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**Programme implementation and future programme of
work of the Secretariat in the field of population**

Programme implementation and progress of work in the field of population in 2021: Population Division, Department of Economic and Social Affairs

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report contains a review of progress made by the Population Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs in implementing its programme of work in the field of population during 2021. It covers the activities of the Division on the analysis of global trends in fertility, mortality, migration, urbanization and population ageing; the preparation of global population estimates and projections; the monitoring of population policies; the analysis of linkages between population and sustainable development; the dissemination of population data and information; technical cooperation with and capacity development provided to Member States; and the support provided to intergovernmental processes, including through the preparation of reports of the Secretary-General and other parliamentary documents, the organization of expert group meetings and the monitoring of internationally agreed development goals.

The objective of the programme of work in the field of population in 2021 was to improve knowledge of global population trends, advance an evidence-based understanding of interaction between population change and sustainable development among policymakers and the public, and strengthen the international community's capacity to effectively address current and emerging population issues and integrate the population dimension into the international development agenda. The Commission on Population and Development oversees the work of the Population Division and provides guidance on the work programme as part of its annual session.

The Commission may wish to take note of the report.

* E/CN.9/2022/1.



I. Introduction

1. The Population Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs is responsible for the implementation of the programme of work on population of the United Nations Secretariat. The programme of work is guided by the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development,¹ by the outcome of the twenty-first special session of the General Assembly on key actions for the further implementation of the Programme of Action (resolution [S-21/2](#), annex) and by the decision of the Assembly to extend the Programme of Action and the key actions for its further implementation beyond the original 20-year time horizon in 2014 (resolution [65/234](#)). The outcomes of other relevant international conferences and summits are also taken into account, including the United Nations Millennium Declaration (resolution [55/2](#)), the Declaration of the High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development (resolution [68/4](#)), the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution [70/1](#)), the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants (resolution [71/1](#)) and the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (resolution [73/195](#)). In addition, the work of the Division is guided by the resolutions and decisions of the Commission on Population and Development, in particular its resolution 2004/1 on the work programme in the field of population ([E/2004/25-E/CN.9/2004/9](#), chap. I, sect. B), and by other relevant resolutions and decisions of the Assembly and of the Economic and Social Council.

2. As described in the programme budget, the objective of the work programme on population in 2021 was to improve knowledge of global population trends, advance an evidence-based understanding of interaction between population change and sustainable development among policymakers and the public, and to strengthen the international community's capacity to effectively address current and emerging population issues and integrate the population dimension into the international development agenda (see [A/75/6 \(Sect. 9\)](#), subprogramme 5, Population). The Commission provided intergovernmental guidance and oversight.

3. The Division collaborates closely with the agencies, funds and programmes and other bodies of the United Nations system in implementing its work programme and in supporting the follow-up to the International Conference on Population and Development. United Nations offices and missions, national Governments, academic researchers, media representatives and the public at large regularly consult with the Division to obtain timely and pertinent data, information and analyses on population patterns and trends and their connection with development issues.

4. The present report provides a summary of the activities and deliverables of the Division during 2021, which included the provision of support to intergovernmental processes, the preparation of reports of the Secretary-General and other parliamentary documents, the monitoring of internationally agreed development goals, the dissemination of population data and information, and technical cooperation. A list of activities and outputs completed in 2021 is presented in the annex to the present report. Reference is also made in the report to work in progress in 2021 that is expected to result in one or more completed outputs in 2022. Where applicable, impacts of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic on the Division's work are indicated. Responses to COVID-19 in the Division's deliverables and activities are also noted.

¹ *Report of the International Conference on Population and Development, Cairo, 5–13 September 1994* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.95.XIII.18), chap. I, resolution 1, annex.

II. Fertility and family planning

5. The Population Division held a virtual expert group meeting on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on fertility on 10 and 11 May 2021. The experts discussed the fertility impact of past economic and health crises, reviewed recent data on determinants of fertility and on reported number of births to assess the possible impact of the pandemic on fertility, and provided recommendations to develop assumptions on the impact of the pandemic on fertility levels and trends at the global, regional and subregional levels in the short to medium term in support of the official United Nations population estimates and projections. The meeting brought together more than 40 experts from United Nations agencies, research institutions and data producers. The report of the meeting contains a summary of the presentations, discussion and recommendations.²

6. As the custodian agency for Sustainable Development Goal indicator 3.7.2 (Adolescent birth rate (aged 10–14; aged 15–19 years) per 1,000 women in that age group), the Division updated the global data set that includes data for 224 countries or areas for 2000–2020. The Division has continued its work on early adolescent fertility through the preparation of a technical paper on selecting the adolescent birth rates (aged 10–14 and 15–19 years) for monitoring and reporting on the Goals.³ The Division will also include, for the first time, data on fertility at ages 10–14 into the updated data set for indicator 3.7.2 for publication in the Global Sustainable Development Goal Indicator Database.

