



UNITED NATIONS



ECLAC Ad Hoc Committee on  
Population and Development  
**ECUADOR 2012**

Distr.  
LIMITED

LC/L.3481(CEP.2/5)  
30 May 2012

ENGLISH  
ORIGINAL: SPANISH

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Meeting of the ECLAC Ad Hoc Committee  
on Population and Development

Quito, 4-6 July 2012

**REFLECTIONS ON THE POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT AGENDA  
FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN BEYOND 2014**

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## A. INTRODUCTION

In resolution 65/234 on follow-up to the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) beyond 2014, adopted on 5 April 2011, the United Nations General Assembly noted that considerable gaps still exist in implementation of different areas of the Programme of Action of the International Conference. It also acknowledged that while many Governments may not meet all the goals and objectives of the Programme of Action by 2014 they should remain valid beyond 2014. The General Assembly therefore decided to extend the Programme of Action and the key actions for its further implementation beyond 2014 and ensure its follow-up in order to fully meet its goals and objectives.

The resolution provides that there will be no renegotiation of agreements contained in the Programme of Action and stresses the importance of protecting the achievements of the International Conference. It acknowledges the need to review the Programme of Action in order to respond to new challenges relevant to population and development and reinforce the integration of the population and development agenda in global processes related to development.

As part of the review process for beyond 2014, the resolution calls upon the United Nations Population Fund, in cooperation with all relevant organizations of the United Nations system and other international organizations, as well as institutions and experts, to undertake an operational review of the implementation of the Programme of Action on the basis of the highest-quality data and an analysis of progress on population and development, taking into account the need for a systematic, comprehensive and integrated approach to population and development issues.

In consultation with key organizations and institutions involved in the review, including the Population Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations, the regional commissions, other relevant organizations of the United Nations system and civil society organizations, it was decided that the operational review will be based on a methodology with a participatory approach, taking into consideration the contributions of all of the actors in terms of existing data, indicators and activities that can further the review of the Programme of Action.

This approach seeks the most accurate assessment possible of the current status of the countries in the area of population and development, by identifying and the challenges and opportunities for speeding up implementation of the Cairo Programme of Action. It also seeks to generate input for discussing, implementing and monitoring population and development policies and programmes in the framework of a revised Programme of Action beyond 2014, encompassing emerging issues, success stories and lessons learned in this area.

The fact that the Programme of Action of the International Conference was a global agreement did indeed raise its profile and impact. But this global approach drew some attention away from particular regional and national realities, such as inequality (social, gender and ethnic), heterogeneity and weak institutions in the case of Latin America and the Caribbean. These issues were to a certain extent taken up in the Latin American and Caribbean Regional Plan of Action on Population and Development. Many of these remain unresolved and should be part of any regional action agenda in this sphere. Specifically, the overarching problem that characterizes the region —inequality— must be addressed in all of the thematic areas because it shapes the population behaviors and demographic patterns that perpetuate social inequality.

The drafting of this report was informed by the lessons learned during implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development in the region and the Latin American and Caribbean Regional Plan of Action on Population and Development, economic and social development trends, current international cooperation priorities and Latin American and Caribbean socioeconomic, cultural and political specificities.<sup>1</sup> It sets out reflections for devising a population and development agenda for the region beyond 2014. In so doing, the report spotlights some of the region's cross-cutting population and development issues and identifies factors to be weighed when devising agreements, goals, policies and mechanisms for following up on the agenda.

The report is consistent with the idea that it is necessary, on the one hand, to strengthen and broaden the population and development agenda in order to tackle the new challenges looming on the horizon for the region and, on the other, to further incorporate population variables into economic and social development policies and programmes and to improve governance in general. To that end it puts forward diagnostic tools for identifying immediate priorities and tentatively explores future scenarios.

## **B. THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME OF ACTION: A PARADIGM SHIFT WITH STRENGTHS AND GAPS**

Within the framework of a decade marked by various such international events, the ICPD was a global milestone. In its resolutions, which took the form of the ICPD Programme of Action, almost all the relevant aspects of the relationship between population and development were addressed, which is reflected in the range of topics covered in its chapters. The focus of international cooperation for population activities on the sexual and reproductive health component of the ICPD Programme of Action, together with the impetus provided by other global forums (including the Fourth World Conference on Women: Action for Equality, Development and Peace (Beijing, 1995) and the resulting Platform for Action and the mandate of the World Health Organization (WHO) and Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) in relation to maternal health) contributed to ensuring that sexual and reproductive health was incorporated fully into the global agenda and into the agendas of many countries, and this has made it possible for significant progress to be made in this area. In Latin America and the Caribbean, that progress was recorded in the five-yearly progress reports on the ICPD Programme of Action published in 1999, 2004 and 2009.

