



ESCAP
Economic and Social Commission
for Asia and the Pacific



Expert Group Meeting Asia-Pacific Population and Development Report 2023

13-14 June 2023

13 June: 09:00 to 17:00, Bangkok time

14 June: 09:00 to 17:45, Bangkok time

Hybrid [by invitation only]

Concept Note

(as of 29 May 2023)

Objectives

The Social Development Division of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and the Asia Pacific Regional Office of UNFPA are co-organizing an Expert Group Meeting on the “Asia-Pacific Population and Development Report 2023”, at the United Nations Conference Center in Bangkok and online from 13 to 14 June 2023.

The Expert Group Meeting (EGM) is organized in preparation for the Seventh Asian and Pacific Population Conference to be held at ESCAP from 15 to 17 November 2023. The EGM will review a draft of the ***Asia-Pacific Population and Development Report 2023***, the basis for the deliberations at the Population Conference. The EGM will ensure that the draft is relevant, comprehensive, of high quality, and that it can effectively inform the Population Conference.

The structure of *Asia-Pacific Population and Development Report 2023* follows the priority actions of the [2013 Asian and Pacific Ministerial Declaration on Population and Development](#). It will also include an introduction, conclusions, and recommendations. The report will be informed by the latest country, subregional and regional evidence, including information on the Sustainable Development Goals. Preliminary information from national voluntary surveys on the implementation of the 2013 Asian and Pacific Ministerial Declaration on Population and Development will be integrated into the report as the surveys become available. The Report aims to cover the entire ESCAP region. It is scheduled to be released prior to the Population Conference.

Structure

The meeting will be composed of **several sessions focusing on the various chapters** of the *Asia-Pacific Population and Development Report 2023*. In each session, the main author of the report will provide a short introductory presentation, followed by comments from discussants

(5-7 minutes).¹ This will be followed by a response from the main author and by Q & A, providing an opportunity for all participants to comment.

In reviewing the report, the following questions per chapter should be considered:

- (a) Does the chapter provide a comprehensive overview of the issue for the entire ESCAP region²? If not, which issues are underexplored?
- (b) What additional data and information could be used?
- (c) What additional challenges, opportunities, gaps, and emerging issues should be addressed?
- (d) Are there any good practices and lessons learned, in particular at the subregional or regional levels, that need to be highlighted?
- (e) How are the main messages of this chapter related to the other chapters of the report? Are there some overarching trends and themes that should be highlighted in the introduction, conclusion and recommendations?

In addition, there will be **two sessions focusing on cross-sectional issues** and **two sessions on recommendations**. These will be important to discuss interlinkages of the different population and development issues and formulate conclusions and recommendations for the entire report.

The draft *Asia-Pacific Population and Development Report 2023* will be shared with meeting participants one week prior to the meeting in order to provide sufficient time to review the report in advance.

Organization

The Expert Group Meeting will be organized in **hybrid mode from 13 to 14 June 2023, in person and through Zoom**. The first day is scheduled from 09:00 to 17:00 (Bangkok time, GMT+7), and the second day is scheduled from 09:00 to 17:45 (Bangkok time, GMT+7). For in-person participants, the meeting will be held at the United Nations Conference Center in Bangkok, Meeting Rooms C-D.

Participants

The Expert Group Meeting, by invitation only, will bring together participants in an **expert capacity** who work on population and development issues. Participants will come from academia, government, civil society and United Nations entities.

¹ Written comments prior or after the meeting are also welcome.

² For a list of ESCAP Member States and Associated Members, please see: <https://www.unescap.org/about/member-states>.

Language and format

The meeting will be held in **English** and will feature presentations and interactive discussions. The meeting will not be recorded.

Expected outcome

It is expected that the discussions will provide **substantive feedback** to help guide the final revision of the *Asia-Pacific Population and Development Report 2023* and ensure that it serves as an effective input to the Seventh Asian and Pacific Population Conference.

A **report of the meeting**, summarizing the discussions, conclusions and recommendations will be drafted after the meeting and made available on the meeting website at [Expert Group Meeting Asia-Pacific Population and Development Report 2023](#).

Background

Population dynamics and development in Asia and the Pacific

Asia and the Pacific is home to 4.7 billion people or 60 per cent of the world's population. About 67 per cent of the population is of working age (15-64 years), about 22 per cent are children and youth (0-14 years) and about another 11 per cent are older persons (65 years or over). The population is projected to grow to 5.2 billion people by 2050, albeit at a declining rate. By then, the share of the children and youth and the working-age population will have declined to 17 and 62 per cent, respectively, and the share of the older population will have increased to 21 per cent.

