



2010 | ECLAC Ad Hoc Committee on  
Population and Development  
*Santiago, 12-14 May 2010*

Distr.  
LIMITED  
LC/L.3219(CEP.2010/4)  
3 May 2010  
ENGLISH  
ORIGINAL: SPANISH

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**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**



UNITED NATIONS



## CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
I. FOREWORD .....	5
II. ENSURING THAT THE POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES FOR 2010-2014 IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN ARE MET EFFECTIVELY .....	6
A. Additional tasks to carry out in 2010-2014 to achieve the objectives of the ICPD Programme of Action .....	7
1. Strengthening actions for greater gender equality .....	7
2. Greater commitment to, and coordination of, the actions aimed at reducing the prevalence of HIV/AIDS .....	7
3. Protecting and guaranteeing the sustainability of the progress made with regard to sexual and reproductive health .....	8
4. Investing in human capacity to take advantage of demographic opportunities.....	8
5. Overcoming urban shortfalls, without neglecting rural areas.....	8
6. Fostering a climate conducive to the exercise of migrants' rights .....	9
7. Consolidating the generation of sociodemographic information and its use in public policies .....	9
8. Strengthening national technical capacities relating to population and development.....	10
9. Guaranteeing the necessary funding for the implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action .....	10
B. Evaluation and follow-up mechanisms for 2010-2014.....	10
III. THE AGENDA BEYOND 2014: CONTINUITY, CHANGES AND CONSIDERATIONS DURING ITS PREPARATION AND FOLLOW-UP .....	11
A. The ICPD Programme of Action: a paradigm shift with strengths and gaps.....	11
B. Changes in context.....	13
1. Factoring in changes in the development context .....	13
2. Redefining population and development.....	15
C. The population agenda for the coming decades: some prominent issues .....	18
1. Promoting fuller integration of population issues in development planning, policies and programmes .....	18
2. Some emerging issues .....	20
3. Sexual and reproductive health, sexual and reproductive rights, poverty and inequality .....	20
4. Gender .....	21

D. Considerations for new agreements, goals and policies, and a follow-up mechanism for the future population agenda.....	22
1. The scope of the ICPD Programme of Action and projections for the agenda beyond 2014 .....	22
2. The focus of the ICPD Programme of Action .....	22
3. The individual weight of certain items on the population agenda and the option of addressing them separately .....	22
4. Identifying deficiencies and establishing a new focus for population specialists: integrating population factors in development policies.....	23
5. Meeting the commitments of the future population agenda .....	23
6. Institutional elements and policies in the post-2014 scenario .....	23
7. Regional particularities in relation to poverty, inequity, heterogeneity, lack of implementation, institutional weakness, financing and rights.....	24
8. Effective follow-up mechanisms.....	25

## I. FOREWORD

In accordance with resolution 644(XXXII) of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), the Latin American and Caribbean Demographic Centre (CELADE) - Population Division of ECLAC, together with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), held the Regional Seminar on the Progress Made and Key Actions for the Implementation of The Cairo Programme of Action 15 years after its Adoption on 7 and 8 October 2009.

On that occasion, the participants of the Seminar requested in the outcome document that the secretariat of the ECLAC sessional Ad Hoc Committee on Population and Development should draft, with the support of UNFPA, a proposed future agenda on the commitments of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) for submission at the Committee's next meeting, to be held at ECLAC headquarters in Santiago from 12 to 14 May 2010.

In response to that request, CELADE - Population Division of ECLAC, in collaboration with UNFPA, has drafted this document, which provides an overview of the issues that could be included in the population and development agenda for the period 2010-2014 and beyond. In drafting this report, the following were used as references: the documentation prepared for the study and evaluation of the situation in Latin America and the Caribbean for the fifteenth anniversary of the International Conference on Population and Development;<sup>1</sup> the lessons learned during the 15 years that the ICPD Programme of Action has been implemented in the region; the foreseeable trends in economic and social development; current international cooperation priorities; and the particular socio-economic, cultural and political realities of Latin America and the Caribbean.

This document 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, and, on the other, to further incorporate population variables into economic and social development policies and programmes and to improve governance in general and at all levels, which should include increasing the awareness of these issues among authorities and those responsible for economic and social planning. To that end, it puts forward diagnostic tools for identifying immediate priorities and tentatively explores future scenarios.