7. The Division published a comprehensive data set on family planning indicators, *World Contraceptive Use 2021*, which includes survey-based estimates of contraceptive prevalence and of the unmet need for family planning among women of reproductive age (aged 15–49 years), disaggregated by age, marital status and contraceptive methods used. It includes data from 1,363 surveys for 196 countries or areas. On the basis of that data compilation, the Division generated a comprehensive set of annual, model-based estimates and projections of family planning indicators for the period 1970–2030, published as *Estimates and Projections of Family Planning Indicators 2021*. The methods for data compilation and the estimates and projections are presented in a methodology report for 2021.⁴ As custodian agency for Sustainable Development Goal indicator 3.7.1 (Proportion of women of reproductive age (aged 15–49 years)) who have their need for family planning satisfied with modern methods, the Division used those two data products on family planning indicators to provide information relevant for the global monitoring of the indicator.

8. Staff members of the Division published a research article on contraceptive use and needs among adolescent women aged 15–19 years, producing regional and global estimates and projections from 1990 to 2030 using Bayesian hierarchical modelling and age-disaggregated data from *World Contraceptive Use*.⁵

9. Staff members of the Division published a research article on patterns of contraceptive use and fertility transition in sub-Saharan Africa.⁶

² See www.un.org/development/desa/pd/event/egm-impact-covid-19-fertility.

³ To be published in 2022.

⁴ United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, “World contraceptive use 2021: estimates and projections of family planning indicators 2021 – methodology report”, UN DESA/POP/2021/DC/NO.1, April 2021.

⁵ Vladimira Kantorová and others, “Contraceptive use and needs among adolescent women aged 15–19: regional and global estimates and projections from 1990 to 2030 from a Bayesian hierarchical modelling study”, *Plos One*, 16(3), art. e0247479 (2021).

⁶ Aisha Dasgupta and others, “Contraceptive use and fertility transitions: the distinctive experience of sub-Saharan Africa”, *Demographic Research*, vol. 46, art. 4. (2022).

III. Health and mortality

10. The Population Division established, in collaboration with the Statistics Division and the World Health Organization (WHO), the Technical Advisory Group on COVID-19 Mortality Assessment.⁷ The Technical Advisory Group serves as a broad scientific and strategic platform to facilitate the exchange of knowledge and the application of methods on COVID-19 mortality. A primary role of the Technical Advisory Group is to advise and support efforts by WHO and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs to assist Member States in obtaining accurate estimates of numbers of deaths attributable to the direct and indirect impacts of the pandemic. The Technical Advisory Group comprises 33 experts from the fields of epidemiology, demography, official statistics and other relevant areas, drawn from national statistical offices, academic institutions and elsewhere. The inaugural meeting of the Technical Advisory Group was held on 19 February 2021, and five additional meetings were held during 2021. In addition, five working groups have been formed to provide guidance on various topics: (a) global mortality estimates, including from COVID-19; (b) use of surveys and censuses to fill data gaps; (c) lessons from the pandemic for death registration and reporting systems; (d) summary metrics of the toll in lives lost; and (e) inequality in COVID-19 mortality between and within countries. Following modelling studies by the first working group over the course of 2021, the Technical Advisory Group proposed a method for generating estimates of excess mortality on global, regional and national scales. The method relies on a statistical model using information from countries with adequate data; the model is used to generate estimates for countries with little or no data available. Estimates of global excess mortality for the period 1 January 2020 to 30 June 2021 derived from the model are expected to be published early in 2022.

11. The Division participated in monthly meetings of two task forces of the Reference Group on Health Statistics, one on mortality and life tables and another on population estimates. The Division also participated in a technical meeting of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) Reference Group on Estimates, Modelling and Projections Methods, held from 5 to 7 October 2021. Estimates from *World Population Prospects* and *World Urbanization Prospects*, as well as population and mortality data from censuses compiled by the Division and available from its open access empirical database (DemoData), have been used by UNAIDS as input to the modelling of the HIV/AIDS epidemic worldwide, and the Division has relied on UNAIDS epidemiological information for the demographic modelling of the HIV/AIDS epidemic.

IV. International migration

12. In 2021, the Population Division worked on improving the management of empirical data, documentation and estimation methods for the 2022 revision of the International Migrant Stock data set. The Division produces biennial estimates of the international migrant stock for all countries and areas of the world, which are widely considered the most authoritative resource describing levels and trends in the number of international migrants disaggregated by sex, age and origin. Improved methods of work for future revisions of the International Migrant Stock data set are planned in order to increase the efficiency of preparation of the successive updates and the transparency of the data and procedures used to produce new stock estimates.

⁷ See www.un.org/development/desa/pd/events/TAG.

13. The Division acts as focal point of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs for the United Nations Network on Migration.⁸ The Division participates in working-level meetings of the Executive Committee and the annual meeting of the Network, assisted the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs in his participation in two meetings of Principals and contributed to joint statements and guidance notes prepared by the Network. The Division also supported the preparation of the second biennial report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (A/76/642), prepared under the auspices of the Network. The report provides an assessment of the activities of the United Nations system in support of the Global Compact and the functioning of the institutional arrangements to support its implementation and will serve to inform the deliberations during the first International Migration Review Forum, to be convened by the General Assembly from 17 to 20 May 2022.