Concentration on this area has not prevented progress from being made in relation to various other components of the ICPD Programme of Action, albeit largely on account of a fortuitous combination of factors, including the existence of other agendas and stakeholders interested in these areas. This is what occurred with regard to three population groups: children, with the Convention on the Rights of the Child; young persons, with the Ibero-American Convention on the Rights of Youth; and older persons and the issues associated with an ageing population, with the Madrid International Plan of

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<sup>1</sup> This report is a contribution to the review of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development. It is a revised version of the document entitled *Input for the preparation of a regional agenda for the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development: towards 2014 and beyond* (LC/L.3219, CEP.2010/4) prepared by ECLAC with the support of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). The report was submitted at the meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee on Population and Development of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean held at ECLAC headquarters in Santiago in May 2010 and was taken as analytical input for a future population agenda.

Action on Ageing and the current regional initiative to establish an international convention on the rights of older persons.

Other components, however, in particular those that are more limited to the realm of population and development, face a more complex situation. Despite efforts and progress made in implementing the recommendation to fully consider population factors in development planning, they have clearly fallen short of desires and expectations. Among other things, this might be because the objective is such a complex one and the national institutions that could coordinate population policy with planning and public policy are weak. That weakness has recently been exacerbated by the planning crisis, the shrinking of the State and the lack of stakeholder support. Moreover, as fertility rates began to decline rapidly in the region, donor interest dropped and public and private institutions working on population issues lost funding. They became less of a priority only because average fertility rates did not reflect gaps in progress across the region and among population groups. A case in point is the still-high fertility rates among disadvantaged groups and adolescents (especially among adolescents living in poverty). Funding for data gathering, training, research and support for policymaking have also declined since 1994. Because of these limitations, demographic research has continued at just a handful of strong autonomous academic institutions in the region, so the overall impact of such research on national policy in the region is well short of its potential.

ICPD represented a clear paradigm shift from the idea of setting demographic goals to further development to a broader concept of the relationship between population and development that starts to incorporate a rights perspective. The important legacy and fundamental spirit of this paradigm shift are destined to last and develop. However, the future population agenda must take into consideration the emerging historical context (undoubtedly different from the context that prevailed in 1994) and take on the challenges arising as a result of the implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action. Three of those challenges are particularly noteworthy: (i) identify remaining gaps and new goals in relation to sexual and reproductive health and gender equality in order to consolidate and deepen the progress achieved in these crucial domains; (ii) consider the progress made on the agendas of other major issues that are linked to population (such as older persons and ageing, the status of migrant persons and international migration) and seek to coordinate those agendas with the global, overarching population agenda; and (iii) make effective progress in an area that has been neglected, namely the integration of population factors into development plans, policies and programmes, which can be achieved with the collaboration of other actors involved in international cooperation that have recognized the benefits of this integration, including the financial institutions that support global and regional development.

## **C. CHANGES IN CONTEXT**

### **1. Factoring in changes in the development context**

Critical changes in the global policy framework will have to be considered explicitly by international development agencies in future efforts to integrate population factors into development planning, as well as in national and local planning efforts. A few of these major contextual determinants are mentioned here by way of illustration.

**(a) Globalization**

A mandatory topic in this connection is how the intensive globalization of economic processes and cultural patterns is impacting sociodemographic dynamics and outcomes. Increased trade, supported by falling transportation costs and improved communication channels, has been a growing driving force in economic globalization. Free trade is assumed to propitiate a more efficient allocation of resources, with all countries involved benefiting from lower prices, more employment, higher output and a higher standard of living. Capital flows, together with technology transfer and migration, are having increasing impacts on labour markets and are indirectly affecting the lives of most of the Earth's inhabitants. Despite hopes that globalization would bring rising wealth for all, advances have so far been unstable and uneven across countries and among their territories and communities. The high volatility of capital flows constitutes a potentially disruptive menace for the countries of the region; specializing in the export of raw materials means low participation in value chains. It has become easier to spread ideas and images, and the influence of the dominant cultural messages is being felt more quickly and rapidly changes people's behaviour, although it can also provoke more intense adverse reactions. In addition, the globalization of expectations of consumption and standard of living of developed countries significantly increases consumption per capita and multiplies the economic, sociocultural and environmental effects of the population dynamic.