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<sup>1</sup> Latin American and Caribbean Demographic Centre (CELADE) - Population Division of ECLAC, "América Latina: avances y desafíos de la implementación del Programa de Acción de El Cairo, con énfasis en el período 2004-2009", *Project documents*, No. 311 (LC/W.311), Santiago, Chile, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), 2010; Latin American and Caribbean Demographic Centre (CELADE) - Population Division of ECLAC, "Appraisal and conclusions from the 1994-2009 Review of the Implementation of the Cairo Programme of Action in the Caribbean", *Project documents*, No. 318 (LC/W.318), Santiago, Chile, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), 2010; Latin American and Caribbean Demographic Centre (CELADE) - Population Division of ECLAC, "Entre los progresos y las asignaturas pendientes: 15 años del Programa de Acción de El Cairo en América Latina y el Caribe, con énfasis en el período 2004-2009", *Project documents*, No. 317 (LC/W.317), Santiago, Chile, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), 2010; Latin American and Caribbean Demographic Centre (CELADE) - Population Division of ECLAC, "Report of the Regional Seminar on the Progress Made and Key Actions for the Implementation of The Cairo Programme of Action 15 years after its Adoption" (LC/L.3211), Santiago, Chile, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), 2010.

The first part of the document examines the pending issues for 2010-2014. Recommendations are put forward for tackling the issues and follow-up, in particular by identifying the actions and priorities for closing the implementation gaps of the ICPD Programme of Action five years from the end of its formal implementation period.

The second part presents resources and options for designing a strategy to maximize the impact and fulfilment of the population agenda beyond 2014. To that end, it highlights some cross-cutting approaches for tackling the population and development issues in the region and outlines some of the elements that should be taken into account when establishing agreements, goals, policies and mechanisms for following up the agenda.

## **II. ENSURING THAT THE POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES FOR 2010-2014 IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN ARE MET EFFECTIVELY**

In recent years most countries in the region have made considerable progress in the field of population and development. Nevertheless, as has been documented in the progress reports on the implementation of the Cairo Programme of Action in Latin America and the Caribbean, it is difficult to assert that, in the five years remaining until the end of the formal implementation period, any one of them will fully meet the commitments assumed in 1994.<sup>2</sup>

One clear indication of the achievements reached in the region is the improvement in the population's living conditions. In recent years tens of millions of people have emerged from poverty and indigence, and in some countries inequality has also decreased. This situation was aided by the action of democratic Governments and the active involvement and political action of social movements that have been making increasingly insistent calls for their social rights to be respected and guaranteed. Furthermore, two other factors boosted social spending and facilitated, to some extent, the application of public policies on social protection and poverty reduction: the notable cycle of economic expansion that lasted until 2008 and favourable demographic trends, including the consolidation of a more robust urban system and the growth of the proportion of the population of working age, which have opened a demographic window of opportunity in various countries that will last for about another two decades on average.

However, the progress made thus far exists alongside wholly unacceptable situations that fall short in terms of providing equality and job security. Moreover, large numbers of persons in Latin America and the Caribbean live in poverty (more than 180 million) and indigence (more than 70 million). Two pressing challenges will shape the scenario for the coming years. The more immediate one is ensuring that the progress continues and that the achievements to date are sustained despite the profound global economic crisis that has struck the region since the end of 2008, which has resulted in a significant drop in economic activity and a consequent increase in unemployment. The other challenge is more long-term and complex in nature and involves reducing socio-economic inequality significantly and permanently. Strengthening the institutional, technical and financial capacities of the States of the region will be vital for tackling these two challenges.

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<sup>2</sup> Latin American and Caribbean Demographic Centre (CELADE) - Population Division of ECLAC, "América Latina: avances y desafíos", op. cit. and "Appraisal and conclusions", op. cit.

Within that framework, it is essential that the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean reaffirm their commitment to the ICPD agenda and adopt concrete measures to obtain tangible results over the next five years. More than ever it is necessary to call on Governments, civil society organizations and international bodies to take urgent action to agree on and implement a joint strategy for the next five-year period so that the region as a whole can move towards the goals set by the ICPD Programme of Action and those derived from the United Nations Millennium Declaration. That strategy, taking into account countries' different levels of socio-economic development and stages of demographic transition, should strengthen, among other measures, the actions already under way by applying best practices and lessons learned, and should prioritize above all the key areas of the ICPD Programme of Action where implementation gaps and shortfalls (described in detail below) persist.