14. The Population Division, jointly with the Statistics Division, participated in planning and preparations for the third International Forum on Migration Statistics, to be held in New York in the last quarter of 2022. The Forum is a biennial event co-organized by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). It highlights the increasing relevance of international migration in the context of sustainable development and supports the global monitoring of progress on migration issues in follow-up to both the 2030 Agenda and the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration. The 2022 Forum will mobilize expertise from a wide range of disciplines, such as statistics, economics, demography, sociology, geospatial science and information technology, to improve the collection and analysis of migration data worldwide. The Forum will explore ways to strengthen migration data for the follow-up of global agreements; new approaches, methodologies and innovations in migration data; data on migrants in vulnerable situations; the impact of COVID-19 on data on migrants and migration; strengthening statistical capacities and financing; and improving data communication, visualization and their utilization for evidence-based planning.

V. Global population estimates and projections

15. The preparation of the official United Nations population estimates and projections for all countries and areas of the world is a key part of the work of the Population Division. The data are used in the calculation of many of the key development indicators commonly employed by the United Nations system, including for more than one third of the indicators used to monitor progress made in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. They are used extensively by United Nations entities and the general public and are widely considered to provide the most authoritative set of demographic data describing population levels and trends around the world.

16. During 2021, the Division worked to prepare *World Population Prospects 2022*, which is scheduled for release by June 2022. The 2022 revision will utilize the most recent information available on population size, fertility, mortality and international migration and will offer estimates and projections of various population parameters for 237 countries or areas, geographic regions and other groupings of countries or areas. In 2021, the Division continued its work on the development and implementation of a new streamlined analytical approach so that it can use more efficiently all relevant empirical country data for the different demographic components of population change and

⁸ The Network, established by the Secretary-General in 2018, seeks to ensure effective, timely and coordinated system-wide support for the implementation of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration. For details, see <https://migrationnetwork.un.org/>.

provide estimates and projections by single year of age and sex and by a one-year time interval. The Division has been implementing these major changes in order to better respond to the needs of Member States, the United Nations system and other users, and to ensure greater compliance with existing international standards for the production of population estimates and projections. All standard demographic relationships will be preserved using the cohort-component framework to account for changes in fertility, mortality and international migration over time, and by age and sex. The upgrade responds to the growing demand for annual population estimates and demographic indicators in order to assess progress in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. In addition, the new approach will lead to greater transparency regarding the empirical data, analytical procedures, methods and assumptions used. Moreover, it will ensure that the production of international estimates follows the best available practices for demographic reconciliation.

17. It is expected that the new framework will help to reduce differences between national estimates of key development indicators and those produced by the United Nations and other international agencies, especially for countries with advanced data systems. In addition, this upgrade will bring *World Population Prospects* in line with the Guidelines for Accurate and Transparent Health Estimates Reporting, which are intended to ensure greater transparency and reproduction of results in the context of global health statistics.

18. Work continued on the development of DemoData containing all available empirical statistics that are relevant for the preparation of national population estimates and projections (e.g., population by age and sex from censuses, fertility and mortality data from civil registration and vital statistics, as well as from censuses and surveys based on direct and indirect estimation methods, upon data availability), including enhanced codified metadata information on underlying data sources. Both the interactive end-user interface and open application programming interface database access are used for the preparation of the 2022 revision of *World Population Prospects*, and further work was conducted on the new web-based data dissemination platform of the Division (Data Portal) to provide access to estimates and projection results for all countries for the *World Population Prospects 2022* release and to enable demand-driven data visualization and database queries for demographic data and underlying empirical data.

19. The Division collaborated with the Population Division of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) on various tasks relating to the implementation of this new approach for *World Population Prospects*.

20. The Division participated in expert group meetings organized by the Statistics Division, including two meetings on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on conducting population and housing censuses and on census data quality concerns, held on 9 to 12 February⁹ and 2 to 5 November 2021,¹⁰ and a meeting on the draft handbook on register-based population and housing censuses¹¹ that was held from 15 to 17 December 2021.¹² Input from experts was solicited at the gathering regarding best practices and contemporary approaches used to conduct censuses during or following the pandemic, and the use of administrative registers and data sources as basis for future population censuses. Staff from the Division also presented the use of census data in the *World Population Prospects* at an international conference on census data users, held in Tashkent on 6 and 7 October 2021, as part of the activities in the preparation of the conduct of the country's next census, in 2023.

⁹ See <https://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic-social/meetings/2021/egm-covid19-census.cshtml>.

¹⁰ See <https://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic-social/meetings/2021/egm-covid19-census2/>.

¹¹ See <https://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic-social/meetings/2021/egm-20211215/>.

¹² See <https://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic-social/meetings/2020/newyork-egm-dyb/>.

