

POPULATION AGEING AND DEVELOPMENT

SOCIAL, HEALTH AND GENDER ISSUES

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REPORT OF AN EXPERT GROUP MEETING
POPULATION AGEING AND DEVELOPMENT:
SOCIAL, HEALTH AND GENDER ISSUES WITH A FOCUS ON THE POOR IN OLD AGE
29-31 OCTOBER 2001
VALLETTA, MALTA

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NOTES:

The views and opinions expressed in this report are those of the experts who attended the Expert Group Meeting on Population Ageing and Development, held in Valletta, Malta on 29-31 October 2001, and do not necessarily reflect those of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).

The designations employed and the presentation of material in this publication do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries. The term 'country' as used in the text of this report refers, as appropriate, to territories or areas. The designations of 'developed' and 'developing' countries are intended for convenience and do not necessarily express a judgement about the stage reached by a particular country or area in the development process.

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FOREWORD

Population ageing has become one of the most significant demographic processes of modern times. An inevitable consequence of the demographic transition and the shift to lower fertility and reduced mortality, the ageing of the world's population has many countries facing unprecedented numbers and proportions of older persons. In much of the world, populations are ageing at an extremely rapid pace. The proportion of older persons, that is those aged 60 years and over, currently comprises around 10 per cent of the world's population, and is projected to increase to 22 per cent by 2050. About two thirds of older persons live in developing countries and the majority are women.

In April 2002, the international community will come together in Madrid, Spain, for the Second World Assembly on Ageing. The Assembly is scheduled to adopt a plan of action that will guide policy formulation and programme implementation in the area of ageing. As part of the preparatory activities leading up to the Second World Assembly on Ageing, UNFPA convened, in collaboration with the United Nations Programme on Ageing, AARP (formerly known as the American Association of Retired Persons) and HelpAge International, an Expert Group Meeting on Population Ageing and Development. The meeting was hosted by the International Institute on Ageing (INIA) in Malta from 29-31 October 2001 and was attended by representatives from government agencies, academia, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), United Nations agencies and Regional Commissions and observers ([Annex 1](#)).

The Expert Group Meeting considered various approaches to alleviating poverty in old age, especially among older women. Participants exam-

ined traditional and innovative ways of enhancing the ability of families and communities to provide support and care for older persons. They also discussed how countries, through training and capacity-building, might evolve policies appropriate to their own cultures, traditions and socio-economic circumstances to alleviate poverty among the elderly. The meeting considered ways to mainstream ageing issues into a broader development framework that takes account of lifelong individual development, an enhanced productive role for older persons, multi-generational relations and the close link between ageing and development.

The meeting included presentations and panel discussions on a wide range of technical issues related to population ageing as well as open discussion of the presentations. This publication provides a summary of the papers presented and the discussions, along with the meeting's conclusions and recommendations. An edited selection of the papers presented at the meeting will be published at a later date.

On behalf of UNFPA, I would like to take this opportunity to thank AARP and HelpAge International for their generous support for the meeting, and our colleagues at the United Nations Programme of Ageing for their excellent collaboration in the preparations for the meeting. Special thanks go to the International Institute on Ageing for kindly hosting the meeting, arranging for the highest level of political commitment from the Government of Malta, and for providing excellent support throughout.

I would also like to thank all the participants at the Expert Group Meeting for sharing their expertise in the area of population ageing. I would like to thank my colleagues from the Geographical Divisions and the Information, External Relations and Resource Mobilization Division. Finally, I would especially like to thank the Population and Development Branch of the Technical Support Division, especially the team listed on page x, for the hard work and commitment in organising the meeting and preparing this report.

Mari Simonen



Director
Technical Support Division
February 2002

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