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**General debate: Population and sustainable development,
in particular sustained and inclusive economic growth**

Programmes and interventions for the implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development in the context of population and sustainable development, in particular sustained and inclusive economic growth

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report has been prepared to inform the Commission on Population and Development in its deliberations on population and sustainable development, in particular sustained and inclusive economic growth, during its fifty-fifth session.

The world today is demographically and economically more diverse than it was in 1994. New megatrends comprising climate change, digitalization and inequality intersect with demographic shifts to influence development trajectories of countries and regions, including progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic has exacerbated inequalities within and across countries. The present report explores programmes that have recognized and are responding to these new challenges in ways that advance inclusive sustainable development. Emphasis is given to programmes that address the core values of the International Conference on Population and Development as set out in 1994, including the fulfilment of human rights and the development of human capital for the economic inclusion of all persons, including women and girls, older persons, persons facing discrimination and all those living in conditions of structural poverty.

* [E/CN.9/2022/1](#).



I. Introduction

1. The 1994 Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development called for sustained economic growth in the context of sustainable development and sustainable patterns of consumption and production as key to raising the quality of life for all people and eradicating poverty. The centrality of inclusive economic growth and decent work for all for the achievement of sustainable development is underscored in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the report of the Secretary-General entitled “Our Common Agenda” (A/75/982).

2. In the nearly three decades since the International Conference on Population and Development, the global economy has been transformed, with dramatic consequences for the everyday activities of all human beings. Global gross domestic product (GDP) per capita in constant international dollar terms increased from \$9,777 in 1994 to \$16,894 by 2019.¹ Between 1990 and 2017, the percentage of the global population living on less than \$1.90 a day declined from 36 to 9 per cent.²

3. Yet deep structural inequalities remain. Inequality is a defining challenge of our era, with dramatic differences in economic growth between countries, while within countries income inequalities remain high and, in some cases, have increased over time. Poverty alleviation has been driven mostly by progress in middle-income countries. In 2018, two thirds of the population of sub-Saharan Africa lived on less than \$3.20 a day – a number that had only declined by approximately 14 per cent since 1994.³

4. More than 60 per cent of the world’s employed population – living mostly in emerging and developing countries – are still engaged in the informal economy and generally lacking rights at work, social protection and decent working conditions.⁴ Creating decent jobs has become even more challenging during the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, which has caused job losses and relegated more people to fragile employment.

5. Women continue to represent a larger share of the poor population, with lower earnings at all ages, lower access to cash income and diminished rights of inheritance.⁵ In many households, women remain excluded from economic decision-making, lack financial literacy or access to household assets and have no bank accounts.

6. The world is a very different place in 2022 than it was in the 1990s. The COVID-19 pandemic has amplified inequalities, and megatrends such as low fertility, ageing, urbanization and climate change have come to the fore.

7. Today, the world is far more demographically diverse than ever before. Many countries, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, are still characterized by high fertility and young age structures, yet even with declines in fertility, population growth will continue for decades owing to population momentum. In many countries, access to quality family planning services remains limited, and preventable maternal, newborn and infant mortality remain high. Many countries with a young age structure also share concerns over the “youth bulge” and have urgent needs to accelerate job creation and undertake structural changes to expand opportunities for young, more educated workers.

¹ <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.PCAP.PP.KD?locations=1W&view=chart>.

² <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SI.POV.DDAY?locations=1W>.

³ World Bank, PovCalNet database, available at <http://iresearch.worldbank.org/PovcalNet/home.aspx>.

⁴ https://ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/news/WCMS_627189/lang--en/index.htm.

⁵ <https://unstats.un.org/unsd/gender/chapter8/chapter8.html>.

8. By contrast, nearly 50 per cent of the global population now lives in a country with below-replacement fertility,⁶ including Bangladesh, Brazil, China, Mexico, Turkey and Viet Nam. Other countries with large populations, notably India, have fertility rates on the threshold of replacement and are trending downward. Many such countries will continue to grow in population size for several decades owing to large populations entering reproductive age. In others, sustained low fertility has already led to population decline. Between 2015 and 2020, 30 countries or territories around the world registered population decline.⁷

9. Every country in the world is experiencing growth in the number of older persons as a consequence of improved health and nutrition and increasing life expectancy. Population ageing is one of the most significant social transformations of the past century, leading to changing roles at older ages in relation to work, new demands for transport, housing and life-long learning, and new requirements for social protection, health and the care sector.

10. Age structures and demographic trends have significant implications for needed structural investments, social protection and pensions systems, the priorities of the health system and potential demographic dividends. Countries with young and growing populations have considerable pressures to expand education and employment opportunities, while countries experiencing depopulation may be focused on capital intensification and labour productivity.

11. The diversity of demographic trends also has important implications for migration policies, with some countries focusing on job creation to stem “brain drain” and the out-migration of young working adults, while others embrace in-migration to offset a declining workforce. The Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration provides a framework to facilitate policies such that migration “works for all”. It underscores the need for strategies to bolster areas relevant to the Programme of Action and the 2030 Agenda, including identity documentation, access to health care, safe work and housing and protection against discrimination.

12. Demographic diversity coincides with a time of other megatrends and conditions that call for new forms of global solidarity. Digitalization, the climate crisis and the COVID-19 pandemic have called for increasing cooperation on “Our Common Agenda”, in order to provide a genuine chance for inclusive and sustainable development.

13. Climate change will affect most forcefully those populations that are already economically vulnerable. If current climate trajectories continue, as many as 1 billion people will be exposed to sea level rise and coastal flooding by 2050⁸ and another 870 million exposed to extreme to exceptional droughts by 2100.⁹ Furthermore, these numbers do not account for those affected by forest fires, storms and other extreme weather events expected to increase in frequency and scale.

14. The COVID-19 pandemic has undermined economic performance worldwide.¹⁰ Fragile macroeconomic conditions, elevated debt levels and challenges in governance may constrain the ability to provide fiscal stimulus at the scale needed to stabilize the economy and tackle the health and human crises. Countries reliant on remittances are

⁶ Defined as a total fertility rate below 2.1 births per woman in 2020, according to the 2019 revision of the *World Population Prospects*, available from <https://population.un.org/wpp/Publications/>.

⁷ *World Population Prospects 2019*, 2019 revision, available from <https://population.un.org/wpp/Publications/>.

⁸ Jan-Ludolf Merken and others, “Gridded population projections for the coastal zone under the Shared Socioeconomic Pathways”, *Global and Planetary Change*, vol. 145 (October 2016).

⁹ Yadu Pokhrel and others, “Global terrestrial water storage and drought severity under climate change”, *Nature Climate Change*, vol. 11, No. 3 (March 2021).

¹⁰ www.un.org/development/desa/pd/sites/www.un.org.development.desa.pd/files/undesa_pd_cpd55_2021_egm_sciarra_presentation.pdf.

likely to be hit especially hard.¹¹ The pandemic is also straining official development assistance and raising the transaction costs of international trade for the least developed countries owing to supply chain disruptions and troubles in gaining access to trade finance.¹² The pandemic has also undermined the prospects of countries achieving universal health coverage. Even before the outbreak, more than half a billion people had been pushed or further pushed into extreme poverty owing to out-of-pocket health expenses, a situation worsened by the pandemic.¹³ It also highlighted the scale and health implications of current economic inequalities, and the persistence of underpaid and insecure work in which women are overrepresented.