## **A. ADDITIONAL TASKS TO CARRY OUT IN 2010-2014 TO ACHIEVE THE OBJECTIVES OF THE ICPD PROGRAMME OF ACTION**

### **1. Strengthening actions for greater gender equality**

With regard to gender, progress has been made towards combating discrimination, inequality and inequity, but Latin American and Caribbean women still receive lower pay than men for the same tasks, are more likely to be employed in the informal sector of the labour market, are less likely to be covered by labour protection provisions, are overburdened with tasks associated with caring for children, the ill and older persons and are subject to discrimination in accessing both public and private decision-making arenas. Women also continue to face difficulties in exercising their reproductive rights and attaining comprehensive access to sexual and reproductive health, especially young girls and adolescents, and unacceptable levels of gender violence remain prevalent.

Action needs to be stepped up in the coming years in the following areas, among others: the effective implementation of legislation against gender violence, which takes place both inside and outside the home; the adoption of legislation and mechanisms to guarantee the participation of women in politics, including through the strengthening of women's organizations; the intensification of actions aimed specifically at improving the conditions of indigenous and Afro-descendent women; and the formulation of policies and strategies that contribute to overcoming the sexual division of productive and reproductive work, which should be fully incorporated into social protection systems with a view to building egalitarian and symmetrical gender relations.

### **2. Greater commitment to, and coordination of, the actions aimed at reducing the prevalence of HIV/AIDS**

In general, although some progress has been made in the region in this area, national efforts to combat HIV/AIDS have been inadequate. Despite various successful examples, such as the programme in Brazil, in general prevention programmes have been weak and have not reached the populations that are most at risk or responded to reflect the evolution of the epidemic. Persons with full-blown AIDS and HIV-positive individuals continue to be stigmatized and discriminated against. Furthermore, public policies and legislation are not always backed up by the relevant regulations, resources or implementation and follow-up mechanisms that would enable them to be fully enforced. Governments need to respond in a more strategic and coordinated manner, increase their financial commitment and emphasize prevention when drafting policies.

### **3. Protecting and guaranteeing the sustainability of the progress made with regard to sexual and reproductive health**

Taking into account the progress made towards recognizing reproductive rights as an integral part of human rights in Latin America and the Caribbean, a key challenge in the area of sexual and reproductive rights is to protect the achievements already made, guarantee the sustainability of policies and programmes, and prevent backsliding in terms of the accessibility, availability, quality and cultural relevance of the services. Moreover, countries must expand comprehensive sex education and ensure that it reaches all adolescents and young persons. This applies also to access to sexual and reproductive health, particularly among persons aged under 15 years and the most disadvantaged sectors of society, in order to reduce the high rates of adolescent pregnancy that are still being recorded in the region.

One of the major challenges to be faced in the coming years in relation to this issue is to reduce the significant inequities in terms of maternal and child mortality that persist between different social groups and which affect, above all, the Afro-descendent population and indigenous peoples. The overall challenge with regard to these two groups is to reduce the marked inequities in wealth, access to opportunities, inclusion and affirmative action, with regard to services, policies and budgets, the exercise of rights, and political and cultural recognition.

### **4. Investing in human capacity to take advantage of demographic opportunities**

As mentioned, most of the countries in the region are experiencing a transitional period of demographic dividend. In order for this dividend to bring real benefits, the changes in the population must go hand in hand with a significant investment in human capacity. Young persons must be a major focus of public policies in the coming years. The current generation of adolescents and young persons is larger than at any other time during the history of Latin America and the Caribbean. As well as representing a unique opportunity, this situation presents challenges that call for urgent responses. Essentially, it is necessary to invest in targeted and comprehensive educational and employment policies and to boost the participation of women in the labour market in order to extend the duration of the demographic dividend. South-South dialogue and exchange regarding strategies for the development of education and employment policies must be enhanced. The favourable ratio of working-age persons to dependants will change as a result of the continuing increase in the proportion of older persons. The ageing population entails new challenges for society, which must adapt to an unprecedented situation and requires public policies that facilitate the necessary changes, particularly where social protection is concerned. In that regard, taking advantage of the demographic dividend is a way of preparing for the challenge posed by an ageing population.