VI. Population policies

21. In 2021, the Population Division completed the implementation of the thirteenth United Nations Inquiry among Governments on Population and Development. The Inquiry, mandated by the General Assembly in 1962, is a long-standing survey used to gather information from Governments on selected population policies and programmes, for the purpose of monitoring progress in the achievement of internationally agreed development goals. The Inquiry documents changes in the views and policies of Governments with respect to population size and growth, population ageing, fertility, reproductive health and family planning, health and mortality, spatial distribution and urbanization and international migration. The scope of the thirteenth Inquiry was focused on measuring two indicators of the Sustainable Development Goals: 10.7.2 (Number of countries with migration policies that facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people) and 5.6.2 (Number of countries with laws and regulations that guarantee women aged 15–49 years access to sexual and reproductive health care, information and education). The thirteenth Inquiry consists of multiple-choice questions organized into two thematic modules: one on reproductive health and another on international migration. The module on reproductive health is implemented with support from the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the module on international migration is implemented in collaboration with IOM and with support from OECD. The thirteenth Inquiry was implemented between November 2020 and October 2021.

22. The Division launched the World Population Policies 2021 data sets,¹³ which include information on national reproductive health policies and programmes in 109 countries that responded to the reproductive health module of the thirteenth Inquiry and information on migration policies and programmes in 89 countries that responded to the international migration module of the thirteenth Inquiry.

23. The Division prepared *World Population Policies 2021* (on policies related to fertility), which will be published early in 2022. The report provides a brief overview of global fertility levels and trends since the early 1960s and presents the most recent government policies on fertility (as of 2019), drawing on data from the *World Population Policies* database. The report also presents five case studies of countries from different regions and includes an assessment of the potential direct and indirect impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on fertility and fertility-related policies. It concludes with an exploration of policy options.

VII. Population ageing

24. In 2021, the Population Division prepared a draft report on population ageing and sustainable development, which will be published later in 2022. The report provides an overview of global levels and trends of population ageing, highlights implications for sustainable development, and reviews policy responses of countries at advanced stages of population ageing. Relevant policies range from those intended to moderate or reverse fertility declines by providing financial incentives and improving work-life balance, to those aimed at mitigating the fiscal impacts of population ageing, including for extreme cases in which low levels of fertility persist over several decades. The analysis features data produced by the Division, including from the *World Population Prospects* series and other data sets.

¹³ See www.un.org/development/desa/pd/data/world-population-policies.

25. The Division published two technical papers on aspects of population ageing. The first, “Ageing populations: we are living longer lives, but are we healthier?”,¹⁴ examines the compression of mortality around a typical age at death, the decline in mortality at older ages, the concept of healthy life expectancy and models of successful healthy ageing. The second, “Health sector challenges and policies in the context of ageing populations”,¹⁵ discusses challenges and policies to address health in the context of population ageing. It reviews a range of data and evidence about policies and good practices to address the health-care needs of older persons and discusses the risks and challenges arising from the COVID-19 pandemic.

26. The Division supported the work of the Titchfield Group on Ageing-Related Statistics and Age-Disaggregated Data at the technical level by attending its third annual meeting, which was held virtually from 29 June to 1 July 2021. The Group was established by the Statistical Commission in 2018 to improve the availability, accessibility and comparability of statistical data in support of ageing-related policymaking.

27. The Division also participated in activities of the Inter-Agency Group on Ageing, an informal network of entities of the United Nations that coordinate on issues of relevance to ageing and older persons, identifies areas of cooperation, works together to raise the profile of older persons and ageing issues within the United Nations system, and integrates ageing and older persons into the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.¹⁶ The Division contributed to an advocacy brief on social isolation and loneliness among older persons, prepared by WHO¹⁷ in support of the implementation of General Assembly resolution 75/131 on the United Nations Decade of Healthy Ageing (2021–2030).

VIII. Population and development

28. The Population Division prepared a report entitled *Global Population Growth and Sustainable Development*, which uses the most recent estimates and projections of global demographic trends from *World Population Prospects 2019*. The report, to be released early in 2022, explains how the current rapid growth of the human population is a typical consequence of the demographic transition, that is, the historic shift towards longer lives and smaller families that has been a universal feature of social and economic development worldwide. It describes how the growth of the world’s population is shaped by trends in fertility, mortality and international migration, which vary considerably across countries and regions and over time, and how population growth possesses a momentum that will affect future trends, making them relatively predictable and inflexible for the coming decades. The report then investigates the social and economic processes that interact in myriad ways with demographic change and population growth. The discussion focuses on several interrelated themes, including the challenge of leaving no one behind in the face of a growing global population, while examining linkages between population growth and

¹⁴ Jean-Marie Robine, “Ageing populations: we are living longer lives, but are we healthier?”, UN DESA/POP/2021/TP/NO.2, September 2021.

¹⁵ André Cezar Medici, “Health sector challenges and policies in the context of ageing populations”, UN DESA/POP/2021/TP/NO.3, November 2021.

¹⁶ For more information on the Inter-Agency Group on Ageing, see www.un.org/development/desa/ageing/iaga.html.