15. While there is an immediate priority to mitigate the impacts of the pandemic, the 2030 Agenda serves as a “policy vaccine” for the worst effects of COVID-19.¹⁴ The need to build back better and leave no one behind invigorates “Our Common Agenda” and demands an end to poverty (Sustainable Development Goal 1), healthy lives and universal health coverage (Goal 3), inclusive and equitable quality education (Goal 4), gender equality (Goal 5), inclusive and sustainable economic growth (Goal 8), innovation (Goal 9), the reduction of inequalities (Goal 10), the combating of climate change (Goal 13), the promotion of peaceful and inclusive societies (Goal 16) and the strengthening of global partnerships for sustainable development (Goal 17).

16. The megatrends are not only coincident but also interdependent. Underlying the megatrends are conditions of extreme economic inequality both within and between countries. Unequal access to digital services has worsened inequalities in education, and in access to health information and care. Climate change disproportionately affects the poor, especially in countries with the fewest resources for transforming their infrastructure for green economic growth. More drought means that women and girls will travel further for water, with greater time use and risk of sexual and gender-based violence. The combination of economic and security stresses, in turn, may drive displacement and migration.

17. The present report explores programmes that have recognized and are responding to these new integrated challenges in ways that advance inclusive and sustainable development. Emphasis is given to programmes that address the core values of the International Conference on Population and Development as set out in 1994, namely, the promotion and protection of human rights and the need for investments in human capital that foster inclusive, sustainable economic growth and resilient societies, and maximize the potential of demographic dividends. These include programmes that explicitly seek to reduce inequalities, expand the capabilities of women and girls, expand opportunities of digitalization and allow all persons to benefit from and contribute to sustainable development. Recognizing that high quality data and demographic intelligence form the backbone of efforts to deliver the vision and values of the Programme of Action, programmes that serve to develop such data are also featured.

II. Programmes to deliver inclusive, sustained economic growth

Human capital investments for all

18. Population age structures alone do not lead to demographic dividends. As the Secretary-General details in a corresponding report to the Commission at its fifty-fifth session (E/CN.9/2022/4), population age structures provide opportunities for time-limited economic acceleration when dependency ratios fall, but these dividends

¹¹ <https://unsdg.un.org/sites/default/files/2020-03/SG-Report-Socio-Economic-Impact-of-Covid19.pdf>.

¹² <https://enhancedif.org/sites/default/files/eif-trade-funding-insights-oda-screen.pdf>.

¹³ www.who.int/news/item/12-12-2021-more-than-half-a-billion-people-pushed-or-pushed-further-into-extreme-poverty-due-to-health-care-costs.

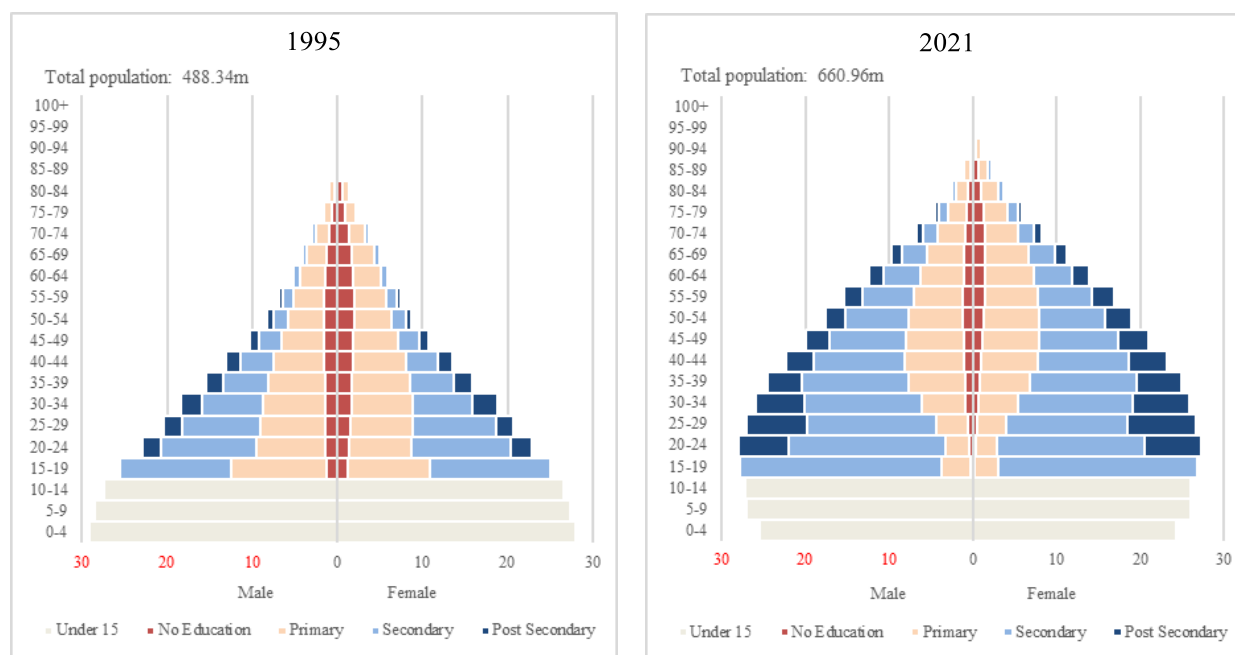
¹⁴ www.un.org/en/desa/opening-remarks-special-event-%E2%80%9C9Csdg-acceleration-actions-build-back-better%E2%80%9D.

reflect the extent to which working age people are healthy, educated, empowered and employed in decent work.¹⁵ Whether in the context of rapid population growth or population stagnation or decline, achieving sustained inclusive economic growth requires the engagement of all persons in society. This includes, inter alia, those who have historically been denied the opportunity to fulfil their potential through long-standing structural inequalities and discrimination. While human capital investments are often addressed in isolation, a growing number of programmes emphasize integrated approaches that simultaneously strengthen multiple human capabilities.

19. In terms of education, investments have substantial effects on earnings as an adult, with each advancing year of school enrolment associated with an approximate 10 per cent increase in wages.¹⁶ While many countries accomplished near universal primary education under the Millennium Development Goals, the 2030 Agenda recognizes the essential need for universal secondary education for employment in the twenty-first century. Progress is noted worldwide: figure I below, for example, includes a population pyramid showing educational attainment in the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean at roughly the time of the International Conference on Population and Development, and one in 2021. In addition to overall population growth, an increasingly older population and the conditions for a demographic dividend brought about through lower fertility rates, reflected in the narrowing of the base of the pyramid, there are also clear advances in educational attainment. At younger ages, those with no education are dramatically reduced, while a significant improvement is observed at the secondary level, with growing tertiary education.

Figure I
Comparison of educational attainment by age and sex, Latin America and the Caribbean, 1995 and 2021

(Population, in millions)



Source: Wittgenstein Centre Human Capital Data Explorer.

¹⁵ www.unfpa.org/data/demographic-dividend#6.

¹⁶ David Canning and T. Paul Schultz, "The economic consequences of reproductive health and family planning", *The Lancet*, vol. 380, No. 9837 (2012).