From a population and development standpoint, the most critical issue undoubtedly involves the impacts of globalization on population displacements, especially international movements. For Latin America and the Caribbean, this is a key issue given the economic, sociocultural and demographic impact of emigration to developed countries and the potential that migration flows between Latin American countries hold. Beyond the debate and the legitimate political disagreements over the causes and consequences of these movements, there is no denying that there are barriers to mobility and that large communities of Latin Americans are forming abroad, many of whom maintain links with their countries of origin, require support from them and in many ways, not only by returning, can contribute to their development. This calls for more effective policies that would reduce the disadvantages (for instance, brain drain) and enhance the advantages (for instance, development impacts of remittances) of such movements. And it is essential to safeguard the human rights of migrant persons. In times of crisis like now, they are at even more risk of being unprotected; reality has shown that they are the hardest hit by unemployment and loss of income.

Within countries, the effects of globalization on the spatial distribution of economic activities lead to the redistribution of population over the national territory and especially to a greater concentration in those areas that are able to compete more effectively in the global economic framework. Much could and should be done from a demographic perspective to help plan ahead for changes in population distribution by leveraging the benefits of the resulting urban growth and by meeting the needs of rural areas and small cities and promoting their potential, especially with regard to the social and sustainable use of space. In Latin America and the Caribbean this is particularly important because the region is so highly urbanized and because of the deficiencies and inequalities found in its cities. Moreover, the incidence of disasters impacting the region has been on the rise over the past four decades, making it second only to Asia as the region with the highest yearly average of disasters. More than 80% of the disasters reported by national sources are in urban areas where the most disadvantaged segments of the population live.

**(b) Decentralization**

Another recent conditioner of public policy is decentralization —the transfer of authority and responsibility for public functions from the central government to intermediate and local governments or to quasi-independent government organizations or the private sector, or both. In theory, decentralization helps streamline complex bureaucratic procedures, increase government officials' sensitivity to local conditions and needs, and allow greater political representation for diverse groups. Decentralization helps to coordinate national, state, provincial, district, and local programmes more effectively. Effective national development and poverty alleviation can hinge on improved subnational growth and service delivery. Achieving these objectives requires overcoming economic and social disparities across regions, and among urban and rural areas. In Latin America, decentralization was an essential part of the democratization process during the historical period in which several autocratic regimes were replaced by elected governments operating under new constitutions.

Decentralization is not a panacea, however. An appropriate balance of centralization and decentralization is required for the effective and efficient functioning of government. Not all functions can or should be financed and managed in a decentralized fashion. Moreover, for decentralization to work, there must be both a minimum of technical capacity grounded in good information and human resources as well as a system of accountability. The community must have public and transparent information that enables it to effectively monitor the performance of the local government and react appropriately to that performance so that politicians and local officials are in fact responsive. Weak administrative or technical capacity at local levels may result in services being delivered less efficiently and effectively in some areas of the country. Lack of transparency or effective monitoring can compound corruption and inefficiency. The demographic domain has long held promise for the improvement of local access to updated information. CELADE-Population Division of ECLAC has provided valuable innovative tools that allow analysis of updated information at the local level, with subsequent improvements in governance. However, support for decentralized access to and use of information and knowledge for planning purposes needs to be improved and generalized. The use of information for planning purposes needs to be supported through didactical approaches and national capacity building to leverage census data.

**(c) Priorities and direct action on poverty**

In 2000, world leaders adopted the Millennium Development Declaration, a historic commitment to eradicate extreme poverty and improve the health and welfare of the world's poorest people within 15 years, from which arose the Millennium Development Goals. Governments have had to act on this commitment and try to achieve the goals that were established. In Latin America and the Caribbean the main innovation in social policy on poverty has been the introduction of conditional cash transfer programmes, which have a direct poverty reduction impact. Beyond the discussion on the sustainability, coverage, design problems and potential side effects of these programmes, their very existence indicates a political will and an innovative programmatic framework that opens up new avenues for incorporating population variables into policymaking.

**(d) Sustainable development and climate change**

Another critical issue that merits close attention but received only perfunctory consideration at ICPD —probably because it had been the subject of an even larger and more publicized international conference only two days earlier— is the issue of sustainable development. Although this topic is the subject of the Programme of Action's first substantive chapter, the discussion has been largely restricted to

repeating the injunction that population factors should be integrated into environmental concerns. Since then, the environmental agenda has come to the forefront of international interest. In particular, the threats to humankind posed by climate change have been documented; this has led to the resurgence of concern over the two-way relationship between population dynamics and climate change factors and the role of population dynamics in delimiting and reducing vulnerabilities. Many questions remain as to the mitigation and adaptation potential of demographic measures. Any future discussion of the relationship between population and development must pay close attention to the links between population dynamics and patterns and the probable origins and consequences of this global change. Specifically, it is essential to monitor the outcomes of the upcoming United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20).

