

Regional Conferences on Population and Development – ICPD Agenda Beyond 2014

Twenty years after the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) Programme of Action was adopted by global consensus in Cairo, the United Nations has launched a series of regional conferences to assess the progress made so far and the challenges and gaps faced in its implementation. Organized by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the United Nations Regional Economic Commissions, government representatives, parliamentarians and civil society are convening in the world's five regions to discuss the future of the ICPD agenda beyond 2014.

Regional Conferences for the Arab States and Europe, Central Asia and North America have just concluded. A brief summary of outcomes is below. Next on the calendar are: [Latin America and the Caribbean](#) to be held in Montevideo, Uruguay on August 12-15, African States in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia on September 2-6, and Asia in Bangkok, Thailand on September 16-20, 2013, respectively.

Three thematic ICPD International Review Conferences on [Global Youth](#), [Human Rights](#) (*by invitation only*), and Women's Health will also discuss developments in the context of the ICPD Programme of Action's implementation.

Regional Conference on Population and Development in the Arab States (Cairo, Egypt / 24-26 June 2013)

The purpose of this Conference was to renew the promise of Cairo and assess development challenges and population dynamics in a changing Arab world with a population of 370 million. During these two days, 350 participants reviewed the regional findings of the global survey on population and development trends with the aim to contribute towards a better understanding of the current state of the Arab population and identify policy options to accelerate the implementation of the ICPD PoA beyond 2014 and feed into the post-2015 development framework.

While achievements have been attained in education and health in wealthier countries, there is still a number of pending issues to address: traditional harmful practices such as female genital mutilation and child marriage are still high in the region as is also the unmet need of an estimated 20 million women for family planning. A high fertility rate coupled with high unemployment exacerbates poverty and marginalization. An Arab Declaration on Population and Developmentⁱ, serving as a reference and guidance document for the region, was expected to be adopted. [Parliamentarians](#), [Arab Women's Coalition](#), and the [Arab Youth Coalition](#) have issued separate Calls to Action/Declarations to strengthen the review process.

Regional Conference on Population and Development for Europe, Central Asia and North America (Geneva, Switzerland / 1-2 July 2013)

Fertility levels overall remain low in most countries of the region, and as a result of increasing longevity and low birth rates, populations are ageing. The number of people aged 65 years and above has increased to 14% or 174.5 million. At the same time, societies are becoming more diverse due to increasingly complex migration patterns and the changing nature of families, gender relations and individual life choices.ⁱⁱ

As a result, the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) identified a number of gaps that require further policy attention. These include: a) Gender and family policies need to facilitate the reconciliation of both paid work and unpaid family responsibilities; b) Legal frameworks need to be better adapted to the emergence of non-traditional family formations; c) More attention is needed to the support of a growing number of single-parent families, and the rights related to fatherhood; d) Persons with disabilities, the poor, migrants and older persons need better access to sexual and reproductive health services; and e) Sexual and reproductive health services need to be better integrated with the primary health care systems. The [Conference Outcomes](#) will constitute the agenda for implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action beyond 2014.

For more information, please visit [ICPD Beyond 2014](#)

If you attended or are planning to attend any of the Regional or Thematic Conferences scheduled for later in the year, please share your experience with PGA.

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ⁱ To be posted as soon as it is available.

ⁱⁱ United Nations Regional Information Center for Western Europe, "Current population changes are an opportunity, not a threat if coupled with smart policies," July 1, 2013, available at: <http://www.unric.org/en/latest-un-buzz/28596-current-population-changes-are-an-opportunity-not-a-threat-if-coupled-with-smart-policies>