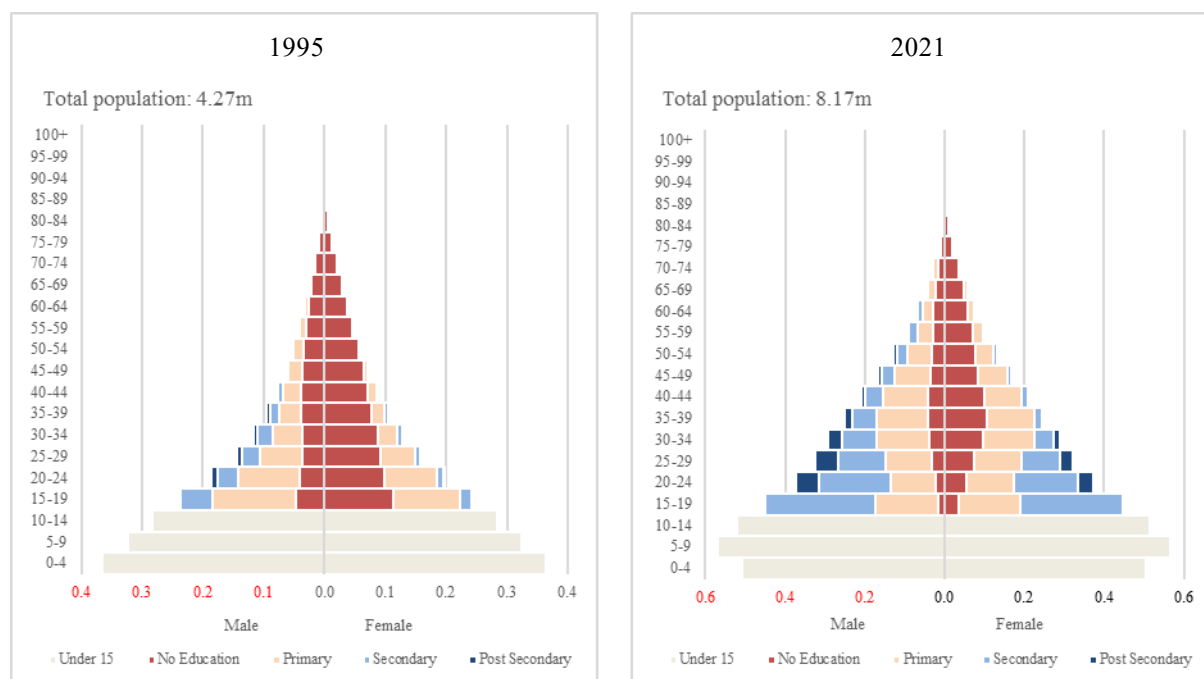
20. At the country level, changes in a generation can be remarkable. Figure II below shows the dramatic transformation in Togo, with a population increase, a growing older population and the first steps towards a narrowing base of the pyramid and the potential for a demographic dividend. The figures also illustrate the substantial gains in educational attainment, in response to the education strategy of the Government of Togo since 2014, which has focused on extended preschool coverage in rural and poorer areas; quality secondary, technical, vocational and higher education courses; alignment with job market needs; parental engagement; and decentralized management of the education system.¹⁷ These policies have led to impressive progress towards the equalization of educational attainment for young men and women; in 1990, roughly 18 per cent of Togolese girls who started primary education saw it to completion. By 2015, this had risen to 79 per cent.¹⁸

21. Despite progress towards universal primary and secondary education worldwide, all schooling has been severely disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic, with an estimated two thirds of students affected by partial or full school closures. The effective global out-of-school rate for primary education increased from 9.5 per cent before COVID-19 closures to 59.6 per cent – the largest reversal of this indicator in history.¹⁹ Learners from poorer households and students living with disabilities are at a greater risk of exclusion, and school closures have also been particularly risky for girls, contributing to increases in adolescent births and child marriage.²⁰

Figure II

Comparison of educational attainment by age and sex, Togo, 1995 and 2021

(Population, in millions)



Source: Wittgenstein Centre Human Capital Data Explorer.

¹⁷ www.globalpartnership.org/where-we-work/togo.

¹⁸ Sajitha Bashir and others, *Facing Forward: Schooling for Learning in Africa* (Washington, D.C., World Bank, 2018).

¹⁹ www.un.org/development/desa/pd/sites/www.un.org.development.desa.pd/files/undesa_pd_cpd55_2021_egm_sciarra_presentation.pdf.

²⁰ www.unicef.org/press-releases/10-million-additional-girls-risk-child-marriage-due-covid-19.

Investments in health and family planning

22. Over decades, countries have invested in health to increase longevity and well-being. The right to health is fundamental, and investing in health is also critical for shaping inclusive, sustained economic growth. Healthy populations promote economic growth through longer lifespans and increased productivity, and healthier populations also choose to have fewer children, confident that children will survive.²¹

23. In the United Nations Decade of Healthy Ageing (2021–2030), a life-course approach to health is adopted and endorsed, emphasizing that early health is the greatest predictor of healthy ageing and health investments at all ages improve health at older ages. Health investments across the life course provide enormous returns in terms of lifetime earnings, reduced health-care costs at older ages and the enabling of older people to continue their social and economic contributions in later life.²²

24. While health investments at all ages provide high returns for development, there are unique benefits to ensuring access to sexual and reproductive health care and family planning. Reproductive rights and choices provide women and girls with greater opportunities to remain in school, increase their skills that in turn raise lifetime earnings and accumulate assets.²³ The introduction of the birth control pill in 1957 and the expansion of other modern contraceptive methods and services worldwide corresponded with a dramatic increase in women's investments in their careers, participation in the labour market and lifetime earnings relative to men.

25. Maternal health during pregnancy and early childhood health and nutrition not only protect children from ill health and death but also promote their early cognitive, physical, language, motor, social and emotional development, build resiliency into adulthood and increase eventual earnings as an adult (see [E/CN.9/2021/3](#)). They are among the most critical investments for improving the capacity to learn and for ensuring that people stay healthy and productive over the life course.

26. Experimental conditions that evaluate the long-term consequences of family planning and maternal health are often hard to discern, as such investments often coincide with other social developments in education or infrastructure. Evidence from Bangladesh shows that family planning not only leads to better maternal and child health but is also a catalyst for poverty eradication and social and economic activity. Evaluation results over 19 years showing a comparison between villages with family planning programmes and those without reveal that, in programme villages, women had fewer children, a higher body mass index, children who were healthier and 40 per cent higher earnings, even after taking into account age and level of schooling. They also reveal that households owned 25 per cent more physical assets per adult compared with their counterparts in control villages (see figure III below).²⁴ Despite this impact, donor aid for sexual and reproductive health fell from about \$10.7 billion in 2018 to \$8.4 billion in 2019. This amounts to a decline of 21 per cent over the previous year – the largest year-on-year decline in aid for sexual and reproductive health over the past decade ([E/CN.9/2022/4](#)).