**(e) Improving capacity, techniques and knowledge for using sociodemographic data**

Better and more up-to-date sociodemographic information for planning is now available. Moreover, the possibilities for a wide range of private actors, non-governmental stakeholders, academics and members of the community to access this information have increased considerably. This is referred to as the “democratization of information”. Similarly, there has been exponential growth in the technologies, procedures and methodologies for processing and using that information for policy purposes, which represents a significant increase in the possibilities for using population data and studies.

Providing countries with technical and financial support for data collection and analysis that assists them in identifying opportunities and challenges posed by demographic transformations is an important starting point that calls for redoubled attention from international donors and national entities in the post-ICPD period.

## **2. Redefining population and development**

**(a) Demographic transition**

The demographic transition has been under way since 1994, blurring the lines between some of the classic subjects of debate relating to population and development (especially the idea that rapid demographic growth is an obstacle to economic and social development), others have merged, and new issues have arisen. It is argued below that these demographic changes should influence the selection of the issues to be included in the population agenda in the coming decades.

There is, however, a consensus on the importance of two emerging phenomena resulting from demographic transition: the change in the age structure (with the consequent increase in the proportion of adolescents and young persons, the working-age population and older persons) and the drop in fertility rates to below replacement level, which is worrying both in terms of reproductive rights and in terms of its potential socioeconomic consequences in the long term.

In this scenario, the generational focus of the debate on population and development is shifting, which will have a number of significant effects on social policy and dynamics. One of those effects is the demographic dividend, which occurs both when the base of the pyramid narrows and when the proportion of persons of intermediate age (working age) increases. The demographic dividend also yields a “gender dividend” as more women participate in the labour force, facilitated by the drop in fertility, which has enabled the relationship between population and development to be viewed from a very different perspective in terms of opportunities compared with a couple of decades ago. In addition, the visibility of



adolescents and young persons as a social group has been growing. In Latin America and the Caribbean, this age group is usually viewed in a negative light because of the problems associated with it (for example, violence, addiction, unemployment and unwanted pregnancy), which overshadow its contribution and strategic importance for development. The need to guarantee the rights of adolescents and young persons is therefore often overlooked. The gradual increase in the older adult population is one of the characteristics that will mark the future of the region. Furthermore, even though children are becoming a smaller demographic group because of these shifts, they are moving up the policy agenda as the idea that the first years of life are vital for the future gains ground and there is a move towards reinvesting in this age group the additional resources that become available because of the narrowing of the pyramid.

**(b) Revaluating public-sector planning and action in relation to economic development**

The emphasis on minimizing the role of the State seen in the 1980s and much of the 1990s has waned and given way to renewed efforts, starting in the 2000s, to make governments more effective and to recognize their important role in investment, finance, human capital formation, technology acquisition and the promotion of policy and institutional reforms. This is happening not only at the national level, but also at the subnational level where the impacts of population dynamics tend to be amplified. For that reason, local governments have been active agents in revaluating the use of sociodemographic knowledge and information to promote socioeconomic development at the local level.

This has opened up an important opportunity for fuller integration of population factors into development planning. Experience has shown that integration strongly enhances the ability of decision-makers in both the public (national and subnational) and private sectors to foresee and monitor changes in the magnitude and characteristics of demand for goods and services and to identify policy options in light of changing scenarios. In particular, opportunities for the use of demographic inputs in the formulation, implementation and monitoring of social policy have been amplified, as illustrated in a later section.

But revaluating the role of the State does not guarantee recovery of lost opportunities. The obvious weakening of the institutions charged with population issues poses a continuing challenge for regaining lost ground and building new institutions to make it possible to take strategic advantage of the links between population and development.

**(c) The methods applied to incorporate sociodemographic inputs into planning, management and decision-making: a small but encouraging step forward**

The progress made in understanding the determinants and consequences of population variables, technical advances in relation to the availability of, and capacity for processing, sociodemographic data, the development of concepts and methodologies for analysing this information and the growing demand for specialized information for policymaking and for national and subnational governance created an environment conducive to expanding the use of this information to, among other activities: (i) tailor interventions to the size and sociodemographic profiles of the target population of programmes; (ii) localize investments and facilities in accordance with sociodemographic requirements; (iii) identify the areas and population groups most in need and prioritize accordingly; (iv) evaluate the results of the action; and (v) facilitate the external monitoring of public programmes by academic institutions and the community. Special mention should be made of the growing use of data and specialized knowledge on population at the local government level, the effects of which were amplified by the decentralization process mentioned above. Latin America has been a pioneer in this field, in particular with regard to accessing and processing census microdata and the drafting of local development and land-use plans with a population focus. In this

new scenario, population studies should be recognized as an applied discipline and its specialists as professionals capable of making a larger contribution to the development of their countries.