### **5. Overcoming urban shortfalls, without neglecting rural areas**

Even though the intensive urbanization of Latin America and the Caribbean has contributed to the achievement of social goals and the well-being of the population, it has also been accompanied by problems that are reflected above all in the exclusion and segregation of certain groups in precarious areas and housing, which lack infrastructure, services and employment. In the coming years it will be important to move towards overcoming the large accumulated shortfalls in the cities. Poverty reduction should be a major factor in shaping urban planning and land-use policies, which should be designed to ensure the provision of infrastructure, housing, services and employment for the urban poor. Urban planning and land-use policies are of prime importance, as shown by the tragic consequences of natural disasters, among other situations, compounded by substandard building conditions and construction in

risky areas. It should be noted that this emphasis on towns and cities does not mean that rural areas should be overlooked: a significant proportion of the population of the region lives in rural areas and their living conditions still lag significantly behind.

## **6. Fostering a climate conducive to the exercise of migrants' rights**

In the coming years, international migration will continue to be a growing concern among countries. There has been a progressive increase in awareness of migration issues that were largely invisible in the past, such as the discrimination and abuse to which migrants are commonly subjected. However, a climate hostile to immigration persists, especially in developed countries that receive large numbers of Latin American and Caribbean migrants. Some of the major future challenges facing Latin America and the Caribbean in this regard include combating that hostile climate and establishing institutional frameworks and mechanisms to protect the rights of migrants and provide them with support in connection with the many problems they face, such as those associated with human trafficking and being smuggled across borders, the shortage of sexual and reproductive health services and the absence of agreements between countries of origin and destination regarding matters such as social security and the recognition of qualifications.

## **7. Consolidating the generation of sociodemographic information and its use in public policies**

To further incorporate the issues of population and development into policymaking in the coming years, existing national bodies need to be strengthened and a suitable institutional framework should be fostered. One of the key elements for strengthening the technical capacity of institutions is the availability of relevant, timely and high-quality information. On the whole, sociodemographic information and knowledge is being used more and more widely throughout the region in the drafting and follow-up of plans, programmes and policies. Nevertheless, there continues to be a significant gap between the increasing recognition of the need to consider sociodemographic inputs in policymaking and the effective use of those inputs.

Furthermore, in many countries of the region the relevance of the demographic information is diminished by the poor coverage, timeliness, quality and updating of the information generated by the mechanisms for data collection and analysis, especially in the areas of health and education, vital statistics and civil registration. The coverage and timeliness of information gathered are still far from acceptable in certain important areas, such as maternal mortality, adolescent pregnancy, international emigration, disability, territorial mobility within each country, the indigenous and Afro-descendent population and gender-based violence. Countries must invest in establishing and improving sociodemographic data systems. These efforts should include the development of instruments for gathering, processing, disseminating and analysing population data.

Taking into account the costs involved in carrying out population and housing censuses, the complexity of the process and the richness of the information generated, the most pressing challenges in this area include guaranteeing that the process of collecting census data in 2010 in Latin America and the Caribbean is of the highest quality and that full use is made of the information. Considerable progress has been made in the region with regard to the dissemination and use of census data through the development of the Retrieval of data for small areas by microcomputer (REDATAM) programme, designed by CELADE - Population Division of ECLAC. Currently, almost all the countries in the region use this tool



for processing census data and other databases and 17 of them offer online processing. The challenge for the years ahead will be to continue to develop the application and expand its coverage. At the same time, other sources of sociodemographic data must be created and used.

### **8. Strengthening national technical capacities relating to population and development**

Another fundamental element in strengthening the ability of regional institutions to incorporate population issues in public policies is human resources training in the field of population and development. There is an urgent need to promote the establishment of training institutions so that people match the required profiles. The absence of a more systematic connection between population issues and planning is due to a regional shortage, at all levels, of individuals trained in demography and in population and development. In general, efforts to make up for this deficiency are isolated initiatives that receive only limited economic resources and lack a regional coordination strategy. The vacuum left by the discontinuation of the courses provided by CELADE - Population Division of ECLAC has not been filled properly, and the training in demography, population and development offered by various academic institutions in the region seems to fall short of satisfying the needs of the public sector in many countries, especially those of the national statistical offices.

### **9. Guaranteeing the necessary funding for the implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action**

Lastly, the lack of sufficient funds continues to be a serious obstacle to achieving fully the goals of the International Conference on Population and Development and the Millennium Summit. Not only have the initial financial flow estimates proved insufficient, but in many cases the financial agreements have only been partially honoured. As an integral part of reaffirming their commitment to reaching the goals of the ICPD Programme of Action and the Millennium Development Goals, it is therefore necessary for the countries of the region to carry out the fundamental task of mobilizing the necessary resources.