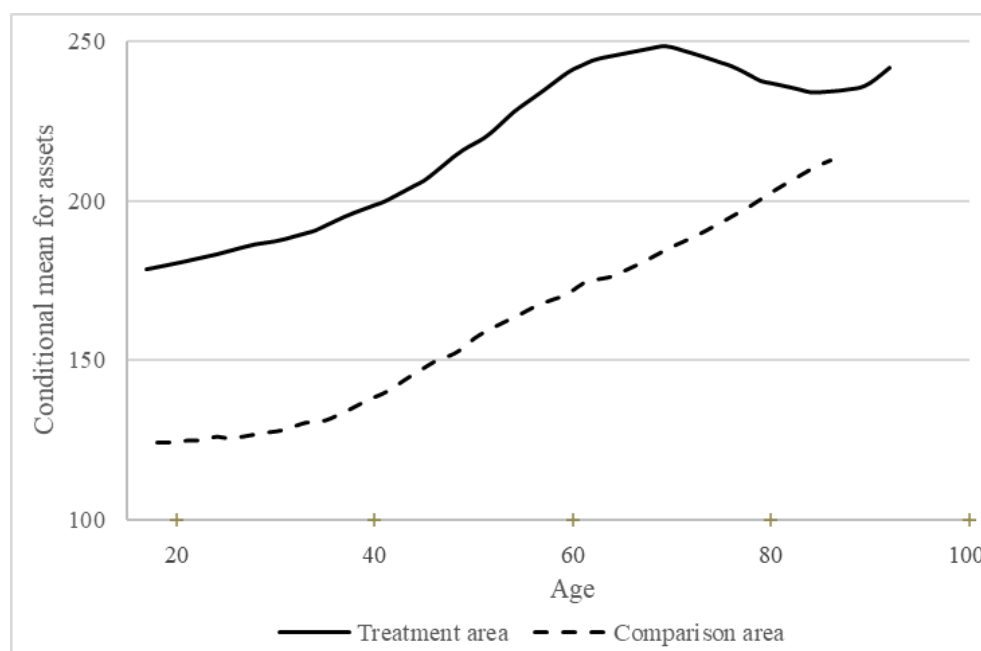
²¹ <https://apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/42435>.

²² www.who.int/initiatives/decade-of-healthy-ageing.

²³ Martha J. Bailey, Melanie Guldi and Brad J. Hershebin, "Recent evidence on the broad benefits of reproductive health policy", *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, vol. 32, No. 4 (Fall 2013).

²⁴ Canning and Schultz, "The economic consequences of reproductive health".

Figure III
Mean assets in programme and comparison villages, Matlab, Bangladesh, 1999
 (Bangladeshi taka)



Source: Shareen Joshi and T. Paul Schultz, “Family Planning as an Investment in Development: Evaluation of a Program’s Consequences in Matlab, Bangladesh” IZA discussion paper No. 2639 (2007).

27. Significant improvements in treatment for people living with HIV have also yielded substantial improvements in health and the economy. Antiretroviral therapy averted 9.5 million deaths worldwide in the period 1995–2015, with estimated global economic benefits of \$1.05 trillion. For every \$1 spent on such therapy, \$3.50 in benefits accrued globally.²⁵

28. Despite the progress achieved, health systems across the developing world continue to be fragile and underfunded. The Universal Health Coverage Partnership is supporting progress towards universal health coverage in 115 partner countries,²⁶ and the World Health Organization (WHO) is working to institutionalize community engagement in primary health-care systems, expand partnerships through the Global Action Plan on Sustainable Development Goal 3, and promote greater efficiencies through digitalization of the health sector.²⁷

29. COVID-19 has dramatically worsened the burdens on health systems and exposed the human cost of health systems that are not resilient or data-driven and that lack an adequate health workforce. While the reported global number of deaths due to COVID-19 stands at just over 5 million, the estimated excess mortality worldwide since the onset of the pandemic is likely to be much higher. Health staff have been redeployed from providing routine health care to COVID-19 response, and vaccine supplies remain disproportionately unavailable in the least developed countries. The pandemic has brought into sharp relief the need to massively increase investments in

²⁵ Steven S. Forsythe and others, “Twenty years of antiretroviral therapy for people living with HIV: global costs, health achievements, economic benefits”, *Health Affairs*, vol. 38, No. 7 (July 2019).

²⁶ www.uhpartnership.net/.

²⁷ www.uhpartnership.net/stories-from-the-field-60-second-summaries-2/.

national health systems and to strengthen global readiness and response to COVID-19 and future pandemics.

Strengthening human capital in low fertility and ageing countries

30. The emphasis on human capital as the basis for inclusive, sustainable economic growth and a means of meeting the Sustainable Development Goals is equally pertinent to countries entering a new phase of demographic change, namely, population decline and rapid population ageing. Prevailing concerns in such countries include a shrinking workforce and the economic resilience of pensions and long-term care systems, but also fears over changes in ethnic composition and political and military security.

31. Population ageing and even depopulation underscore the importance of building societies and economies that are resilient to change, through greater human capital, higher overall productivity and by ensuring the active economic and social participation of all people. Indeed, economists refer to the potential for a “second demographic dividend” in ageing countries, when greater individual wealth helps the economy to grow and people are able not only to support themselves at older ages but also to invest in the health and education of their children, thus creating a virtuous cycle.²⁸

32. At the heart of these changes, again, are healthy, educated, empowered individuals, but also more flexible and resilient institutions. Indeed, in the October 2019 report on Programme of Action implementation in the Economic Commission for Europe region, it is noted that new demographic realities required holistic, human rights-based policies that eradicate inequalities and embrace the contributions of all individuals and generations to sustainable development.²⁹ The Republic of Moldova provides a recent example of responding to demographic circumstances with a holistic approach. At the mid-point assessment of the country’s national strategic programme on demographic security for the period 2011–2025, it was recognized that emphasis on increasing population numbers by boosting the birth rate ignored many youth-related factors contributing to low fertility and high out-migration and, hence, may be ineffective in promoting development. The policy focus shifted to supporting families and encouraging young talent to stay in the country, based on human capital and on a human rights approach, and the individual well-being of each Moldovan.³⁰

33. Enabling continuous opportunities to retool and acquire new skills across the life course is particularly critical to allow all people, especially older persons, to maximize their potential contributions to society and to economic growth. The Institute of Lifelong Learning of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization has been instrumental in coordinating research and policy lessons on lifelong learning and has gathered a collection of lifelong policies and strategies.³¹ In many countries, the development of digital platforms has been essential; the Governments of Japan, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Viet Nam, for example, have assisted in the development of e-learning systems that provide formal and workplace learning. The Republic of Korea developed its own massive open online course (“K-MOOC”) to provide lifelong learners, job seekers as well as young people and college students with access to reliable and excellent higher education content.³²

34. Working in a range of partnerships with the African Union Commission, Germany, the Republic of Korea and the Russian Federation, the Global Programme

²⁸ www.prb.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/africa-second-demographicdividend.pdf.

²⁹ www.un-ilibrary.org/content/books/9789210477314.

³⁰ <https://eeca.unfpa.org/en/news/moldova-new-demographic-approach>.

³¹ <https://uil.unesco.org/lifelong-learning/lifelong-learning-policies>.

³² www.kmooc.kr/about.

on Ageing and Low Fertility of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) supports Governments in projecting future population change, undertaking analyses of how demographic change will affect the economy through national transfer accounts, supporting policy dialogues on demographic diversity and dividends and developing rights-based population policies. UNFPA and the Government of Bulgaria co-hosted a 2021 ministerial conference entitled “Demographic Resilience: Shaping Europe’s Demographic Future”, at which Governments declared a decade of action to build demographic resilience.

Cost of discrimination

35. All persons deserve opportunities to improve their capabilities and to engage productively and creatively in the economy. Yet sustained legacies of discrimination, stigma and exclusion keep many people at the margins. These include not only older and retired persons, but also women and girls; racial, religious and ethnic minorities; migrants and refugees; forcibly displaced persons; disabled persons; indigenous peoples; and all those living in extreme structural poverty.