¹⁷ World Health Organization (WHO), International Telecommunication Union and United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, *Advocacy Brief: Social Isolation and Loneliness among Older People* (Geneva, WHO, 2021) <https://www.who.int/teams/social-determinants-of-health/demographic-change-and-healthy-ageing/social-isolation-and-loneliness>.

key aspects of social and economic development, including poverty and inequality, hunger, food security and nutrition, health and well-being, education, gender equality and women's empowerment, and sustained economic growth and decent work. Lastly, the report focuses on the relationship between population growth and environmental sustainability, including the limited scope of population limitation as a mitigation strategy for climate change and the critical roles played by energy efficiency, sustainable consumption and production, and sustainable food systems.

29. The Division produced a policy brief on population, food security, nutrition and sustainable development as part of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs Policy Brief series.¹⁸ The brief highlighted links between population trends – including population growth, urbanization, changing age distributions, changes in health and mortality, rural-urban migration and international migration – and aspects of food systems, food security and nutrition.

IX. Support for intergovernmental processes

30. The Population Division supported the organization of the fifty-fourth session of the Commission on Population and Development, which was held in a hybrid format at United Nations Headquarters from 19 to 23 April 2021. Its special theme was “Population, food security, nutrition and sustainable development”. At the request of the Chair, the Division convened meetings of the Bureau and informal meetings of Member States. The Division assisted the Bureau in organizing the plenary session by inviting high-level officials for the opening session, organizing interactive panel discussions and facilitating the participation of panellists. The Division also supported the co-facilitators in holding informal consultations on draft proposals.

31. In response to General Assembly resolution [72/305](#) and Economic and Social Council resolution [2016/25](#), the Division supported the Bureau in introducing several innovations in the organization of the annual session. The innovations focused, in particular, on more extensive consultations with Member States and other stakeholders, greater transparency, increased engagement with civil society, enhanced participation of United Nations entities with relevant expertise, and more time being allocated for informal consultations. During the annual session, traditional formats and presentations were replaced by multi-stakeholder panels and interactive discussions. The Division will continue to advocate innovative approaches to organizing annual sessions of the Commission, based on the results of the survey on the future role and organization of Commission, which were summarized in a conference room paper and discussed during the fifty-fourth session.

A. Reports of the Secretary-General

32. The Division prepared the report of the Secretary-General on the theme of the fifty-fourth session of the Commission, “Population, food security, nutrition and sustainable development” ([E/CN.9/2021/2](#)). The report presented data on food security nutrition, healthy diets and burden of disease; impacts of COVID-19 on the food system, food security and nutrition; relationships between population growth, food consumption and sustainability, including the challenge of keeping food systems within planetary boundaries while reducing the health burdens associated with current dietary patterns; and connections between agricultural transformation and livelihood,

¹⁸ United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, “Population, food security, nutrition and sustainable development”, Policy Brief, No. 102, 20 April 2021.

including gender dimensions and the role of technology, data and innovation in nourishing the world sustainably and improving livelihoods.

B. Expert group meetings

33. The Division convened a virtual expert group meeting on population and sustainable development, in particular sustained and inclusive growth, on 21 and 22 July 2021, to inform the preparation of the fifty-fifth session of the Commission. The meeting convened some 100 experts from Governments, the United Nations system, universities and research institutions, including 26 representatives of 15 Member States and 29 invited speakers and moderators. Experts reviewed evidence on how population change (in terms of size, age structure and geographic distribution) was interlinked with macroeconomic growth, inequalities, poverty, the gendered economy and climate change. The experts stressed the need for a long-term perspective in planning for and achieving sustainability (fiscal, economic, demographic or environmental). They also emphasized the need to invest in better data and measurement in the context of time-use data, as well as for data disaggregated by age, sex, income and other characteristics relevant in national contexts. Furthermore, experts advocated consideration of the twin goals of sustainability and inclusion in evaluating specific policy interventions.¹⁹

C. Support for the General Assembly

34. The Division is working closely with the United Nations Network on Migration in preparing for the first International Migration Review Forum, to be convened by the General Assembly from 17 to 20 May 2022. In particular, the Division, together with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, will organize a preparatory webinar on round table No. 4 of the Forum early in 2022. The Division made a presentation on preparations for the Forum during the third annual meeting of the Network, held virtually in December 2021.

D. Monitoring of internationally agreed development goals

35. In the context of the 2021 high-level political forum on sustainable development, the Division provided substantive support to the organization of a side event (“lab”) on 12 July in the context of the voluntary national reviews.²⁰ The event, organized by the United Nations Network on Migration and the group of friends on migration, brought together national policymakers and experts from countries that had recently prepared a voluntary national review, as well as representatives of international organizations and other stakeholders. Participants exchanged knowledge, good practices and innovative approaches in addressing migration-related issues. The lab facilitated a discussion of assessing progress made in achieving migration-related targets of the Sustainable Development Goals and recommended action to accelerate the availability, quality and comparability of population and migration data in the coming decade. In addition, the Division provided other support to the organization of the high-level political forum, including support to two countries (Islamic Republic of Iran and Malaysia) in their preparation of the voluntary national review presentation, and for the organization of the panel “SDGs in focus: SDGs 1, 2, 8, 17 and interlinkages among those goals and with other SDGs”.