Six of the 10 most populous countries in the world are in Asia and the Pacific, including the two most populous, India and China. Between 2023 and 2050, 12 countries/areas will experience a population decline, with most of these countries located in North- and Northeast Asia, including China, Japan and the Republic of Korea (in order of absolute population decline).

There is wide variation within these general trends. For example, while fertility in Asia and the Pacific is at or below replacement level of 2.1 births per woman in 30 out of 58 countries/areas with available data, representing 3.9 billion people or 84 per cent of the total population in the region, fertility remains at or above 3.0 births per woman in 13 countries, about 7 per cent of the region's population. Many of the countries with fertility above 3.0 births per woman are countries in special situations, mostly small island development states, landlocked developing countries, and least developed countries. Similarly, although life expectancy at birth has increased in Asia and the Pacific from 43 years in 1950 to 75 years in 2023, variations across the region remain. For example, in 35 countries/areas life expectancy at birth remains below the

regional average of 75 years. At the other extreme, in 11 countries/areas, children born today can expect to live 80 years or more.

Population and development changes over recent decades in Asia and the Pacific are a human success story, the result of improvements in public health and medical advancements, better nutrition and hygiene, increased education and training, and overall socio-economic development. Since the first Asian Population Conference in 1963, the region has become the main engine of global economic growth and innovation and transitioned from high to low levels of mortality and fertility, coupled with increased longevity. The demographic transition has spurred growth of the working-age and older populations, more people live in urban areas with smaller families, and there are more migrants in the region and beyond. The large number of older persons is a resource of knowledge and experience for children, youth, and the working-age population. People of different generations are now living together, learning from one another, and building their futures.

Yet challenges remain. For example, many countries face rapid population ageing amid an overall population slow-down while many people continue to lack social protection. Despite increases in life expectancy, healthy and active ageing remain elusive for too many, and, in many countries, sexual and reproductive health and rights are yet to be fully realized. Climate change and environmental crises threaten the lives and livelihoods of the population, including growing numbers of older persons, persons with disabilities, and women. Development is hindered by the digital divide and lack of respect for rights and choices, and policymaking suffers from a lack of disaggregated, timely, and relevant data. The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated existing vulnerabilities. These factors are obstacles to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030.

Seventh Asian and Pacific Population Conference

From 15 to 17 November 2023, ESCAP will organize the Seventh Asian and Pacific Population Conference at the United Nations Conference Center in Bangkok, Thailand, in collaboration with the Asia Pacific Regional Office of UNFPA and input from other regional partners and stakeholders.³

The intergovernmental meeting will coincide with the 60-year anniversary of the first Asian Population Conference, held from 10 to 20 December 1963 in New Delhi, India, the 30-year

³ According to resolution 74 (XXIII) of 17 April 1967 of the Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East, the Asian Population Conference was established as a statutory organ of the Commission, to be convened every ten years synchronizing with the decennial population and related censuses, for the consideration of all aspects of population questions and of their impact on economic and social development. Since its first session in 1963, the Asian and Pacific Population Conference has been convened six times. The sixth Conference was held from 16 to 18 September 2013 at ESCAP, and members and associate Members adopted the Asian-Pacific Ministerial Declaration on Population and Development by vote.

regional review of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, and the 10-year anniversary of the adoption of the 2013 Asian and Pacific Ministerial Declaration on Population and Development. It will also mark the half-way point in achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific.

The Seventh Asian and Pacific Population Conference will:

- (a) review progress in implementing the Asian and Pacific Ministerial Declaration on Population and Development and the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development in Asia and the Pacific;
- (b) identify good practices, lessons learned, priority actions and emerging trends in implementing the aforementioned documents in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; and
- (c) prepare a regional input to the global review of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development which will take place at the 57th session of the Commission on Population and Development in 2024.

The Conference will take place against the backdrop of demographic changes and socio-economic development in Asia and the Pacific. It will reaffirm that people are at the center of sustainable development and the interconnectedness of all dimensions of socio-economic development.

Contact details for further information

Ms. Sabine Henning

Chief

Sustainable Demographic Transition Section

Social Development Division

ESCAP

E-mail: escap-sdd@un.org

(For logistics)

Ms. Lawan Uppapakdee

Research Assistant

Sustainable Demographic Transition Section

Social Development Division

ESCAP

E-mail: (uppapakdee@un.org)