## **B. EVALUATION AND FOLLOW-UP MECHANISMS FOR 2010-2014**

Given the need to make concrete progress in the next few years towards the goals described above, it is necessary to strengthen and extend the mechanisms for evaluating and following up on actions and their successes by taking advantage of the technical, political and administrative synergies offered by other related follow-up processes (especially that of the Millennium Development Goals) at the global, regional and national levels.

First, it is proposed that national systems for evaluating and following up the goals of the ICPD Programme of Action should be set up. These could take the form of inter-ministerial commissions or councils and would also have the task of agreeing on the policies and measures needed to progress towards the different goals. To evaluate the progress made, it would be necessary to update the respective national systems of indicators for follow-up to the ICPD Programme of Action in the countries that have such systems.

Second, and with a view to strengthening and increasing the follow-up of the implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action at the regional level, the Presiding Officers of the Ad Hoc Committee on Population and Development could consider the possibility of convening a meeting during the period in between its regular sessions that would be open to all countries that wished to participate. The positions adopted by the countries participating in that meeting should take account of inputs from the national follow-up systems mentioned in the previous paragraph.

In addition, it is proposed that advantage should be taken of the capacities of other regional instances of evaluation and follow-up of relevant population and development issues. For example, the Statistical Conference of the Americas of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (SCA-ECLAC) regarding the progress relating to population and housing censuses and the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean on the activities carried out to implement the regional and international agreements and plans regarding the advancement of women. Furthermore, it is proposed that the various subregional forums (Andean, Central American and Caribbean, among others) involved in this field should also be used.

With a view to facilitating the work of the proposed evaluation and follow-up institutions, the technical secretariat of the Committee is requested to provide the support needed by the Presiding Officers for two important tasks: (i) the regular updating of the regional system of indicators for follow-up to the ICPD Programme of Action, and (ii) the establishment of a regional agency to monitor the national policies relating to the follow-up of the ICPD Programme of Action, whose tasks should include identifying and disseminating the best practices developed in the region in this regard.

### **III. THE AGENDA BEYOND 2014: CONTINUITY, CHANGES AND CONSIDERATIONS DURING ITS PREPARATION AND FOLLOW-UP**

#### **A. THE ICPD 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. International cooperation in relation to population issues has focused on reproductive rights, reproductive health and gender equity, however, as is widely recognized. 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) has 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.

The 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 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 and, to an even greater extent, those relating to demography, face a more complex situation. First, there was the problem posed by the aforementioned focus of international cooperation on reproductive rights, reproductive health and gender equity, which was then exacerbated by the lack of supporting social stakeholders, the planning crisis and the reduction of the size of the State. Furthermore, some of the difficulties that arise in implementing the recommendation to fully consider population factors in development planning may also stem from the fact that, at the time of ICPD, the idea of “integrating population factors into development” was only partially conceptualized. For many, including much of the existing population establishment at the time, this injunction meant primarily having policymakers in different countries pay more attention to high fertility and rapid rates of population growth. The various national institutions set up at this time to coordinate population policy were, consequently, often restricted in their ability to analyse and interpret the significance of other demographic phenomena for development processes. As fertility rates began to decline rapidly in the region, donor interest in such institutions dropped, thereby restricting their potentially broader impact on development. This waning interest is based, however, on average fertility rates that do not reflect the high fertility rates of disadvantaged groups and adolescents (and the even higher rates among poor adolescents). Funds for data gathering, training, research and support for policymaking also declined. In many countries of the region, hiring of demographic researchers ground to a standstill. Despite these limitations, demographic research, spurred by a few strong autonomous academic institutions in the region, has continued to progress in a few countries, but 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, which includes a rights perspective. The important legacy and fundamental spirit of this paradigm shift are destined to last. However, the future population agenda must take into consideration the emerging historical context (undoubtedly different to the context that prevailed in 1994), have lower expectations regarding the breadth and diversity of population issues, 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 equity in order to consolidate and deepen the progress achieved in these crucial domains; (ii) consider the progress made on the agendas of issues that are linked to population (such as older persons and ageing) 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.