¹⁹ See www.un.org/development/desa/pd/events/EGM-CPD55.

²⁰ See <https://migrationnetwork.un.org/events/vnr-lab-migration>.

36. During 2021, the Division contributed to the work of the Inter-Agency Group for Child Mortality Estimation, whose task is to monitor progress made towards the achievement of target 3.2 of the Sustainable Development Goals (End preventable deaths of newborns and children under 5 years of age, with all countries aiming to reduce neonatal mortality to at least as low as 12 per 1,000 live births and under-5 mortality to at least as low as 25 per 1,000 live births). The Inter-Agency Group, led by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and WHO, also includes the Division and the World Bank. The Division provided information to update the database on infant and under-5 mortality estimates maintained by UNICEF and collaborated in the preparation of the report *Levels and Trends in Child Mortality*, published in December 2021.²¹

37. In addition, the Division continued to participate in the Maternal Mortality Estimation Inter-Agency Group, which is responsible for monitoring progress towards the reduction in maternal mortality, which is target 3.1 of the Sustainable Development Goals (By 2030, reduce the global maternal mortality to less than 70 deaths per 100,000 live births). The Inter-agency Group is led by WHO, with the participation of UNICEF, UNFPA, the World Bank and the Division. The latter provides key input to the maternal mortality estimation process, including country-level estimates of the number of women of reproductive age, the total fertility rate and the number of live births. Owing to the impact of COVID-19, the date of the release of the report on maternal mortality is postponed to 2022.

38. The survey-based estimates of family planning indicators published in *World Contraceptive Use 2021*, as well as the model-based estimates and projections of those indicators, *Estimates and Projections of Family Planning Indicators 2021*, informed the report of the Secretary-General on global progress in the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals in 2021,²² in particular with regard to target 3.7 on ensuring universal access to sexual and reproductive health-care services, including for family planning. The comprehensive data set and model-based estimates and projections provide critical evidence regarding the degree to which the demand for family planning is being met and whether that demand is being satisfied by the use of modern methods of contraception (indicator 3.7.1).

39. As the custodian agency for Sustainable Development Goal indicator 3.7.2, the Division provided updates on the fertility rate for women aged 15–19 years, now available for 224 countries or areas for the period from 2000 to 2020. For 219 of those countries or areas, there are at least two data points available.²³ The Division will also include, starting in 2022, estimates for the adolescent birth rate at the ages 10–14 years in the annual updated data set for publication in the Global Sustainable Development Goal Indicator Database.

40. The Division released the 2021 update of the data set on Sustainable Development Goal indicator 10.7.2 (Number of countries with migration policies that facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people).²⁴ The information on indicator 10.7.2 was available for 138 countries that responded to the international migration module of the twelfth or the thirteenth United Nations Inquiry among Governments on Population and Development. Target 10.7, to facilitate the orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through the implementation of planned and well-managed migration

²¹ Inter-Agency Group for Child Mortality Estimation, *Levels and Trends in Child Mortality Report 2021: Estimates Developed by the United Nations Inter-Agency Group for Child Mortality Estimation* (New York, United Nations Children's Fund, 2021).

²² *The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2021* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.21.I.3).

²³ United Nations, Global SDG Indicators database, available at <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/indicators/database>.

²⁴ See www.un.org/development/desa/pd/data/sdg-indicator-1072-migration-policies.

policies, is the target most explicitly and directly related to international migration among all the targets of the 2030 Agenda. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs and IOM are the custodian agencies for indicator 10.7.2, and OECD is a partner agency.

41. The Division also published a policy brief to provide updated information on Sustainable Development Goal indicator 10.7.2.²⁵ The brief summarizes global and regional situation with regard to well-managed migration policies.

42. The Division contributed to the preparation of a data set on Sustainable Development Goal indicator 5.6.2. The information for measuring that indicator was drawn from the fertility, family planning and reproductive health module of the twelfth Inquiry and the reproductive health module of the thirteenth Inquiry, which were implemented by the Division. UNFPA is the custodian agency for indicator 5.6.2 and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs is a partner agency.

43. The Division contributed to the work of WHO on global monitoring of Sustainable Development Goal indicator 3.8.1 (Coverage of essential health services) and provided data for the family planning tracer indicator that is a part of the service coverage index used to measure indicator 3.8.1.²⁶ The Division participated in the official country consultation with all WHO member States and communicated with representatives from 27 countries, clarifying the definition of the family planning indicator and explaining how differences between survey-based and model-based estimates may arise, as well as addressing other concerns. In addition, the Division contributed to a country training event coordinated by the WHO Regional Office for the Western Pacific for the Ministry of Health in Malaysia. The event provided guidance on the construction of indicator 3.8.1 and how the individual tracer indicators are calculated, including the family planning tracer indicator. The materials prepared by the Division will be used by the Regional Office in other country training activities in the region.