36. The evidence of human harm caused by discrimination and stigma is clear and includes not only negative consequences for physical and mental health, performance, productivity and financial decision-making,³³ but also national income and economic growth. For example, Citigroup estimates that sustained discrimination against African Americans in the United States of America has cost the country’s economy \$16 trillion since 2000, through combined losses due to discrimination in higher education, housing, business lending and wages.³⁴

37. Ageism robs millions of people of the opportunity to fulfil their potential and contribute actively to the economy. In 2019, WHO produced a toolkit to address such losses as part of its Global Campaign to Combat Ageism.³⁵ While many countries have legislation making it illegal to discriminate against someone on the basis of age, some countries have advanced active prevention. Sweden amended its Discrimination Act in 2017 to place greater responsibility on employers to investigate risks of discrimination, analyse their causes and take active measures to prevent them.³⁶ Other countries, meanwhile, have set up schemes to actively promote age-friendly workplaces, including Bulgaria, which amended its Civil Servants Act to include provisions for job-sharing options where inexperienced civil servants could work simultaneously with retired colleagues.³⁷

38. The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) estimates that the global economic cost of gender discrimination alone is up to \$12 trillion.³⁸ Based on the social institutions and gender index in 160 countries, regional income losses associated with gender discrimination are estimated in figure IV below,

³³ Priyanka B. Carr and Claude M. Steele, “Stereotype threat affects financial decision-making”, *Psychological Science*, vol. 21, No. 10 (2010); Karla Hoff, Priyanka Pandey, “Making up people: the effect of identity on preferences and performance in a modernizing society”, Policy Research Working Paper, No. 6223 (Washington, D.C., World Bank, 2012); and Diane S. Lauderdale, “Birth outcomes for Arabic-named women in California before and after September 11”, *Demography*, vol. 43, No. 1 (February 2006).

³⁴ Dana M. Peterson and Catherine L. Mann, *Closing the Racial Inequality Gaps: The Economic Cost of Black Inequality in the U.S.* (Citigroup, 2020).

³⁵ www.un.org/development/desa/dspd/wp-content/uploads/sites/22/2021/03/global-campaign-to-combat-ageism-toolkit-en.pdf.

³⁶ https://unece.org/DAM/pau/age/Policy_briefs/ECE-WG1-30.pdf.

³⁷ www.oecd.org/countries/bulgaria/Bulgaria%20Key%20policies_Final.pdf.

³⁸ www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/employment-and-growth/how-advancing-womens-equality-can-add-12-trillion-to-global-growth.

reflecting women's reduced access to education and labour, their loss of human capital and the resulting decline in the talent pool from which employers can draw.

39. Digital platforms have the potential to promote inclusion, especially for many with challenges in gaining access to decent work. In Portugal, “Refujobs”, founded by the High Commission for Migration, is an online hiring support tool for refugees and employers to be matched with job and training opportunities.³⁹ In a recent report, the International Labour Organization (ILO) concluded that, in Egypt, Kenya and Uganda, digital gig work through platforms such as “Jumia” or “UpWork” had the potential to generate income for refugees who otherwise have struggled to enter the local labour market.⁴⁰ Technical solutions are important, but Governments must act to assure the realization of human potential for all people, without distinction of any kind.

Figure IV

Regional income loss associated with gender discriminatory social institutions



Source: Gaëlle Ferrant and Alexandre Kolev, “Does gender discrimination in social institutions matter for long-term growth? Cross-country evidence”, OECD Development Centre Working Paper, No. 330 (Paris, 2016).

Investment in gender equality and women's empowerment

40. Those living in extreme poverty are more likely to be female, and women are more likely than men to be unemployed or engaged in informal or vulnerable employment. They are also less likely than men to have access to pensions or financial institutions (e.g. holding a bank account), to be an entrepreneur or to hold leadership positions.⁴¹ More than 2.7 billion women remain legally restricted from having access to the same choice of jobs as men.⁴² Furthermore, of 189 economies assessed in 2018, 59 had no laws on sexual harassment in the workplace, and in 18 economies, husbands could legally prevent their wives from working.⁴³

³⁹ www.refujobs.acm.gov.pt/en/about-us.

⁴⁰ www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/news/WCMS_816547/lang--en/index.htm.

⁴¹ www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/economic-empowerment/facts-and-figures.

⁴² www.ifc.org/wps/wcm/connect/Topics_Ext_Content/IFC_External_Corporate_Site/Gender+at+IFC/Priorities/Employment/.

⁴³ <http://wbl.worldbank.org/>.

41. Foundational conditions for women's economic empowerment include ensuring that women have the legal and technical means to make choices about forming relationships and the number and timing of children they wish to have; and that policies and programmes guarantee equal access to education and health-care services and the ability to balance work and family, to save and be financially literate and independent.

42. Investing in and supporting women affects the economy in multiple ways. According to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), women's economic empowerment boosts productivity, increases economic diversification and income equality.⁴⁴ At the macro level, it has been estimated that increasing female employment rates in OECD countries to match that of Sweden could boost GDP by over \$6 trillion.⁴⁵ Gender equality also delivers important gains at the organizational or meso level. For instance, companies with three or more women in senior management score higher in all dimensions of organizational performance.⁴⁶ Finally, at the micro level, women and their households benefit from improved life choices as well as higher wages and greater economic autonomy.

43. In Rwanda, a series of pro-women reforms initiated over the past two decades has seen gender rights enshrined in the constitution. As well as investing heavily in maternal, newborn and child health, other reforms have meant that women now comprise 52.5 per cent of secondary school enrollees and account for 54 per cent of the workforce, with one of the lowest gender-based salary gaps in the world. It has been argued that these investments in women likely have contributed to the recent economic success of the country where, between 2000 and 2015, the average income has more than doubled – a much higher and faster increase than the average for sub-Saharan Africa.⁴⁷

44. Another precondition for development is ending gender-based violence and harmful practices. In a recent report, IMF suggests that an increase in violence against women in sub-Saharan Africa by one percentage point is associated with a 9 per cent lower level of economic activity.⁴⁸ At the national level, a recent study found that the economic cost of violence against women and girls in Ghana accounts for almost 1 per cent of the national GDP and is “a permanent invisible leakage from the circular flow of the economy”.⁴⁹ Research from Fiji, meanwhile, shows that high rates of gender-based violence account for almost 10 days per employee per year of lost staff time and reduced productivity.⁵⁰ Meanwhile, there is strong evidence that the COVID-19 pandemic lockdowns and economic insecurity increased gender-based violence.

Integrated human capital investments

45. Given the multifaceted nature of human capital, a growing number of programmes feature investments that simultaneously address multiple dimensions of human capacity. In 2019, the World Bank unveiled its Africa Human Capital Plan. Recognizing that the continent's young people are its greatest resource and the key to prosperity in a globalized and digitalizing economy, the plan set out clear targets and commitments to boost sub-Saharan Africa's potential through its human capital – the

⁴⁴ www.imf.org/en/Publications/Policy-Papers/Issues/2018/05/31/pp053118pursuing-womens-economic-empowerment.

⁴⁵ www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/economic-empowerment/facts-and-figures.

⁴⁶ www.empowerwomen.org/-/media/files/un%20women/empowerwomen/resources/hlp%20briefs/unhlp%20full%20report.pdf?la=en.

⁴⁷ www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/fandd/2017/09/bloom.htm.

⁴⁸ www.imf.org/en/Publications/WP/Issues/2021/11/19/The-Heavy-Economic-Toll-of-Gender-based-Violence-Evidence-from-Sub-Saharan-Africa-509667.

