

UN Commission on Population and Development 50th session

Changing population age structures and sustainable development

Panel discussion: Implementation of the Programme of Action of the ICPD, with emphasis on changing age structures and sustainable development

Speaking Notes

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1. These notes summarize the basic concepts that I would like to share with participants at the event during the panel discussion. They do not represent a direct and complete transcript of

what I intend to say, but a general overview of the main points.

2. I will focus my intervention in the area where I believe my experience gives me more space to contribute to a constructive debate: the links between population ageing, labor markets, and

social protection systems.

3. Much has been written and discussed about the Demographic Dividend and the opportunities that this process brings to economic development. However, I think it is very important for policy makers and analysts to understand that the demographic dividend is just an opportunity, which may or may not be turned into growth by societies. This depends, among other critical issues, on their human capital dotation (i.e., on the coverage and quality of their education systems), female labor force participation (particularly, if they are employed in higher

no single solution to this challenge, we have a few principles that should be followed: First

retirement should be a right, not an obligation, for workers that are not able to continue their participation in the labor market. That implies that retirement rules should be more flexible than they currently are, offer incentives for workers to remain in the labor force, and provide adequate protection to all. Second, labor force participation should be as close as universal as possible, for individuals that have completed their education and until retirement. This implies creating opportunities for all, and particularly for women, eliminated discriminatory practices in

cases women are forced to stay at home as they don't have a reasonable alternative care provider. Third, as in any case we can expect to see a decline in the absolute number of workers in the next few decades, it is critical that these workers have the highest possible productivity