44. Throughout 2021, the Division participated in the task team on calculating aggregates for global Sustainable Development Goal monitoring initiated by the Statistics Division, and continued to participate in system-wide consultations and reviews of indicators under the auspices of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators, including discussions on options for indicators that are not yet clearly defined.

X. Dissemination of population information and data

45. The Population Division continued to strengthen its communications and outreach activities, collaborating closely with the Department of Global Communications and the Strategic Planning and Communications Service of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs in launching major publications and in publicizing major intergovernmental events. In line with the strategic communication framework of the Department, the Division further systematized its outreach activities by preparing key messages, media advisories, press releases and social media packages, including digital cards, infographics, tweets and Facebook posts.

²⁵ See United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, International Organization for Migration, and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, “SDG indicator 10.7.2”, Policy Brief, No. 2, December 2021.

²⁶ WHO and World Bank, *Tracking Universal Health Coverage: 2021 Global Monitoring Report*, conference ed. (2021).

46. During 2021, the Division continued the migration of its website²⁷ to a new Drupal platform. The new website (<https://www.un.org/development/desa/pd/>) allows for easier access from mobile devices, reduces the need for posting content on multiple locations, facilitates content management by non-technical staff and integrates the departmental visual ecosystem. The new website, which consolidates various older websites that had been developed in parallel, showcases the main activities and outputs of the Division through easily identifiable sections.²⁸ The migration, which remains under way, involves moving hundreds of publications, meetings and data sets to the new website location.

47. According to information obtained through Google Analytics, the websites maintained by the Division²⁹ had nearly 4.3 million page views in 2021, a decrease of 4 per cent compared with 2020. Several Division publications, including *World Population Prospects*, *International Migration Report*, *World Urbanization Prospects* and *World Cities*, continued to rank among the most accessed publications in the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, according to departmental download statistics. The outputs presenting the findings of the 2019 revision of *World Population Prospects*, including reports, data files in Excel and ASCII formats, an interactive database, figures and maps, as well as other supporting materials,³⁰ remained widely consulted in 2021.

48. Several agencies, funds and programmes of the United Nations system distribute data produced by the Division through their databases and websites. For example, the Division contributes to more than 80 of the 1,600 indicators in the World Development Indicators database of the World Bank, with a focus on population dynamics and population structures, fertility, contraception, mortality, migration and urbanization. The indicators were downloaded by up to 745,000 visitors in 2021, and 6 of them were among the top 15 most downloaded data.

49. The Division engaged in outreach activities in support of the commemoration of international days, in close collaboration with partner entities. In particular, it produced relevant materials in the context of International Day of Family Remittances (16 June), International Youth Day (12 August), World Contraception Day (26 September), the International Day of Older Persons (1 October) and International Migrants Day (18 December). To mark World Population Day 2021, the Division, in collaboration with UNFPA, organized a virtual webinar on 14 July 2021 to examine the potential impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on fertility. Population experts from various regions were invited to discuss the impact of the pandemic on, among others, fertility preferences and behaviours, the availability and use of family planning, teenage marriage and challenges in data collection.

50. Staff members of the Division participated in meetings of professional associations in the field of population, which provided a platform for the dissemination of the Division's work in academic circles. In 2021, staff organized or moderated sessions and gave presentations at, among others, the quadrennial International Population Conference of the International Union for the Scientific Study of Population, held virtually from 5 to 10 December 2021, and the annual meeting of the Population Association of America, held virtually from 5 to 8 May 2021.

51. The Division received many requests for data and provided such information in a timely manner. In 2021, it continued to meet with delegations of Member States to discuss various population-related topics, including the Division's estimates of and

²⁷ The old website location was www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/index.asp.

²⁸ The main sections include: CPD, GA, Themes, Events, Publications, Data and SDGs.

²⁹ See www.un.org/development/desa/pd/, <https://population.un.org/wpp/> and <https://population.un.org/wup/>.

³⁰ See <https://population.un.org/wpp/>.

projections for the global population, the work of the Commission on Population and Development, the follow-up to and review of the 2030 Agenda and the work of the United Nations in the area of migration. It also provided briefing notes and statements for senior officials of the United Nations.

XI. Technical cooperation

52. At the request of the national statistical office of Georgia, the Population Division provided technical assistance on subnational population estimates and projections. The Division advised on the methodological and technical issues confronted in producing those projections.

53. At the request of the national department of statistics of Colombia, the Division, jointly with ECLAC, held a national training workshop from 31 May to 4 June on the estimation of distributional national accounts by age (national transfer accounts). Colombia will begin to produce estimates of national transfer accounts as part of its official national statistical programme.

54. At the request of the National Population Council of Mexico, the Division held a virtual training workshop on the estimation of national transfer accounts for Mexico and their use for public policy. The workshop was held on 11 November in collaboration with ECLAC.