The potential benefits of considering population factors in development plans and policies have been demonstrated, but are far from being fully exploited. Regaining lost ground and integrating population factors in the development process will therefore remain a priority.

**(d) Repositioning the State in relation to social issues**

Reevaluating State action has not been limited to macroeconomics and microeconomics; it has also included the State's role as guarantor of human rights (including economic, social and cultural rights), equal social opportunities, the sustained reduction in social and gender inequality and greater protection against new and old risks (some of which are linked to the population dynamic) faced by humanity.

Following the wave of privatization, which was particularly intense in the region during the 1980s and 1990s, it became evident that free interaction of market forces had many limits from a social perspective. It was not the appropriate instrument for resolving existing social debts, such as poverty, and, above all, inequality, which tend to get worse in deregulated markets. Difficulties were encountered in progressing towards internationally agreed social goals, including universalizing the provision of basic services and decreasing gender inequality, as well as reducing poverty and socioeconomic inequality. In addition, no protection was afforded to a significant proportion of the population, in particular the groups with fewer resources, at a time when social risks were taking on new forms, some associated with demographic change (for example, ageing).

Countries framed various responses, including strengthening the role of the State in the deployment of programmes and measures, providing financial support and increasing regulatory capacity. In Latin America and the Caribbean, the main innovation in social policy with regard to poverty was the introduction of conditional transfer programmes. The design of these programmes took account of sociodemographic information and knowledge, and their terms and conditions have implications in the field. The boost given to the provision of basic services has also made it necessary to identify, characterize and project needs, for which it is essential to take careful account of sociodemographic information and knowledge. Providing protection against social risks has led to some very innovative and strategic responses on the part of various Governments in the region. In general, the idea that the life cycle is key to understanding the risks that are relevant to each individual has gained acceptance, and some countries have begun to prepare early responses to the inexorable challenge resulting from demographic change: the ageing of the population.

The integration of population factors into social policies has fallen short of its potential, and the immediate challenge is to increase and improve that integration. The report of the fifteenth anniversary of the ICPD outlined areas of action to that end and emphasized the need for conditional transfer programmes to include more specialized and up-to-date sociodemographic knowledge on the links between population and poverty. It further underlined the need for the social protection systems currently under construction to take into account the basic parameters of population trends (which should ideally be disaggregated by socioeconomic group), in terms of age composition, life expectancy and size of the family support network.

## **D. THE POPULATION AGENDA FOR THE COMING DECADES: SOME PROMINENT ISSUES**

### **1. Promoting fuller integration of population issues in development planning, policies and programmes**

In practical terms, where should one start in attempting to more fully integrate population factors into development planning? It has long been accepted that public policies have two interfaces with population dynamics. On the one hand, most countries attempt to directly influence changes in demographic variables, through efforts to lower or increase fertility, reduce mortality and morbidity in given population groups, or alter population distribution patterns. On the other, the evolution of different patterns of demographic dynamics has significant implications for economic, social and political processes. Knowledge and understanding of demographic trends, as well as their determinants and consequences, are crucial in recognizing and acting upon the specific needs, opportunities and challenges that changes in demographic behaviour generate in a given society.

#### **(a) Scenario-building**

The main contribution of the population field in this connection comes principally from its capacity to anticipate trends, take a long-term view and construct long-range scenarios. Analyses that provide concrete results for economic, social and environmental planning in both the public and private sectors include those concerning the probable evolution of the size and growth rates of different population groups, spatial distribution patterns, age and sex composition, international migration and socioeconomic structure. The interaction of these trends is what ultimately determines the size and distribution of markets for goods and services which, in turn, condition the dynamics of current economic processes. It is in this complex context of open economies, with internally differentiated demographic dynamics, that scenario-building and policy articulation acquire greater significance. The inertial component of demographic trends lends them a predictability beyond that normally available in the social sciences. Hence, they provide key input for the crucial decisions that countries now face on issues such as how to take best advantage of the demographic dividend available to most of the countries of the region, how to best address population ageing and concomitant issues like rising health expenditure, the shift in the care structure of the population and the status of pension systems. Demographic scenarios therefore constitute a necessary starting point for any attempt to assess medium- and long-range perspectives and thus determine how to adapt to, or respond to, social change.