## **B. 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 in the trade benefiting from lower prices, more employment, higher output and a higher standard of living. Capital flows, together with technology transfer and immigration, are having increasing impacts on labour markets and are indirectly affecting the lives of most of the Earth's inhabitants. Though globalization holds the promise of rising wealth for all, advances have so far been uneven and unstable. The high volatility of capital flows constitutes a potentially disruptive menace for developing countries, as observed repeatedly in recent years. 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 influence acquired by emigration to developed countries and migratory flows between Latin American countries. Beyond the debate and the legitimate political disagreements over the causes and consequences of these movements, it is a fact 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. On an international level, issues are more complex, less from an economic standpoint —since studies show that both receiving and sending countries tend to benefit overall from international migration— but from a sociocultural standpoint. More effective policies that would reduce the disadvantages (for instance, brain drain) and enhance the advantages (for instance, development effects of remittances) of such movements should be forthcoming.

Within countries, the effects of globalization on the spatial distribution of economic activities leads 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 resulting urban growth, especially with regard to the social and sustainable use of space.

In Latin America and the Caribbean this is particularly important because of the high degree of urbanization in the region and because of the deficiencies and inequalities that can be seen in the cities.

**(b) Decentralization**

Another recent conditioner of public policy involves 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 cut 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 often 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. Moreover, CELADE-Population Division of ECLAC has provided valuable innovative tools that allow analysis of updated information at the local level, with subsequent improvements in local management. However, support for decentralized access to and use of information and knowledge for planning purposes needs to be improved and generalized. In fact, use of information for planning purposes needs to be supported through didactical approaches.

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

As the 1990s reached a close, an acute awareness of the failures of both foreign assistance and the development formula based on the promotion of trade and structural adjustment led to a new surge of international attention on poverty and inequality. 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. An unparalleled degree of political commitment to this endeavour required all international agencies to modify their agendas in order to become “development agencies” and practical contributors to poverty reduction.

The pressure to focus greater attention on poverty reduction obliges all international agencies to review their respective agendas and, at least, to demonstrate explicitly how their actions are having an impact in the direction of reduced poverty and inequality. Governments have also had to act on this commitment and try to achieve the goals that have been established. It is no surprise, therefore, that in Latin America and the Caribbean the main innovation in terms of social policy has been the introduction

of conditional cash transfer programmes, which have the direct effect of reducing poverty. 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 which merits close attention but which received only perfunctory consideration at ICPD —probably because it had been the object of an even larger and more publicized international conference only two years earlier— is the issue of sustainable development. Although this topic is the object of the Programme of Action’s first substantive chapter, the discussion is largely restricted to repeating the injunction that population factors should be integrated into environmental concerns. Although the increasingly complex discussion of what constitutes “sustainable development” has lost some of its focus, there is no doubt that certain aspects of the environmental agenda have come to the forefront of international interest. In particular, the threats to humankind posed by climate change have been documented beyond reasonable doubt and this has led to the resurgence of concern over the role of population dynamics in accelerating climate change factors and in delimiting and reducing vulnerabilities. Any future discussion of population and development relations must pay close attention to the links between population dynamics and patterns the origins and the probable consequences of this global change.

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

Better and more updated sociodemographic information for strategic 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 an 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 provided by demographic transformations is an important starting point that calls for redoubled attention from international donors and national entities in the post-Cairo period.

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

**(a) Demographic transition**

Demographic transition has continued since 1994 and, with it, some of the classic subjects of the debate relating to population and development have metamorphosed (for example, 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 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 its potential socio-economic 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 stimulates 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 and 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 as a demographic group seem to lose relative importance in the midst of these changes, they are becoming more important in policymaking terms 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**

ICPD was held during a development era marked by faith in “the miracle of the markets” and distrust of government intervention. During this phase, which lasted throughout the 1980s and much of the 1990s, international financial institutions endeavoured to convince Governments that removing barriers to international trade, reducing Government influence and getting prices right would lead to rapid economic growth. The intention stated in the Programme of Action of getting Governments to integrate population variables into development planning was thus a somewhat anachronistic and unrealistic recommendation at that particular point in time. It found its way into the Programme of Action simply because it had been a primary strategy employed by the population establishment since the 1970s to focus attention on high fertility rates and rapid population growth.