⁴⁹ www.levyinstitute.org/pubs/wp_939.pdf.

⁵⁰ www.ifc.org/wps/wcm/connect/region_ext_content/ifc_external_corporate_site/east+asia+and+the+pacific/resources/fiji-domestic+and+sexual+violence+report.

health, knowledge, skills and resilience of its people.⁵¹ Since 2019, various projects have been implemented under the Plan, including \$400 million dedicated to the Human Capital for Inclusive Growth project in Rwanda, which stretches across sectors and the human lifecycle to ease policy and institutional bottlenecks that hinder human capital development outcomes.

46. At the initiative of the Presidents of Benin, Burkina Faso, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, Mauritania and the Niger, the Sahel Women's Empowerment and Demographic Dividend project was founded in 2015 to maximize women's empowerment, human capital and demographic dividends by accelerating transitions in fertility, gender attitudes and schooling.⁵² This is brought about by three components of change, namely: (a) increasing the demand for and acceptance of contraception; (b) meeting that demand and driving actual demographic change; and (c) transforming this demographic change into demographic dividends. Such components are delivered by a focus on piloting interventions among adolescent girls in highly affected regional hotspots. These interventions aim at improving life skills and sexual and reproductive health, keeping girls in school and expanding economic opportunities that bring girls and women into higher-earning trades.

47. Regional capacity for the availability of reproductive health has been strengthened to enhance the reproductive, maternal, newborn, child health and nutrition supply chains, including centres of excellence in the training of nurses and in health services management. The Sahel Women's Empowerment and Demographic Dividend project promotes an inclusive approach to female empowerment through clubs for husbands and future husbands that had reached 49,200 men and boys by 2018.⁵³ Finally, the training of experts in national transfer accounts, as well as the creation of six demographic dividend observatories and a programming guide, have supported local stakeholders.

48. Implementation of the Sahel Women's Empowerment and Demographic Dividend project contributed to an additional 4,302,000 women using modern contraceptives between 2016 and 2018. Furthermore, the number of child marriages decreased; 99,201 young women and girls benefited from empowerment programmes; and a successful media campaign reached more than 300 million people in five months, not least by engaging journalists, the media and celebrities as "champions" committed to supporting not only efforts to keep girls in school until the age of 18, but also the economic empowerment of women and girls. Consequently, there has been a significant decrease in school dropout rates, an increase in rates of academic achievement and a number of girls who have returned to school. Empowerment programmes are making headway. Stereotypical images of women are becoming outdated by training women and girls in non-traditional jobs.

49. In northern Nigeria, the Adolescent Girls Initiative for Learning and Empowerment,⁵⁴ which promotes schooling for adolescent girls, has also adopted an integrated and "wrap-around" approach. The programme is building 9,000 new climate-smart secondary schools and upgrading infrastructure at an additional 4,700 schools. Teens will receive digital literacy and life skills training to help them navigate the challenges of reproductive health, safety and gender-based violence. In total, the programme will benefit some 6.7 million adolescents, along with 15.5 million people in their families and communities. The programme will also

⁵¹ www.worldbank.org/en/publication/worldbank-africa-human-capital-plan.

⁵² https://wcaro.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/SWEDD_ENG.pdf.

⁵³ <https://wcaro.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/UNFPA%20WCARO%20SWEDD%20SUCCESS%20web%20%283%29.pdf>.

⁵⁴ <https://reliefweb.int/report/nigeria/nigeria-boost-support-keeping-adolescent-girls-school>.

respond flexibly to the circumstances of COVID-19 by supporting a blended approach of remote and distance learning.

Job creation in a changing world

50. Across many countries that face high rates of youth unemployment, there is an expanding range of programmes that mentor, train and actively engage young people in entrepreneurship and the formal economy. The most successful programmes of this nature are holistic, or “wrap-around”, that is, interventions that integrate job creation with other types of interventions that address training, health, housing, food security or civic action.

51. According to ILO, 24 million jobs could be created by 2030 provided sustainable practices are adopted and implemented.⁵⁵ In Zambia, the Green Jobs Programme was implemented, adopting a human and environment rights-based and a value chain development approach for improving the sustainable livelihoods of rural and urban families through private sector development and sustainable housing.⁵⁶ Under the programme, women have been given training not only in green home construction, but also in solar panel assembly and installations. The programme not only provides better homes but benefits the community and the environment. Digital technologies can also be deployed to support the development of “green jobs”. The expansion of e-agriculture, for example, has the potential to enhance agriculture, forestry and fishery outputs and, thus, foster rural development.⁵⁷

52. Ongoing threats emanating from conflict – which can be exacerbated by climate change – compound the challenge of job creation. At ILO, the flagship Jobs for Peace and Resilience programme responds to these twin challenges by focusing on employment generation, especially for young women and men, in conflict-affected and disaster-prone countries.⁵⁸ In Sri Lanka, for example, extensive flooding in 2016 and 2017 brought widespread damage to tea-growing regions. In 2018, the programme developed a model to better manage water resources, leading to job and income protection.⁵⁹

53. Digital labour platforms are also transforming the world of work. The rise of short-term contracts – the so-called “gig economy” – is one feature of this. To avoid contributing to greater inequality, it is important that social protection systems adapt to these changing labour environments. For example, this requires ensuring non-discrimination and equal treatment for different contractual arrangements; adapting social insurance schemes to extend coverage for those workers previously excluded; and increasing compliance among employers regarding social protection contributions.⁶⁰ The rise of the “gig economy” also, arguably, gives further impetus to the need for the complementing of social insurance systems with non-contributory mechanisms, such as the universal basic income, in order to provide an adequate social protection floor.

Growing care economy

54. In the light of the ageing population and women’s increasing participation in work outside the home, the care economy is growing in all regions and is poised to create many jobs in coming years. According to United Nations estimates, the proportion of people aged 60 or above will multiply by 1.6 by 2050 and by 2.1 by 2100, compared

⁵⁵ www.un.org/en/climatechange/climate-solutions/green-jobs.

⁵⁶ www.ilo.org/global/docs/WCMS_213390/lang--en/index.htm.

⁵⁷ www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---asia/---ro-bangkok/---ilo-hanoi/documents/publication/wcms_630854.pdf.

⁵⁸ www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/how-the-ilo-works/WCMS_495276/lang--en/index.htm.

⁵⁹ www.un.org/en/climatechange/climate-solutions/green-jobs.

⁶⁰ www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---inst/documents/publication/wcms_559136.pdf.

with 2015.⁶¹ At the same time, multigenerational households are becoming less common, meaning more and more older persons live alone, or in institutions.