#### **(b) Incorporating population factors into development policies and programmes as a matter of course**

Population factors should be integrated into development policies and programmes as a matter of course. Although this is less ambitious than the traditional approach in which population inputs are the building blocks of development policies and programmes, it is a necessity in many areas and at many levels. Sociodemographic information and knowledge should be taken into account to ensure that better decisions are reached both when setting and allocating the national budget and when local governments choose the location of community facilities. In some cases, this practice is already established, even if only in a very basic sense. One example among many is the territorial distribution of public resources according to the number of persons recorded by the census or subnational population projections. Nevertheless, population variables are still often not incorporated into the decision-making process. The challenge is therefore to make the practice of integrating these variables more widespread. The situation

has improved, and a significant proportion of the necessary elements are now available (for example, access to information, technology, procedures and methodologies, and expertise). However, more progress needs to be made in terms of raising awareness of this need among decision-makers in both political and technical fields and in terms of targeted training for professional and technical staff in charge of planning (in addition to the requisite general training in demographics) to ensure that population variables are incorporated into public (and private) governance as a matter of course and that available expertise is leveraged.

## **2. Some emerging issues**

Research since ICPD has unveiled important trends in demographic dynamics that present significant societal challenges as well as clear opportunities for the improvement of social and economic policy. A partial list of contemporary issues is given below.

- (i) The evolution of family structure. This encompasses a variety of issues running from new challenges in the articulation of gender roles in production and reproduction to the social significance of new family forms, as well as the growth of single-person households.
- (ii) A changing age structure. There is increasing awareness of the potential advantages of the demographic dividend but, in general, there are no policies geared towards harnessing them. The multifaceted challenges of a rapidly ageing population throughout the region are still incompletely understood. Health and education policies need to be rapidly adapted to the needs of the emerging population pyramid. Social security issues and care needs are becoming more and more dramatic in many countries of the region and require more direct support in the form of a better understanding of the role of demographic dynamics. As the epidemiological transition progresses, chronic and degenerative diseases will account for a growing proportion of care needs.
- (iii) The urban transition. The precocious urban transition experienced by Latin America and the Caribbean, in comparison with other developing regions, could signify important economic, social and environmental advantages if proactive stances were taken in relation to the social and sustainable use of urban space and to planning for the land and housing needs of the poor. Specific policies, supported by demographic research, are needed to reduce segregation and vulnerability, including vulnerability to climate change. At the same time, more innovative and effective policies are needed in order to address the needs of rural populations.
- (iv) Disaster risk reduction. The population and development perspective should also be incorporated into disaster risk management and in preparedness for and response to humanitarian emergencies associated with climate change, natural disasters or periods of social or political instability. Such situations often force the population into internal displacement or migration, so the demographic dimension of these emerging issues must be taken into account for needs assessment, policymaking and other purposes and to guarantee support for and protection of migrant and displaced persons and refugees.

### **3. Sexual and reproductive health, sexual and reproductive rights, poverty and inequality**

Despite the focus on sexual and reproductive health and gender issues in the post-ICPD period, important gaps remain in relation to both. Indeed, recent cut-backs in funding for reproductive health services, including access to family planning, have been highlighted, and their impact on the persistence of considerable unwanted fertility has been condemned. From a rights viewpoint, inequality in terms of fulfilling reproductive expectations and access to the means necessary to fulfil them shall remain a central issue. The debate on the implications of sexual and reproductive rights is far from over and could even become more intense in the future and be included as a separate issue in the future population agenda. Demographic research is instrumental in assessing the lags in a right-based approach to sexual and reproductive health in specific categories, in monitoring the translation of formal commitments into practices and services, and in identifying and measuring unequal access to sexual and reproductive health services among adolescents, the persistence of unmet demand for family planning and high maternal and infant mortality, and the high levels of unsafe abortion. Such research also supports more integrated and coordinated responses in the domain of HIV/AIDs. The post-ICPD period will have to focus on these issues, in particular in Latin America and the Caribbean where advances in health and reproductive rights are under constant threat from national and international actors who campaign against them on ideological grounds.

From the point of view of the links to the development process, access to quality reproductive health at the individual level brings great benefits to the formation of human capital and, thereby, to any given country's prospects for competitiveness in a globalized framework. It is also important to highlight the fact that women's decisions on labour force participation remain contingent upon the number and spacing of children. These and other highly positive impacts of interventions to promote sexual and reproductive health and women's empowerment must continue to be emphasized and spur even more effective efforts in these domains.