Later, recognition that Government-promoted investments in human capital, domestic infrastructure and interrelated industrial initiatives had been crucial in the economic success enjoyed by several countries in East and South Asia at a challenging period in the global economy, helped to promote a re-evaluation of the role of Government in economic development. Gradually, emphasis has moved from minimizing the role of Government towards making Governments more effective. The role of the State in investment, finance, human capital formation, technology acquisition, and the promotion of policy and institutional reforms is now generally recognized. This is happening not only at the national level, but also at the subnational level. As stated below, the population dynamic tends to vary significantly and its effects are amplified at the local level. For that reason, local governments have been one of the most active agents in revaluating the use of sociodemographic knowledge and information to promote socio-economic development at the local level.

This has opened up an important opportunity for a more strategic “integration” of population factors into development planning. This 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 their 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.

The planning crisis was not the only factor that had a bearing on the difficulties involved in the traditional methods of integrating population factors into development policies, which is why this reevaluation of the State's role does not guarantee a return to the previous situation. The collapse of the institutions responsible for population issues and the fear of an alleged link between the measurement of population indicators and coercive action also came into play. This was particularly evident in Latin America and the Caribbean where the main public bodies responsible for promoting and coordinating that integration virtually disappeared. There remains the challenge of recovering the ground lost and establishing new institutions to make it possible to take advantage of the strategic links between population and development described above.

**(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, the technical advances in relation to the availability of, and capacity for, processing sociodemographic data, the development of the concepts and methodologies for analysing this information and the growing demand for specialized information for policymaking and for use by national and subnational public administrations created an environment conducive to the use of this information to, among other activities: (i) adapt action to take account of the size and sociodemographic profiles of the target population of programmes; (ii) localize investments and provisions 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 are being amplified by the advances in 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 countries' development.

The potential benefits of considering population factors in development plans and policies have been demonstrated, but are far from being fully exploited and recovering ground and aiming for a greater strategic integration of population factors in the development process will therefore remain a priority.

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

The reevaluation of 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 the increased 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 the free interaction of market forces had its 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



making progress towards internationally agreed social goals, including universalizing the provision of basic services and decreasing gender inequity, as well as reducing poverty and socio-economic 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 the policies implemented in the three abovementioned social areas 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 link 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 socio-economic group), in terms of age composition, life expectancy and size of the family support network.

### **C. 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”? 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 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 take a long-term view and to 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 socio-economic 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, demographic scenarios constitute a necessary starting point for any attempt to assess medium- and long-range perspectives and thus prepare to orient, or react to, social change.

**(b) Using knowledge and evidence to draft development policies**

At the macro level, poverty reduction is linked to more general processes of economic development and structural change. The integration of population factors in development planning requires up-to-date knowledge and understanding of changes in population dynamics. Throughout the region, population growth rates are falling rapidly, age structures are changing quickly and people are moving in huge contingents to urban areas, according to patterns that are differentiated spatially and socially. This creates both demographic obstacles and opportunities for development and poverty alleviation. Interactions between different components of population dynamics, as well as with other societal changes, generate specific needs and opportunities for public policy at the aggregate or macro level, as well as at the micro level of individuals, families and households.

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

Population factors should be integrated into the day-to-day management and operation of development policies and programmes as a matter of course. Although this is less ambitious than the traditional idea of integrating population factors as the focus 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 the training of professional and technical staff to ensure that population variables are incorporated into public (and private) administration as a matter of course.

## **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:

- The evolution of family structure and function in the region provides a particularly rich field of study for policy formulation. 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.
- Getting to grips with a changing age structure. Countries are increasingly aware of the potential advantages of the demographic dividend but most have yet to deploy the policies that would be necessary in order to benefit from 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 are rapidly becoming 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.
- Taking advantage of the urban transition. The precocious urban transition experienced by Latin America and the Caribbean, in comparison to 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 global climate change. At the same time, more innovative and effective policies are needed in order to address the needs of rural populations.
- The population and development perspective should also be incorporated into disaster risk reduction and response to humanitarian emergencies associated with climate change or natural disasters. These are emerging issues that require consideration of the demographic dimension (needs assessments, policy-making, and so forth).

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

Despite the concentration of attention on sexual and reproductive health and gender in the post-Cairo period, important gaps remain in relation to both. Indeed, recent shortfalls in financial support 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. Inequality in terms of fulfilling reproductive preferences 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 levels of unsafe abortion. Such research also supports more strategic and coordinated responses in the domain of HIV/AIDs. The post-Cairo period will have to focus renewed attention on this issue, 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 in the household. 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 (in the post-Cairo era) have always been supported and legitimized by other population and development efforts involving support for data generation, training, research and policy support.