55. However, much current care work lacks benefits and protections and is characterized by low wages or non-compensation, as well as exposure to physical, mental and, in some cases, sexual harm.⁶² The care economy is also dominated by women workers. The gendered burden of care work has, inevitably, been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic as a consequence of school closures and the number of older persons in lockdown conditions. According to the World Food Programme and the Caribbean Community, 54 per cent of women compared with 47 per cent of men experienced an increase in unpaid domestic work, while 46 per cent of women compared with 35 per cent of men increased their childcare duties during the pandemic.⁶³

56. Families frequently turn to domestic workers to care for their homes, children and aging relatives. ILO estimates there are at least 67 million domestic workers over the age of 15 worldwide, of whom 80 per cent are women and approximately 17 per cent are migrant workers. Historically and across a diverse range of countries, domestic workers also tend to represent disadvantaged racial and ethnic groups.⁶⁴

57. Domestic work is an important source of income for women, representing as much as 14 per cent of female wage employment in Latin America and 11 per cent in Asia. The labour of domestic workers also enables other women to enter the paid labour market, thus contributing both directly and indirectly to women's greater participation in the labour force.⁶⁵

58. The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) and ILO have recently produced a policy tool that emphasizes the rationale for public investments in the care economy.⁶⁶ The tool helps to ensure that care work contributes to achieving target 5.4 of the Sustainable Development Goals, that is, to recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family as nationally appropriate, through a transformative approach to care policies.⁶⁷

Social protection programmes

59. Social protection policies have long been a key component in poverty and inequality alleviation, ensuring that no-one is left behind, but they also operate as a key tool in strengthening sustained and inclusive economic growth.⁶⁸ The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has supported 85 countries in implementing social protection schemes that protect jobs and informal workers and supporting women, young people and older persons. In Burundi, social protection was identified as a key priority in the National Development Plan for 2018–2027, and a National Social Protection Code was implemented in 2020.⁶⁹ The Code recognizes social protection as a right, specifying that everyone has the right to a standard of living sufficient to ensure their own health

⁶¹ *World Population Prospects 2019*, 2019 revision, available from <https://population.un.org/wpp/Publications/>.

⁶² www.ilo.org/global/topics/care-economy/dw-and-care-economy/lang--en/index.htm.

⁶³ www.cepal.org/en/events/burden-unpaid-care-work-caribbean-women-time-covid-19.

⁶⁴ www.ilo.org/global/topics/care-economy/domestic-workers/lang--en/index.htm.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/Headquarters/Attachments/Sections/Library/Publications/2021/Policy-tool-Care-economy-en.pdf.

⁶⁷ www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/---publ/documents/publication/wcms_633135.pdf.

⁶⁸ www.un.org/en/coronavirus/financing-development/meeting-jobs-social-protection-poverty-eradication.

⁶⁹ <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/WFP-0000132361.pdf>.

and well-being as well as that of their family, in particular through decent food, clothing and lodging. They also have the right to security in case of illness, incapacitation, old age or in other cases of loss of livelihood (subsistence) due to circumstances beyond their control. In Rwanda, more than 1.5 million people have benefited from the “Vision 2020 Umurenge Programme”, the country’s flagship social safety net programme that has extensive engagement with the World Bank.

60. In addition to ensuring no-one is left behind, social security transfers are also a key tool to tackle inequalities. In El Salvador, the universal social protection system includes non-contributory universal interventions, ensuring a social protection floor for the whole population, and is complemented by contributory components. The system is guided by rights-based principles and a life-cycle approach, with a focus on gender equality. Thanks in part to the system, El Salvador has seen a progressive decline in poverty and income inequality. More broadly, the social programme has generated productive chains and had an impact on other sectors of the economy, with an emphasis on strengthening local economies.⁷⁰ Examples of this include the mobilization of local microenterprises. The “school kits” programme, for example, directly links over 4,300 smaller enterprises to schools as providers of uniforms and kits generating, in turn, tens of thousands of jobs. Through its “glass of milk” programme, the school meals and health programme has contracted thousands of cattle farmers as suppliers, again driving rural economic development.

61. In recent years, universal basic income has been put forward as a means to address increasing labour market precarity, jobless growth and rising poverty and inequality.⁷¹ Temporary basic incomes can be a critical tool to offset the damage caused by shocks, such as pandemics. In 2021, UNDP called for the implementation of a temporary basic income, with a specific focus on women. They argued that 0.07 per cent of developing countries’ GDP, or \$51 billion in purchase power parity, could provide reliable financial security to 613 million working-aged women living in poverty.⁷² In Tuvalu, a temporary basic income scheme has been implemented to support citizens through the COVID-19 pandemic.⁷³ In Spain, a monthly budget of €250 million was approved in May 2021 to provide a minimum income guarantee equivalent to lifting 850,000 families out of poverty.⁷⁴

62. In response to population ageing, some countries have undertaken reforms of pension systems, such as a postponement of the retirement and admissible pension age, lowering benefits and increasing contributions. While these measures have been able to reduce the financial pressures on pension systems – which they were designed to do – such reforms need to be judged against their effects on social inclusion. While postponing or abandoning the retirement age is a potential instrument to enable people to work at later ages, such measures need to be complemented by social protection measures that provide support to those who are unable to work longer.

Bridging the digital divide

63. Digitalization is driving modern economies worldwide, changing the format of education and learning, modernizing the world of work and creating new opportunities for enhancing business and social resilience.⁷⁵ A first step towards

⁷⁰ www.social-protection.org/gimi/RessourcePDF.action;jsessionid=knwjNtIHq7LCBHrc9trXgRuJ5JRpoQ-7TE61652yMCRpd4dm-9st!241796269?id=53018.

⁷¹ www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2021/04/policy-brief-universal-basic-income.

⁷² www.undp.org/press-releases/undp-calls-temporary-basic-income-help-worlds-poorest-women-cope-effects-covid-19.

⁷³ Ugo Gentilini and others, *Social Protection and Jobs Responses to COVID-19: A Real-Time Review of Country Measures* (Washington, D.C., World Bank, 2020) (14 May 2021 update).

⁷⁴ United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), “Temporary basic income: protecting poor and vulnerable people in developing countries, July 2020.

⁷⁵ <https://unctad.org/news/making-fourth-industrial-revolution-work-all>.

digitalization, however, involves recognizing and closing the digital divide. In 2021, the Deputy Secretary-General, Amina Mohammed, remarked that “without decisive action by the international community, the digital divide will become the new face of inequality”.⁷⁶ While 78 and 87 per cent of households in Europe own computers and have access to the Internet, respectively, this compares with 11 and 18 per cent in Africa.⁷⁷ In Mexico, 78 per cent of 15-year-olds from households in the highest economic quartile own a laptop computer or tablet, and 95 per cent of these are connected to the Internet; in the lowest quartile, only 13 per cent own a laptop or tablet, and only 30 per cent of these devices are connected to the Internet.⁷⁸

64. Numerous policies and programmes are being implemented across the world to ease the transition towards increased reliance on digital technologies. In many cases, COVID-19 has spurred digital transformation. Countries have mitigated the challenges of school closures by broadcasting educational programmes through radio or television,⁷⁹ or by providing school-age children with new devices. In Uruguay, under the “Ceibal Plan”, the school-age population were provided with laptops or tablets, and in Guatemala, the Ministry of Education launched “Mineduc Digital” to expand online platforms and print materials to reach the most marginalized children in rural areas.⁸⁰

65. Recognizing that women and girls in rural areas are especially likely to suffer digital exclusion, the #eSkills4Girls fund provides financial resources to local initiatives that offer gender-sensitive skills training across countries in the global South. Funded programmes include “codehack training”, a virtual programme to equip young women from marginalized communities in six Kenyan counties with coding skills in web and app development and digital marketing. In Morocco, the Douar Tech association trains vulnerable young people, especially women and those in rural and peri-urban areas, in digital marketing, entrepreneurship and other tech-related skills. In Cameroon, “Data Girl Technologies” is a #eSkills4Girls-funded start-up focusing on tech skills for internally displaced girls, teenage mothers, women and girls who cannot afford school, with the aim of increasing their career pathways.⁸¹

66. Actions are also being taken to ensure digital inclusion for older persons. For older persons, the inability to gain access to timely digital information and health services has been a particular challenge during the COVID-19 pandemic.⁸² A growing range of new technologies, national policies and civil society initiatives are emerging that focus on increasing the digital skills of older persons, including for lifelong learning, social services and banking services.⁸³

Better data and demographic intelligence

67. Good data and strong demographic intelligence lie at the heart of any strategy to maximize human capital to bring about and harness the potential of the first and second demographic dividends. Population data is essential to not only understand the changing characteristics and needs of the population, but also to ensure evidence-based decision-making. Against this background, in his report to the Commission on resource flows (E/CN.9/2022/4), the Secretary-General raises serious concerns, as the report documents a low and falling level of official and private aid for population-

⁷⁶ <https://news.un.org/en/story/2021/04/1090712>.