However, in trying to advance this agenda, it is crucial to understand that development itself would greatly advance efforts to reduce persisting gaps and that much more can be done from a population perspective to promote that development. At the same time, interventions arising from ICPD in the areas of sexual and reproductive health and gender encompass only a relatively small segment of the potentialities highlighted by the Programme of Action in the population and development domain. An underlying institutional apprehension that may have impeded further expansion of the agenda appears to have been the fear that focusing greater attention on the other issues of this broad domain would weaken the resource base and political support for reproductive health issues and women's empowerment. Any such a concern could be allayed by observation of a historical fact: advances in the promotion of family planning (initially) and reproductive health (post-ICPD) have always been supported and legitimized by other population and development efforts, such as support for data generation, training, research and policymaking.

In brief, focusing on the explicit integration of population factors into development planning generates a win-win situation, both from the standpoint of the potential impact on efforts to reduce poverty and inequality and in terms of strengthening the institutional ability to pursue the ICPD goals in the reproductive health and gender areas. In addition to furthering attainment of ICPD goals in these areas, integration can also have a forceful development impact, above all by addressing the acute and persistent poverty and inequality that plague Latin America and the Caribbean. For the United Nations system, any achievements in this sphere will offer an opportunity to focus even more on development and will, by yielding practical outcomes, justify the existence and continuation of international cooperation in the area of population.

#### **4. Gender**

Advances in relation to asymmetric gender relations and to the best ways to exploit the gender dividend require evidence-based policy. The same is true with regard to the improvement and enforcement of legislation on violence against women. Demographic data and research make key contributions in support of this work.

Given the breadth of existing gender imbalances as well as the prevailing institutional concerns of international cooperation agencies at the time of ICPD, gender concerns have understandably focused on women rather than on an integrated gender agenda. Consequently, “reverse inequalities”, such as those observed in education and health, or topics such as the much higher mortality risks due to violence among young males, or domestic and sexual violence against men and boys, have not been given priority treatment. Such concerns should therefore occupy a prominent place on the future population agenda, without detracting from the central focus on the disadvantaged situation of women in the region.

### **E. CONSIDERATIONS FOR NEW AGREEMENTS, GOALS AND POLICIES, AND A FOLLOW-UP MECHANISM FOR THE FUTURE POPULATION AGENDA**

#### **1. The scope of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the population agenda beyond 2014**

The ICPD Programme of Action addresses almost all the relevant aspects of the relationship between population and development, which is reflected in the wide range of the themes covered in its chapters. However, some issues that were less conspicuous in 1994, for example, climate change, disaster mitigation, preparedness for and humanitarian response to catastrophes and crises, and below-replacement fertility levels, should be included in the agenda. In any case, the thematic scope of the ICPD Programme of Action means that it can be used as a springboard for planning the population agenda beyond 2014. Its specific content should be updated in accordance with the substantive proposals set forth in this document.

#### **2. The focus of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development**

As discussed in detail herein, the thematic diversity of the ICPD Programme of Action did not mean that all subjects received equal coverage. The focus of international cooperation linked to population on the sexual and reproductive health component of the ICPD Programme of Action has helped ensure full incorporation of this issue into the global agenda and into national agendas and has made it possible for significant progress to be made in this area. In Latin America and the Caribbean, that progress was recorded in the five-yearly progress reports on the ICPD Programme of Action published in 1999, 2004 and 2009. The evidence suggests that resolute political will, robust financial backing and specific and tangible goals are vital for fulfilling the population agenda. Those reports also show that the progress achieved is not guaranteed and that unwavering political will is needed if it is to continue. With regard to the work to be carried out in relation to population beyond 2014, it is important to ensure that focusing on one item on the agenda does not lead to the neglect of others and to expect priorities to shift once the most urgent matter has been addressed. There is no question that appropriately developing the rights perspective across all spheres of population and development would help keep issues from falling off the agenda, as would recognizing that the countries should be held to their commitments.

### **3. The individual weight of certain items on the population agenda and the option of addressing them separately**

Some specifically sectoral subjects (such as health), intersectoral subjects (such as poverty and the environment), those linked to specific population groups (women, older persons or indigenous children, for example) or highly compelling causes (gender issues and international migration) have emerged as autonomous issues over the last few decades and have received special attention from international cooperation agencies and national actors. The interest that these issues have generated among international, national and local stakeholders has resulted in important progress being made, as recorded in the five-yearly progress reports on the ICPD Programme of Action. The future population agenda should take these issues into account and specify a way in which they can be included without limiting their potential and which promotes synergies.

