



UNECE Regional Conference

ENABLING CHOICES: POPULATION PRIORITIES FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

Geneva, Palais des Nations, 1-2 July 2013

Organized jointly by UNFPA and UNECE

BACKGROUND

UN General Assembly resolution 65/234 on the follow-up to the International Conference on Population and Development beyond 2014 (*ICPD Beyond 2014*), mandated the UN Population Fund (UNFPA) to undertake, in consultation with Member States and in cooperation with the regional commissions and other relevant organizations, an operational review of the implementation of the Programme of Action (PoA) agreed by the International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo in 1994. The outcome of the review processes taking place at the regional level will feed into the UN Secretary-General's global report, which will be considered in 2014 at the 47th session of the Commission on Population and Development (CPD) and at a Special Session of the UN General Assembly on *ICPD Beyond 2014*. During the GA Special Session, governments are expected to re-affirm at the highest political level their commitment to achieving the goals and objectives of the ICPD PoA.

In the region comprising Europe, North America, Central Asia and Israel, the UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) has coordinated the conduct of a global survey on ICPD PoA implementation in its Member States. Based on the survey results and available analytical studies, UNECE is preparing a report which will assess the progress made and identify good practices as well as constraints in implementing the ICPD PoA in the region. The report will be launched at the UNECE Regional Conference in July, which will mark the culmination of the review process in the region.

An organizing committee composed of representatives of UNECE, UNFPA's Eastern Europe and Central Asia Regional Office, the co-hosting government and civil society will lead preparations for the conference.

CONFERENCE PURPOSE

The conference will bring together 200-250 representatives of governmental authorities, including high-level officials, academia and civil society organizations, as well as members of national parliaments and other national and international stakeholders to review the progress that has been made towards achieving the goals and objectives of the ICPD PoA in the region, identify neglected areas, and pinpoint what needs to be done to accelerate the implementation of the PoA, address the emerging issues and reduce inequities.

OBJECTIVES AND PROCEEDINGS

1. Discuss the status of implementation of the commitments made in Cairo in 1994 in the region and outline the persistent and emerging issues to be addressed in the area of population and development, sexual and reproductive health and rights, gender equality and empowerment of women.
2. Highlight successful approaches (policies, strategies, programmes) and provide the basis for recommendations for scaling-up good practices within countries and across the region.

3. Raise awareness about the *ICPD Beyond 2014* process and possible synergies with the debate on the Post-2015 UN development agenda; mobilize political support, expand partnerships and urge allocation of adequate resources at the national and regional levels for the advancement of the ICPD agenda.

The Conference will be organized around five sessions. The opening plenary session will include a keynote speech, followed by a presentation and discussion of the UNECE regional report on *ICPD Beyond 2014*. Three thematic sessions will be dedicated to the following topics: *Population Dynamics and Sustainable Development*; *Families, Sexual and Reproductive Health over the Life Course*; and *Inequalities, Social Inclusion and Rights*. A panel session on *Partnership and International Cooperation* for advancing the ICPD agenda beyond 2014 will be conducted over the lunchtime on day two. Each thematic session will commence with a keynote presentation followed by two discussant interventions. Comments and notes from the floor will complete the session. The keynote presenters and the discussants will be leading experts from academia, governments, national parliaments and CSOs.

During the thematic sessions the following issues of concern will be discussed:

Population Dynamics and Sustainable Development - interrelationships between population, sustained inclusive economic growth and sustainable development; opportunities in the future for a harmonious balance between social, economic and environmental development centered on human-rights and equality principles

Families, Sexual and Reproductive Health over the Life Course - diversity of family formations and social-economic support to the family, family health and well-being; challenges in the area of sexual and reproductive health and rights; changing life course perspective

Inequalities, Social Inclusion and Rights - inequity and vulnerable population groups as well as the factors that contribute to their formation or alleviation, as they relate to population and development, sexual and reproductive health and gender equality and women's empowerment

The panel session on ***Partnership and International Cooperation*** will focus on the complexity of the 21st century architecture for development cooperation in the area of population and development; domestic funding and unmet needs; renewed commitments and emerging donors in the region for funding the ICPD PoA.

CONFERENCE OUTCOMES

The Conference will contribute to the assessment of the progress made in implementing the ICPD PoA in the UNECE region by outlining the achievements as well as remaining challenges and emerging issues. During the two-day conference lessons learned and good practices will be highlighted.

The Conference is also expected to make recommendations on future policy actions, synergies with the post-2015 UN Development agenda and on how to effectively place the rights, gender equality and empowerment of women, as well as of adolescents and youth, at the core of sustainable development.

The Conference will conclude with the Chairperson's summary of the two-day discussions. The proceedings of the Conference will be published subsequently.

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

1. Participants / Official delegations

UNECE Member States are invited to send delegations of up to three persons, including the head of delegation. The Members of national Parliaments and representatives of civil society organisations (CSOs) are expected to be considered for nomination as part of the national delegations. The participation in the Conference of the UNFPA programme country delegations will receive financial support to cover participation costs.

Representatives from UN specialised and related agencies and delegates from other inter-governmental organisations, scientists and representatives of CSOs (apart from official members of country delegations) will participate as experts and/or observers to the Conference.

All participants attending the Conference are expected to make their own travel and accommodation arrangements.

2. Registration

Member States are kindly requested to communicate to the UNECE secretariat the composition of their delegations and complete the registration forms by 10 June 2013. Same registration deadline applies to all participants in the Conference. A registration form is available at <http://www.unece.org/icpd-2014/unece-regional-conference.html>

3. Languages and interpretation services

English, French, and Russian are the languages of the Conference. Statements made in any of those languages will be interpreted into the other two languages.

4. Conference Venue

The Conference will take place in the Palais des Nations, salle XVIII, Geneva, Switzerland.

5. Calendar of preparatory events

6 -7 December 2012	Informal expert meeting to identify key issues/themes to be addressed at the Regional UNECE conference in July 2013 (UNFPA EECARO and UNECE)
25 - 26 March 2013	First thematic expert meeting "Population Dynamics and Sustainable Development" (UNFPA EECARO and UNECE)
15 - 16 April 2013	Second thematic expert meeting "Reducing Inequities, Fostering Social Inclusion" (UNFPA EECARO and UNECE)
25 - 26 April 2013	Third thematic expert meeting "Life Course, Sexual and Reproductive Health, and Families" (UNFPA EECARO and UNECE)
6 May-10 June 2013 (tbc)	Electronic consultation with Member States on Regional UNECE Report (UNECE)

6. Contact details

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For more information please visit http://www.unece.org/pau/icpd_beyond_2014.html or <http://icpdbeyond2014.org/>