⁷⁷ <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2020/The-Sustainable-Development-Goals-Report-2020.pdf>.

⁷⁸ https://repositorio.cepal.org/bitstream/handle/11362/45905/1/S2000509_en.pdf, pp. 6–7.

⁷⁹ Ibid., p. 3.

⁸⁰ www.unicef.org/lac/en/media/14246/file, p. 4.

⁸¹ www.equalsintech.org/eskills4girls-fund.

⁸² <https://longevity.stanford.edu/the-pandemic-has-accelerated-the-need-to-close-the-digital-divide-for-older-adults/>.

⁸³ <https://unece.org/digitalization/press/ageing-digital-era-unece-highlights-key-actions-ensure-digital-inclusion-older>.

related matters, notably population data and policy analysis, as well as the low level of aid for data systems more generally.

68. The 2020 census round offers an opportunity to modernize not only the capture, processing and use of population and housing census data, but also overall national statistical systems. The widespread integration of digitalization and georeferencing within the 2020 census round has brought faster and more efficient enumeration, transformational potential for locating those populations left behind and the potential for far more rational distribution of investments and interventions. Despite these widespread improvements, the implementation of the 2020 population and housing census round has seen massive delays owing to COVID-19. While a majority of Governments should be using fresh census results to update the Sustainable Development Goals and development plans, more than 80 countries are still coping with census delays.

69. Census remains the backbone of population data for most developing countries, as registry data continue to lag in both coverage and quality. Civil registration and vital statistics systems continue to have inadequate budgets; weak monitoring and coordination mechanisms; and lack of public demand. Digitalization is offering such systems numerous avenues for affordable expansion, including digitalized, electronic versions of such systems.

70. Age-disaggregated demographic data is a crucial tool to measure health, economic activity and social engagement. These data are critical to gathering intelligence on the demand for services and identifying areas to maximize potential human capital. In 2018, the Titchfield Group on Ageing-Related Statistics and Age-Disaggregated Data was established under the lead of the Office for National Statistics of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, to develop standardized tools and methods for producing both data disaggregated by age and ageing-related data, and encourage countries to do so, by playing a leading role in the dissemination of good practices across the world and facilitating collaborations between national statistical institutes.

71. Survey data is also a critical component for capturing demographic characteristics, living standards, human capital and public attitudes and aspirations. International comparative survey instruments, such as the Demographic and Health Surveys, Living Standards Surveys and the Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys, continue to provide valuable, cross-sectional data on household economics, health conditions, access to family planning and use of services.

72. The value of longitudinal data has long been appreciated to track changes both at the individual level, with or without interventions, and the societal level. Young Lives is a longitudinal survey of more than 12,000 young people in Ethiopia, India, Peru and Viet Nam.⁸⁴ The generations and gender survey explores inter-generational and gender relations between people, expressed in care arrangements and the organization of paid and unpaid work.⁸⁵ In 2018, the Ministry of Health, Labour and Social Protection of the Republic of Moldova became one of the most recent countries to launch the survey to support the reorientation of population policy into a human capital-grounded, data-driven and rights-based approach to tackling contemporary demographic challenges, including progress on the Sustainable Development Goals.⁸⁶

⁸⁴ www.gov.uk/research-for-development-outputs/early-child-development-informing-policy-and-making-it-a-priority-impact-case-study.

⁸⁵ www.ggp-i.org/about/.

⁸⁶ https://moldova.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/fisha_1_eng_final.pdf.

Measuring population impact on the economy

73. New tools and measures present more clearly the relationship between demographic change and socioeconomic development. National transfer accounts, in particular, provide a coherent accounting framework of economic flows from one age group or generation to another.⁸⁷ In doing so, they provide an insight into the economic nature and challenges of population change. National transfer accounts have been produced in more than 60 countries as part of the global network of national transfer accounts, with support from various United Nations agencies. In 2013, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat published a manual on national transfer accounts to guide countries on how to measure and analyse the generational economy.⁸⁸ UNFPA has supported institutional efforts to construct and use national transfer accounts in Africa, Latin America and Asia.⁸⁹

74. Multiple initiatives have been developed to further deepen the understanding of the linkages between population and development issues, including gender equality and climate change. Demographic data, coupled with the insights from national transfer accounts and their offshoots, are brought together in comprehensive population situation analysis reports produced with key local stakeholders with support from UNFPA, not least through a comprehensive manual.⁹⁰

Recommendations

75. Member States are encouraged to apply a human rights-based approach to population issues; recognize that demographic change is an opportunity rather than a threat; and maximize the potential of demographic dividends through human capital investments in health, education, empowerment and decent employment that reach all persons, in particular the most vulnerable.

76. Member States are called upon to achieve universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights, including family planning.

77. Member States are called upon to accelerate progress to achieve universal health coverage, including universal access to high-quality maternal and newborn nutrition and health care and greater global coordination on preparedness and response to health crises.

78. Member States are called upon to eliminate structural barriers, discriminatory laws and social norms that impede women's equal economic opportunities and create inequalities in women's labour force participation, entrepreneurship, pay, working conditions and social protection.

79. Member States are called upon to take all appropriate measures to end gender-based violence and eliminate harmful practices, recognizing that violence against women and girls is a major impediment to their social and economic development, with serious costs to the global economy.

80. Member States should ensure universal access to quality secondary education and workplace training, and expand access to lifelong skills development.

⁸⁷ www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/publications/development/NTA_Manual.asp.

⁸⁸ <https://ntaccounts.org/doc/repository/NTA%20manual%202013.pdf>.

⁸⁹ www.un.org/development/desa/pd/sites/www.un.org.development.desa.pd/files/undesapd_cpd55_2021_egm_dramani_presentation.pdf.

⁹⁰ United Nations Population Fund, *Population Situation Analysis: A Conceptual and Methodological Guide* (New York, 2010).

81. Member States should invest in job creation and promote decent work while advancing a sustainable and green economy, and increase income-generating opportunities in rural and urban areas.

82. In anticipation of global ageing and the growing importance of the care economy, and in the light of the current dependence of that sector on the insecure work performed by women and migrants, Member States are called upon to regularize benefits, protections and wages for care work.

83. Member States should adopt proven interventions to close the “digital divide” both in terms of access to the Internet and digital literacy.

84. Member States should ensure the availability of quality statistical data for inclusive development, including by completing in a timely manner the 2020 round of population and housing censuses and improving civil registration and vital statistics; and encourage the use of national transfer accounts and tools such as population situation analysis reports, to ensure the integration of population dynamics within national development planning.