### **4. Identifying deficiencies and establishing a new focus for population specialists: integrating population factors in development policies**

One important goal of the ICPD that was not addressed immediately was the long-sought, but elusive incorporation of population variables into development policies. The detailed and rich discussion of this point herein indicates that the lessons learned in relation to integrating population factors into development planning point to a need to recover a strategic base and establish new institutions in accordance with the needs of a modern State and a more demanding civil society. The arguments in favour of this are solid and the support for integration has increased because of the reevaluation of development planning and the growing recognition of the capability to anticipate long-term population scenarios. However, those arguments need to be convincing in order to win over the political and technical decision-makers who define the economic and social development plans. There is a need to build on the progress already made with regard to the practical incorporation of sociodemographic information and knowledge into public (and private) governance with a view to making it a standard practice at the institutional level. This calls for awareness on the part of authorities and technical experts, standardized procedures and techniques, ongoing and targeted training of planning professionals and technical experts for including population issues in public (and private) governance as a matter of course and drawing on the stock of accumulated experience.

### **5. Meeting the commitments of the future population agenda**

Seeking an effective consensus will be a key component of the strategy beyond 2014, and the first step is to recognize that the exercise requires a coherent synthesis, which should, as far as possible, satisfy all stakeholders. This will be difficult in many ways since not only economic interests, but also world views clash in population issues. Therefore, it is vital to develop a lobbying strategy that is aimed not only at decision-makers and technical experts, but also public opinion and opinion makers. The human rights perspective offers an important point of departure for achieving the necessary agreements because it creates obligations that must be met, but alone cannot offer any guarantees.

## **6. Institutional elements and policies in the post-2014 scenario**

At this precise moment, the concentration of international efforts on the Millennium Development Goals is imposing a hegemonic quantitative model as the standard procedure for implementing international agreements. Establishing quantitative goals has become the accepted way of setting objectives and measuring progress. This method is obviously at odds with the content of the ICPD Programme of Action, which is more analytical and sets forth proposals with little in the way of precise quantitative goals and deadlines for monitoring and assessing implementation. This virtual absence of goals for monitoring progress is associated, at least in part, with a new guiding principle of ICPD and its Programme of Action: explicit rejection of demographic goals, particularly with regard to growth, fertility, family planning and migration, because they run the risk of incentivizing interventions that could be coercive or threaten inalienable individual rights.

An emblematic example of this aversion to goals in the ICPD Programme of Action is chapter VII on reproductive rights and reproductive health. In line with the abovementioned principle, despite the importance of this chapter, it did not include the operationalization (that is to say, no indicators were specified) of the definitions of reproductive health, reproductive health care or reproductive rights. Nor did it include quantitative goals or a time line for implementation, with the exception of a call to achieve universal access by 2015. These ambiguities, as well as other factors, played a decisive role when, at the Millennium Summit in 2000, the economic and social development agenda of the United Nations was operationalized in the form of the Millennium Development Goals, which are almost all associated with quantitative goals, with time lines for implementation and follow-up mechanisms. This marked a change of approach that is still in use today and that initially excluded sexual and reproductive health from its list of issues. Only in 2005 was the issue included, and only since 2007 has universal access to sexual and reproductive health (measured using four indicators) been part of the Millennium Development Goals.

In any case, various crucial issues from the global population agenda are still excluded from the Millennium Development Goals (ageing, international migration, indigenous peoples and the integration of population variables in development planning, among others), and their complexity makes it hard to translate them into quantitative goals. It should therefore not be expected that this unresolved ICPD agenda will be subsumed or superseded by the Millennium Development Goals. It is necessary to evaluate carefully the strengths and weaknesses of qualitative goals and the potential for complementing and homologating any proposed plan of action with quantitative goals on the agenda beyond 2014.

## **7. Effective follow-up mechanisms**

The ECLAC sessional Ad Hoc Committee on Population and Development is ultimately responsible for following up and reviewing issues relating to population and development in the region, including the Latin American and Caribbean Regional Plan of Action on Population and Development. In addition, the Committee is the intergovernmental body responsible for follow-up on the Regional Strategy for the Implementation in Latin America and the Caribbean of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing and has been called on to follow up issues related to international migration, indigenous peoples and Afro-descendant populations in Latin America and the preparation of population and housing censuses in the 2010s.



The Ad Hoc Committee has the necessary technical instruments to carry out those responsibilities, namely the system of indicators for following up the Latin American and Caribbean Regional Plan of Action on Population and Development and systems of indicators relating to older persons and indigenous peoples. It will be able to draw on the population and development knowledge base and networks and, eventually, on a regional observatory for public policies relevant to the field that has been proposed as a mechanism for following up and disseminating specific experiences with integrating population issues in development planning.

These instruments will be useful and necessary for following up the objectives, activities and goals to be proposed for the post-2014 period, along with any other mechanisms that might be required to that end. National follow-up mechanisms, such as evaluation commissions and national systems of indicators, should also be established.