patterns of different segments of the population.

4. *Small Group Discussions on a Research Agenda for the 21st Century.* These discussions will be organized for persons with different disciplinary and substantive interests. They are expected to lead to a systematic statement of desirable future research in the field of aging.

5. *Living Arrangements of Older Persons.* This session will provide an opportunity to examine variations in the living arrangements of older persons. Census data are a valuable source on information on the types of households in which the aged live. Thus studies utilizing PAU's collection of census samples are expected to contribute in significant ways to the knowledge on the cross-national differences in living arrangements. Contributions formulating and testing hypotheses regarding demographic, social and other conditions influencing the living arrangements are especially encouraged.

6. *Housing Conditions of Older Persons.* Censuses are a rich source of data on the housing conditions of various population groups and on the quality of residential units. The status of the older population is affected in significant ways by the housing they occupy, by their tenure status, and by the economic assets derived from ownership. Housing availability also influences the living arrangements and spatial mobility of older persons. All these issues will be covered in the sixth session of the conference.

7. *Work and Retirement at Older Ages.* The labor force participation, both full-

time and part-time, and the process of retirement, within and across countries, is the focus of this session. Important differences by age, gender, and other social characteristics can be examined using the detailed census sample data (e.g., employment status by single-year ages).

8. *Income Maintenance.* Income data from census sources are scarce and available for very few countries, so most of the presentations in this session are expected to be based on sources like the Luxembourg Income Study.

9. *Health Status of Older Persons.* This session will deal with levels of health within and between countries, as measured by mortality, morbidity and disability. The contributions to this session are expected to focus on issues like the active life expectancy, as an important means of examining differentials and changes over time both within and across countries, as well as the present research within the framework of the the Global Burden of Disease group and the REVES network.

10. *Social Distinctions: Gender, Educational, Sociocultural Differences.* It is anticipated that gender, educational, and sociocultural differences will be examined in many of the presentations at the Conference. Nonetheless, it is viewed as appropriate to devote a session to papers that identify and examine emerging issues that relate to the high proportion of women at older ages, the increasing educational levels of aging cohorts, and the growing ethnic and racial diversity of older populations in many countries.

11. *Research Agenda for the 21st Century: Rapporteurs' Reports.* A synopsis of the reports from the rapporteurs for the small group discussions (Session 4) will be presented. A statement of desirable future research in the field of aging is expected to be one of the outcomes of the Conference.