

**Expert Group Meeting on  
Population Ageing, Intergenerational Transfers and Social Protection**

Santiago, Chile, 20-21 October 2009.

**Meeting Programme:** <http://www.eclac.cl/celade/agenda/9/36949/PreliminaryProgram.pdf>.

**Report**

The United Nations Population Division organized, in collaboration with the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, the Expert Group Meeting on “Population Ageing, Intergenerational Transfers and Social Protection”, held in Santiago, Chile, 20-21 October 2009. The meeting, held as part of a regional technical cooperation project funded by the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) of Canada, was co-sponsored by UNFPA, the University of California at Berkeley, and the International Union for the Scientific Study of Population (IUSSP). A member of the IUSSP Scientific **Panel on the Impacts of Population Ageing** was part of the organizing committee.

The meeting examined different ways in which population ageing in Latin America and in other regions of the world are transforming the needs for economic support and social protection for different population groups. These questions can now be better understood and addressed with newly available information on intergenerational transfers generated by the National Transfer Accounts (NTA) project. This project, of wide international scope, has set to measure and analyze intergenerational reallocations with a common conceptual framework and methodology. The Population Division continues to collaborate with UN ECLAC in this effort, and in disseminating the results of the research. The expert group meeting focused attention on five countries of the Latin American region (Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, Mexico and Uruguay), but included also some discussion of countries in Northern America, Europe, Asia, and preliminary results for some African countries.

The meeting brought together more than 40 experts, including academic researchers, experts from UN-DESA and other international organizations such as the ILO, IUSSP, and the World Bank, as well as government officials, who provided their policy perspective in the final panel of the meeting. The experts discussed, among other topics, the policy implications of population ageing for economic support ratios, which reflect the total number of equivalent producers per consumer in the population. Most of the Latin American countries are in the phase of “demographic dividend” where the changes in the age structure lead to increasing support ratios. However, these ratios will start to decline during the coming decade as population ageing intensifies, and this will require adjustments in life-cycle work and consumption. In all countries studied, the role of the public sector in transferring resources is important, typically largest in providing support for the elderly, notably in Brazil, Uruguay and Chile. Familial transfers are another major source of support, but mostly for children, not significantly for the elderly. Asset-based reallocations (life-cycle saving in housing, private pension accounts and other real or financial assets) are likely to become a more important source of financing old-age consumption in the region, as the newer generations of adults are surviving to ever older ages, and several national pension systems have introduced or expanded private saving schemes.

The policy makers present stressed the importance of addressing the needs of all generational groups in the population simultaneously, and especially the key role of the public sector in protecting older persons and in filling the gap of underinvestment of education, and in children in general. Policies and programs directed to children and education in the countries of the region are considered to be essential to reduce socioeconomic inequality and contribute to increase the well-being and productivity of the future generations of workers and elderly. The meeting also addressed the impacts of the present financial and economic crisis on economic security in old age, and analyzed different options to address the growing health expenditures in ageing societies. A selection of the papers presented at the meeting will be published in *Notas de Población*, a review published by ECLAC/CELADE-Population Division.