

UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

HOW GENERATIONS AND GENDER SHAPE DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGE

Towards Policies Based on Better Knowledge

Conference Proceedings



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This publication includes the documents, keynote papers and summaries of panel discussions at the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) Conference “How Generations and Gender Shape Demographic Change”, which was held from 14 to 16 May 2008 at the Palais des Nations in Geneva.

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The organizers of the Conference would like to thank the authors of keynote papers, panellists and participants for their contributions and engagement in the discussion, which led to the material contained herein.

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NOTE

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PREFACE

In the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) region, population ageing is the dominant demographic trend of this century. However, other pertinent demographic developments – such as decline of fertility to low or very low levels, increasing age at family formation, and changes in family patterns – also challenge many areas of public policy. The policy challenges include the reconciliation of work and family life, the promotion of intergenerational solidarity and collaboration, gender equality and flexibility in life-course transitions between education, work and retirement. In the Regional Implementation Strategy for the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (2002) and in the León Ministerial Declaration “A Society for All Ages: Challenges and Opportunities” (2007), UNECE member States committed to responding to these challenges.

Sustainable policy responses can be achieved if the causes and consequences of the demographic developments are understood and explained. In recognition of this fact, at the 2000 International Meeting on Generations and Gender, UNECE member States invited the UNECE secretariat to organize another round of region-wide data collection and research on population issues that would build on the successful experience with the Family and Fertility Surveys in the 1980s and 1990s. The meeting launched the Generations and Gender Programme, which comprises: (a) a survey covering a broad range of influences on demographic behaviour; (b) a related contextual database of national and regional trends and policies on these issues; and (c) analyses of these data.

After the several years required for conceptual and methodological work and data collection, the Programme has now started to deliver results for policymakers. To discuss how these results of innovative research can be used in developing policy responses to demographic change, UNECE organized the Conference on How Generations and Gender Shape Demographic Change. This forum involved both policymakers and researchers and covered the key policy areas where analyses of the Generations and Gender Programme can make a significant contribution, including intergenerational relations, gender equality, living conditions of older persons, low fertility, reconciliation of work and family life, and integration of young people in society.

This volume contains the keynote papers and a summary of contributions to the Conference as well as the background note by the secretariat and the conference report. It aims at disseminating the conference proceedings to a wider audience and thereby inspiring broader debate.

UNECE is grateful to the authors of the keynote papers, to the panellists and the participants for their engagement in discussion and contributions that led to the material contained herein. UNECE also wishes to acknowledge the support from the Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities of the European Commission, which was crucial in terms of organizing the Conference and preparing this publication.

It is expected that this volume will be of interest to a broad audience interested in population matters and will increase awareness about the need for policy responses to demographic change.



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