

**FIRST ADVISORY GROUP MEETING
FOR THE FOLLOW-UP TO THE
EPC & ICPD CONFERENCES**

Geneva (Switzerland)
15-16 January 1998

**ADVISORY GROUP RECOMMENDS THE CONVENING OF
THE 1999 REGIONAL POPULATION MEETING**
(March 1998)

1. The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) held the first meeting of its Advisory Group (AG) on the follow-up to the European Population Conference (EPC) (Geneva, 1993) and the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) (Cairo, 1994)¹ on 15-16 January 1998. The AG took note of the relevant General Assembly documents² and reviewed information on the events planned for 1998-1999 as part of the global review and appraisal of the ICPD Programme of Action and the declarations and recommendations of the regional population conferences held as part of the ICPD preparations. The Advisory Group was unanimous in the view that an ECE meeting should be convened as part of this global exercise in order to review and assess recent population developments in the ECE region and policy responses to them. The AG considered and made recommendations on the objectives, programme, format, venue and duration of an ECE Regional Population Meeting. The summary of these considerations and recommendations, as amended during further consultations involving AG members,

¹ *The AG consists of representatives of Estonia, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy and the Russian Federation, who participate in the work of the Group in their personal capacity (see the attached list of the AG members).*

² *The first of the relevant documents is entitled, "Sustainable development and international economic co-operation: population and development; Implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development; Report of the Secretary-General, Addendum: Proposals on the process and modalities for the review and appraisal of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development." (A/52/208/Add.1, 12 September 1997). The second document is the draft resolution entitled "Sustainable Development and International Economic Co-operation: Population and Development; Draft resolution submitted by the Vice-Chairman of the [Second] Committee, Mr. Hans-Peter Glanzer (Austria), on the basis of informal consultations held on draft resolution" (A/C.2/52/L.43, 3 December 1997).*

ECE and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) are given in paragraphs 2 through 10 below.

2. The Advisory Group was informed of new arrangements instituted during 1998 whereby the Population Activities Unit will report to the Conference of European Statisticians. In particular, the Group took note of the fact that "at the request of the Economic Commission for Europe, which is one of the Conference of European Statisticians' parent bodies, beginning with its 1998 plenary session the Conference is expected to conduct an intergovernmental review of the work carried out by the ECE's Population Activities Unit (Economic Analysis Division). This means that the Conference has been empowered by the Commission to take decisions on the planned work programme of the Unit, just as if the Unit's activities were part of the Conference's work programme." Also, the Advisory Group took note of PAU's proposal to the Bureau of the Conference of European Statisticians (CES) to request the Conference to adopt at its 1998 plenary session a decision approving the organising of the Regional Population Meeting.
3. The Government of Hungary, in co-operation with the ECE and UNFPA, will organise the meeting in Budapest during 7-9 December 1998. Preparations for the meeting will be carried out jointly by the Hungarian Central Statistical Office (HCSO), ECE and UNFPA, while the AG will continue to play its advisory role with respect to the preparations. Funding for the meeting will be requested from the UNFPA and interested Governments and foundations, while ECE and HCSO will provide various inputs in kind.
4. The AG is of the view that Europe is in the *avant-garde* of emerging, unprecedented demographic trends and structures. These include very low fertility in a number of countries, showing no signs of recovery. Reproductive health conditions, including the prevalence of induced abortion and modern contraceptive use in extensive parts of central and eastern Europe are among the poorest in the world. Continuing low fertility and concomitant improvements in old age mortality, particularly in western Europe and North America are contributing to unrelenting population ageing, the consequences of which pose ever-growing challenges to society. In central and eastern Europe, particularly the Newly Independent States, mortality, especially among working-age men, has recently risen to levels higher than those in many developing countries.
5. The meeting will consider the whole array of population issues and policies in the region, focusing, however, on the most salient ones. Three priority themes have been selected for the meeting, which have received ample attention in the EPC Recommendations and in the ICPD Programme of Action. These are:
 - a. Low fertility, including its determinants and future prospects;
 - b. Mortality, with special emphasis on the falling and stagnating survival in countries in transition and on old age mortality throughout the region; and
 - c. Population ageing, including its dynamics and its social and economic implications at the family, community and societal levels.
6. The documentation for the meeting will include:
 - a. Brief reports on current population-related policies in the ECE Member Countries, emphasising changes in policies over the past five years.
 - b. A broad background paper to review recent population developments and policy responses in the region, including reproductive health issues in central and eastern Europe; and
 - c. Three priority-theme papers on relevant developments, issues and policies in the respective priority areas.

7. Governments will be requested to contribute the reports on policies. The deadline for the submission of these reports will be determined at a later date in consultation with the AG members. Noted population scholars will prepare the background and priority-theme papers. The deadline for their submission will be the next meeting of the AG scheduled for 1-2 October 1998. All the documents will be made available to the participants of the regional meeting in one of the three official ECE languages - English, French, Russian - in which they are written. They will be distributed prior to the meeting by mail and over the Internet.
8. It is envisaged that the meeting will negotiate and adopt a report on future priority actions and a plan for future population co-operation in the region. Drafts of the report and the plan will be prepared by late September and considered in the next AG meeting. These two documents will be ECE inputs to the global review and appraisal of the implementation of the ICDP Programme of Action.
9. The programme of the meeting will be as follows:

Monday, 7 December:

Morning: opening and presentation of the background paper.

Afternoon: presentation of the paper on fertility and debate.

Tuesday, 8 December:

Morning: presentation of the paper on mortality and debate.

Afternoon: presentation of the paper on ageing and debate.

Wednesday, 9 December:

Morning: general debate.

Afternoon: continuation of the general debate, and adoption of the report and the plan.

10. The two documents - the report and the plan - will be transmitted to the Conference of European Statisticians through its Bureau for consideration and approval. The PAU will also request the Conference to propose to the Economic Commission for Europe that it consider the two documents at its 1999 annual session in the context of a possible debate on the quinquennial review and appraisal of the implementation of the EPC Recommendations and the ICPD Programme of Action.

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