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. Given the current process of re-engineering within the United Nations system—the One United Nations Initiative, the creation of a specific gender entity, the emphasis on poverty reduction, and the increased need to demonstrate practical results as a development agency—such an ability to bring in the bigger population and development picture, as alluded to in ICPD, constitutes an important comparative advantage that justifies 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 application 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.

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

##### **1. The scope of the ICPD Programme of Action and projections for the 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, the mitigation of natural disasters, humanitarian responses 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 ICPD Programme of Action**

As already discussed in detail in chapter III, 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 contributed to ensuring that this issue has been incorporated fully 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 an unwavering political will is needed if it is to continue. With regard to the work to be carried out in relation to population from 2014, experience so far has shown that 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.

##### **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) 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**

As already mentioned in chapter III, 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 in chapter III 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 strategic 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 administration with a view to making it a standard practice at the institutional level. To that end, it is necessary to raise the awareness of the authorities and technical experts who do not have a background in population issues, standardize procedures and techniques and train the relevant staff.

#### **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, but alone cannot offer any guarantees.

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

At this point in time it is difficult to predict the decisions and commitments that should be adopted after 2014 and to say whether a new International Conference on Population and Development or Programme of Action would be appropriate or advisable. Given the interplay of global political, institutional and thematic factors at this juncture, it is difficult to imagine holding a cycle of specific social conferences similar to that which took place in the 1990s. Furthermore, the reforms under way in the United Nations system make it impossible to envisage exactly which specific bodies will be in charge of the main areas pertaining to population and development in the broad sense and how their respective responsibilities will be assigned. For the same reason, it is difficult to predict the composition of the different political constituencies in 2014 and what their respective platforms might be.

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 without necessarily identifying precise quantitative goals and deadlines for monitoring and assessing the implementation of the Programme of Action. This virtual absence of goals for monitoring progress is associated, at least in part,

with a guiding principle of ICPD and its Programme of Action: the 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 is chapter VII of the Programme of Action 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.

The post-2014 scenario presents many new, complex and as yet unpredictable elements for planning the future of the ICPD Programme of Action. The relative success of the Millennium Development Goals will determine whether the hegemony of quantitative goals will endure and whether the Millennium Development Goals will continue to dominate the international development agenda. 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 it should therefore not be expected that this agenda will be subsumed or superseded by the Millennium Development Goals. The re-engineering of the United Nations system, the regrouping of political powers and social movements and the effect of various economic, social, environmental, political and demographic processes that are difficult to anticipate should be monitored constantly over the coming years. The post-2014 strategy is also going to necessitate reflection on specific, changeable situations and their relationship with the population agenda, as well as up-to-date monitoring of political priorities and powers. At the same time, it is necessary to evaluate carefully the strengths and weaknesses of action plans relative to quantitative goals.

### **7. Regional particularities in relation to poverty, inequity, heterogeneity, lack of implementation, institutional weakness, financing and rights**

The ICPD Programme of Action was an international agreement, which undoubtedly contributed to its considerable visibility and profound impact. Its global scope meant setting aside features of regional and national situations. This was clear in some of the few quantitative goals included in the ICPD Programme of Action (for example, the goal relating to the education of girls, both in terms of coverage and gender equity), which were not very relevant to Latin America and the Caribbean, or at least not for the majority of countries. On a more qualitative level, the region has demonstrated an aptitude for signing agreements and passing legislation, but has failed to enforce them. Therefore, in Latin America and the Caribbean, follow-up should not be limited only to the formalities of passing laws or signing agreements (especially non-binding ones), but should go further in ensuring their effective implementation. Finally, the huge problem of inequity, which is a distinctive feature of Latin America and the Caribbean, should be included in the agenda, as it permeates population and demographic trends, which in turn perpetuate social inequality in the region.

## **8. 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 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 the issue of international migration.

The ECLAC sessional Ad Hoc Committee on Population and Development has the necessary technical instruments, 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 to carry out those responsibilities. It will also have input from the regional observatory for public policies relevant to the field of population and development.

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. As proposed for following up the ICPD Programme of Action until 2014, national follow-up mechanisms, such as evaluation commissions and national systems of indicators, should also be established.

With a view to moving forward with the drafting of the regional agenda on population and development beyond 2014, the meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee in 2012 could be used to examine countries' proposals for future priorities and action. The contents of this document could be used as a basis for preparing those proposals.