55. The Division held a series of online training workshops on evaluating the economic and fiscal impacts of population ageing using estimates from national transfer accounts. The workshops were held in November and December with the participation of five pilot countries using their most recent estimates of national transfer accounts: Cambodia, India, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, the Philippines and Thailand. The feedback received from the pilot countries is being used to revise the forthcoming training handbook on the topic.

56. The Division provided technical assistance in a training workshop on using national transfer accounts for policy advancement in the Asia-Pacific region. The online workshop was held from 5 to 7 October and organized by UNFPA, the Government of Indonesia and others. Twenty Member States participated in the training. Staff gave presentations on utilizing evidence from national transfer accounts for policy development and the contributions of the United Nations system to support countries in the estimation and use of national transfer accounts. Staff also participated in a round-table discussion to assess the successes and failures of national transfer accounts for policy planning.

57. At the request of the Guatemala office of UNFPA, a staff member from the Division met parliamentarians in Guatemala about the “demographic dividend” generated during a period particularly favourable to economic growth in which the population becomes concentrated in the working ages. The discussion focused on policies to accelerate and magnify those favourable economic effects through universal access to family planning; investment in health and education, especially girls; empowerment of women; and creation of governmental mechanisms for long-term analysis and planning. The meeting was held in Guatemala City on 21 October.

58. At the invitation of the Planning Institute of Jamaica, the Division participated virtually in the special meeting of the population thematic working group, held in Kingston on 2 June, and made a presentation entitled “Mainstreaming population into sustainable development”. The presentation focused on the importance of using adequate measurements of population and other demographic components in the context of monitoring various sustainable development indicators, among others. The

meeting was attended by more than 50 participants from various government offices and institutions within Jamaica.

59. As part of its contribution to the support of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs for the resident coordinator system and United Nations country teams, the Division provided input and reviewed several common country assessment reports (or regional reports), United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework proposals and other types of documents. On related matters, the Division contributed to the development of the Department's vision and strategy towards advancing the sustainable development of small island developing States and to a proposal for a Department-Development Coordination Office compact for resident coordinator support.

60. The Division released a set of Excel workbooks for the projection of different demographic components of population change, namely, the total fertility rate, life expectancy at birth and the net number of migrants.³¹ The workbooks allow users to generate different projection scenarios.

³¹ See www.un.org/development/desa/pd/content/templates-projecting-demographic-components-and-related-scenarios.

Annex

Publications, expert group meetings and other materials prepared or events organized by the Population Division (1 January–31 December 2021)

Expert group meetings

Expert group meeting on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on fertility, virtual meeting, New York, 10 and 11 May 2021

Expert group meeting on population and sustainable development, in particular, sustained and inclusive economic growth, virtual meeting, New York, 21 and 22 July 2021

Capacity development workshops

Virtual training workshop on the estimation of distributional national accounts by age for Colombia, 31 May to 4 June 2021

Virtual training workshop on the estimation of national transfer accounts for Mexico and their use for public policy, 11 November 2021

Online training workshops on evaluating the economic and fiscal impacts of population aging using estimates from national transfer accounts: Cambodia (11 November 2021); India (13 November 2021); Lao People's Democratic Republic (27 November 2021); the Philippines (18 November 2021); and Thailand (7 December 2021)

Reports of the Secretary-General and other parliamentary documents

Report of the Secretary-General on population, food security, nutrition and sustainable development ([E/CN.9/2021/2](#))

Report of the Secretary-General on programme implementation and progress of work in the field of population in 2020: Population Division, Department of Economic and Social Affairs ([E/CN.9/2021/5](#))

Databases and data sets

World Contraceptive Use 2021

Estimates and Projections of Family Planning Indicators 2021

World Population Policies 2021

Technical papers

“A sensitivity analysis of the projected median fertility trajectories in the World Population Prospects: towards a better understanding and reassessment of the Bayesian model” (Technical Paper, No. 2021/1)

“Ageing populations: we are living longer lives, but are we healthier?” (Technical Paper, No. 2021/2)

“Health sector challenges and policies in the context of ageing populations” (Technical Paper, No. 2021/3)

“World contraceptive use 2021: estimates and projections of family planning indicators 2021 – methodology report” (UN DESA/POP/2021/DC/No.1).

Policy briefs

“SDG Indicator 10.7.2: Number of countries with migration policies to facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people”

“*World Population Policies 2021: Policies on Fertility; Highlights* – Ten key messages” (forthcoming)

“54th session of the Commission on Population and Development – Ten key messages”

“Population, food security, nutrition and sustainable development”, UN/DESA Policy Brief, No. 102

Capacity development tools

Template for the projection of the total fertility rate (TFR): medium and other scenarios (UN DESA/POP/2021/DC/No.2).

Templates for the projection of the total net number of migrants (medium and other scenarios) and to derive the age and sex patterns of migration following Castro models (UN DESA/POP/2021/DC/No.3).

Template for the projection of life expectancy at birth (e0) by sex: medium and other scenarios (UN DESA/POP/2021/DC/No.4).
