



Check Against Delivery

Statement by

**Mr. Rogelio Fernandez-Castilla**  
Technical Support Division  
UNFPA

on the

Report of the Secretary-General on the Mid-Term Review of Population Programmes,  
Focusing on the Changing Age Structures of Populations  
and Their Implications for Development  
(E/CN.9/2007/4)

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Mr. Chairman,

Distinguished Delegates,

I am pleased to introduce the Report of the Secretary-General of the *Monitoring of Population Programmes, Focusing on the Changing Characteristics of Populations and Their Implications for Development* (E/SM/2007/13). The document has been prepared by the United Nations Population Fund in response to the *technical advisory work* programme of the Commission on Population and Development.

The Report examines the unprecedented transition of the world's population during the 21st century, from high to low levels of fertility and mortality and the social and economic implications which this scenario presents for development. The Report also describes the programmatic work of the United Nations Population Fund to assist countries in addressing the implications and challenges of changing age structures for the labour community and society.

Mr. Chairman, the current demographic situation is unique in that it encompasses both the largest youth and the largest elderly populations. While the numbers of children and youth were historically always large, the large numbers and proportion of older persons is a twentieth-century phenomenon. All countries are experiencing some change in their age structures, but since countries are at different stages of the demographic transition, the social and economic conditions, the change is more pronounced in some countries than in others. Developing countries continue to be characterized by higher levels of fertility and smaller numbers of older persons. Developed countries, on the other hand, have much older populations. Countries will need to respond to the new realities with appropriate policies and programmes to meet the needs of all age groups in society.

Mr. Chairman, UNFPA works to ensure that the needs of both young and old are met. The Fund has carried on extensive work to address the needs of young people. UNFPA has always released the institutional framework in *Action on Adolescents and Youth* draws on a vision of a world in which young people's rights are promoted and protected and in which girls and boys have opportunities to develop their full potential and live free from poverty, discrimination and violence.

At the policy level, UNFPA positions has the adolescent and young age group within the larger development context of poverty reduction. The Fund engages in policy dialogue, policy analysis and policy advocacy, including young people's issues in national development strategies, plans and processes of sector-wide approaches, poverty reduction strategies and Millennium Development Goals. UNFPA builds alliances and forges partnerships with governments, development partners, civil society, youth serving organizations and media for leveraging resources for young people, ensuring that they are most vulnerable and excluded. UNFPA also leverages the global focus on HIV/AIDS to place adolescent sexual and reproductive health issues on the policy table and the programming agenda.

At the programme level, UNFPA advocates for an essential package for social protection interventions for adolescents and youth comprising education, sexual and reproductive health services, and livelihood components. It promotes partnerships to ensure that health and non-health components such as basic education, vocational training and employment receive due policy and programme attention.

UNFPA is also engaged in a number of activities at global, regional and country levels designed to address population ageing issues. The Fund's strategic focus in this area is to influence policy to respond to the challenges posed by the social, health and economic consequences of population ageing and to meet the needs of older persons, with particular emphasis on the poor, especially women. The elderly can no longer be ignored. The many contributions of older persons to the family, community and society must be actively recognized and promoted. In many parts of the world, older women who are already living in difficult financial circumstances, are assuming the responsibility of taking care of adult children living with HIV/AIDS and orphaned grandchildren.

UNFPA facilitates policy dialogue to address the implications of population ageing among all stakeholders, advocates for the mainstreaming of ageing issues into national development frameworks and poverty reduction strategies, and provides technical assistance, data, research and institutional capacity for formulating, implementing, monitoring and evaluating population ageing policies and programmes.

UNFPA supports national policy and programme interventions in the following important areas: eradicating poverty, ensuring economic security and social dignity, promoting active ageing, ensuring equal access to health and social services, and eliminating discrimination, violence and abuse of the elderly. UNFPA collaborates with the International Institute on Ageing (IiA) in Malta to train policy makers and build institutional capacity in the area of population ageing. UNFPA encourages its Country Offices to support and implement the United Nations International Year of Ageing.

Mr. Chairman, meeting the challenges of both young and old requires advocacy work to ensure that young people as well as older persons are included in the development process. Our goal should be a society for all ages - one in which no age group is left behind or mainstream.

Thank you.