

How Generations and Gender Shape Demographic Change

Towards Policies Based on Better Knowledge

Information note on the Conference

1. Date and venue

The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) will organize the conference *How Generations and Gender Shape Demographic Change – Towards Policies Based on Better Knowledge* from 14 to 16 May 2008 at the Palais des Nations in Geneva.

2. Format

The Conference is planned as a forum for policymakers and the research community on challenges related to demographic change. It will be carried out as an intergovernmental meeting of UNECE member States and will open to representatives of the international and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) as well as to the research community. The Conference has received financial support from the Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities of the European Commission.

3. Expected outcome

The Conference is expected to address key challenges in policy areas related to family and reproductive behaviour as well as intergenerational and gender relationships; to reflect advances in knowledge in these areas; and to provide guidance on the use of such knowledge in policymaking.

The Conference will also facilitate an exchange of views on the modalities of the 15-year appraisal of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (Cairo, 1994) in the UNECE region, and may lead to the planning of further steps in this regard.

4. Sessions and topics

The Conference will be organized in seven plenary sessions on specific topics, each with an approximate duration of one and a half hours. Opening and concluding sessions are also foreseen.

The opening session will feature the presentation of the background information on the organization and concept of the UNECE Generations and Gender Programme (GGP) as well as on the perspectives for international cooperation in the area of population-related policies, followed by an interactive discussion.

The subsequent plenary sessions will be organized around the following topics:

- *Very low birth rates:*
E.g. very low fertility in Southern, Central and Eastern Europe; reproductive health; and increasing age at childbearing;
- *Realities of parenthood and childbearing:*
E.g. childcare provisions and strategies, the economic conditions of families with children, and their implications on behaviours regarding the family and the labour market;
- *Walking the tightrope of career and family:*
E.g. parental leave, flexibilities of the labour market, values and attitudes;
- *Moving towards gender equality:*
E.g. household organization from the perspective of gender equality, use of parental leave by men and women, and related attitudes;
- *Solidarity between and within generations:*
E.g. childcare provision by older persons, care provided to older persons, monetary transfers between generations, and attitudes on care;

- *In the age of old age:*
E.g. economic and emotional well-being, living conditions, transition to retirement, consequences of early life experience on life at older age, and gender relations between older persons;
- *Breaking down barriers by integrating young people:*
E.g. transition to adulthood, residential independence, economic independence and integration into the labour market, increasing age at family formation, poverty and social exclusion of young people, and integration of young immigrants or second-generation immigrants.

These sessions will each include:

- A keynote presentation summarizing the state of the art and showing new policy-relevant empirical findings;
- Statements by policymakers highlighting the challenges facing their countries, and addressing how research could better support resolving these challenges;
- Up to two selected research contributions based on the new data from the GGP;
- Statements from the floor and a discussion moderated by a discussant.

The concluding session will feature summary statements by the rapporteurs, and a discussion on the modalities of further international cooperation in this area.

5. Participants

It is envisaged that UNECE Governments will be represented at the Conference by officials involved with the formulation and/or implementation of population-related policies.

The national experts involved with GGP – members of the GGP International Working Group – have been invited to participate and provide contributions based on the Programme. International and accredited NGOs are also expected to participate.

6. Registration

To facilitate arrangements, member States are kindly requested to communicate to the UNECE secretariat the composition of their delegations by the end of February 2008. The deadline for sending completed registration forms is **15 April 2008**.

An electronic registration form is available on the GGP website (<http://ggp.unece.org>).

7. Languages and interpretation services

English, French and Russian will be the working languages of the Conference. Statements made in any of these languages will be interpreted.

8. Documentation

The UNECE secretariat will prepare a background paper that will be distributed in mid-April. Keynote speeches and presentations will be made available at the Conference. The report will be completed shortly after the Conference. Provisions have been made to publish the edited proceedings of this Conference by the end of this year. Documents and other background material will be made available through the GGP website (<http://ggp.unece.org>).

9. Background

Current demographic developments in Europe have important and far-reaching implications across all spheres of society, affecting economic development, social cohesion, sustainability and equity, and posing key challenges to public policies. The recent UNECE Ministerial Conference on Ageing (León, Spain, November 2007) discussed policy responses to population ageing and concluded with a Ministerial Declaration on further actions and priorities in this regard. Discussion on ageing and other salient areas of population-related policies has been carried out in the context of the Programme of Action of the International Conference for Population and Development (ICPD,

Cairo, 1994) and its follow-up. In the context of the 5- and 10-year appraisal of the ICPD Programme of Action, the UNECE convened the Regional Population Meeting (Budapest, 1998) and the European Population Forum (Geneva, 2004). The final documents of those meetings provide a broader context for deliberations at the upcoming Conference, and for the discussion on modalities of the 15-year appraisal of the ICPD Programme of Action in particular.

At the International Meeting on Generations & Gender (Geneva, 2000), member States invited the UNECE secretariat to organize another round of region-wide data collection and research on population issues, building on the successful experience with such cooperation programmes in the 1980s and the 1990s. That meeting initiated the GGP, which is becoming a compelling source of policy-relevant research on population issues in the UNECE region. The Programme comprises: (a) a survey covering a broad range of influences on demographic behaviour, (b) a related contextual database of national and regional trends and policies on these issues, and (c) analyses of these data. The vital role of research in developing effective policies and programmes was again emphasized in the Declaration adopted at the recent León Ministerial Conference on Ageing (2007) as well as in the conclusions of the European Population Forum (Geneva, 2004). Integration of the GGP with policy discussion is expected to contribute to the better use of research findings in policymaking.

10. Contact details

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