

Population

Towards Better Life For Population

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Editorial

I am pleased to present to the reader the 45th Issue of "Population" Magazine. The first topic of this issue includes an introduction to one of the axes of the Population Policy of the State of Qatar (2017-2022); namely, Urban Growth, Housing and the Environment. The primary goal of this axis is to create and develop urban centers far from greater Doha, to provide clean urban environment and to ensure the sustainability of natural resources, through transforming urban centers outside Doha to attractive areas for citizens and residents, solving the housing problem for citizens and residents, and providing a clean urban environment.

The Issue's article presents an overview of the key aspects of the changes that occurred in Singapore's population and families over the last half century in order to provide a context for understanding the continuity and changes in this country. It provides a rare opportunity to examine the complex relationship between development and family changes with its unique hybrid of East and West. The article focuses on policy measures designed to achieve family cohesion, an integrated society, and a sustainable population. Policies covered include marriage and fertility measures, immigration policies, as well as social protection programs such as the public housing policy, measures to encourage childbirth and marriage, and interventions for vulnerable populations such as low-income families and disadvantaged elderly. The article also highlights the current major challenges in family and population issues faced by Singapore.

In the context of attention to youth issues as it constitutes one of the axes of the Population Policy of the State of Qatar, this issue presents an extensive interview with His Excellency Mr. Salah bin Ghanem Al-Ali, Minister of Culture and Sports, in which he explains the attention paid by the wise political leadership of the State of Qatar to the youth as a momentum of development and construction, highlighting the Ministry's contribution to developing the capacities of youth, shedding light on their role in building

and developing the country, caring for the talented and gifted persons, and working to develop their skills, as well as general supervision of the bodies concerned with youth welfare in the state, supporting and following up on their work and coordinating among them.

The Spotlight of this issue presents the Regional Workshop on Modernization of Official Statistics in the State of Qatar organized by the Planning and Statistics Authority, which was held in Doha during the period 4-5 November 2019. The workshop concluded with the adoption of the Doha Declaration by the participants. The Workshop hosted representatives from international, regional and local research organizations and centers, and a significant number of United Nations organizations, as well as a number of ministries, government agencies and research centers, alongside experts, specialists and leaders of statistical work in Qatar.

In order to keep its readers informed of its various activities, the fifth topic of this issue includes a brief overview of the PPC activities in 2019, including the completion of a number of reports related to population and development issues, foremost of which are the Final Report on The Implementation of Proposed Solutions To Address The Demographic Imbalance; Qatar Population Status Report 2019; and Qatar Technical Report on the Follow-up on the Implementation of the General Framework of the Population Strategy for the GCC Member States (2015 - 2016-2017) pursuant to the recommendation of the 17th Meeting of GCC Committee for Population Policies, as well as the Final Report on The Implementation of Proposed Solutions To Address The Demographic Imbalance.



Dr. Saleh Mohamed Al Nabit
Chairman of Permanent Population Committee

Follow ups

Qatar's Population Policy: Urban Growth, Housing and the Environment axes



By Dr. Yousif Breik, Permanent Population Committee

In the previous issue (44) of "Population" Magazine, we shed light on the first axis of the Population Policy of the State of Qatar (2017-2022). In this issue, we will focus on the second axis, namely: "Urban Growth, Housing and Environment."

This axis includes three main components:

- Urban Growth
- Housing
- Environment

These components have been expressed through the following basic goal:

"To create and develop urban centers far from greater Doha, to provide clean urban environment and to ensure the sustainability of natural resources."

In order to achieve this goal, this axis tries to answer the following questions:

What are the appropriate means and procedures to ease the pressure on Doha?

What should be done to solve the housing problem, especially for those with low incomes and those those who intend to marry ?

How to provide a clean urban environment? What are the appropriate measures to rationalize the use of water and energy and sustain their development for future generations?

To answer such questions, the Population Policy has defined a host of related goals and procedures, which we will try to present according to the three components mentioned above as follows:

First: Urban Growth

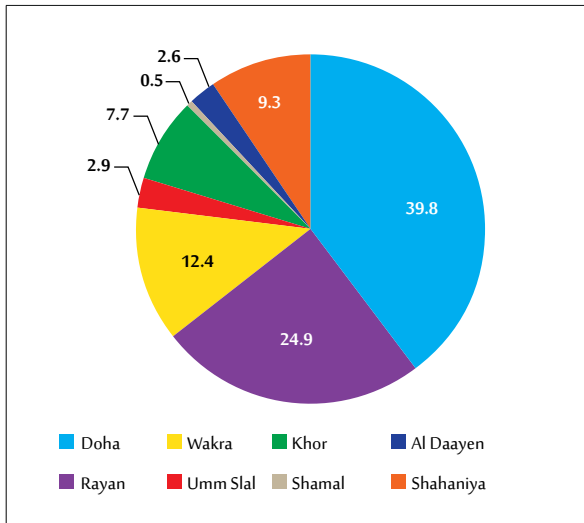
The concept of urban growth refers to changes in the size and growth of the population in cities due to the natural population movement (births and deaths), and spatial population movement (internal migration and expatriate labor). Usually, urban growth accompanies the expansion of the organizational space of cities as a result of the horizontal and vertical extension of urbanization in order to meet the basic needs of the population, such as housing, roads and services in various forms.



The deep economic and social transformations witnessed by Qatar played a prominent role in the concentration of economic, social and cultural services in urban centers, especially major ones, which led to the congestion of these centers, which (according to the results of the General Census of Population, Housing and Establishments 2010) absorb 100% of population as of 2010.

According to the latest and most recent statistics available, the following figure indicates that 39.8% of the total population are concentrated in Doha Municipality ¹(*), while the rest is distributed among other urban centers.

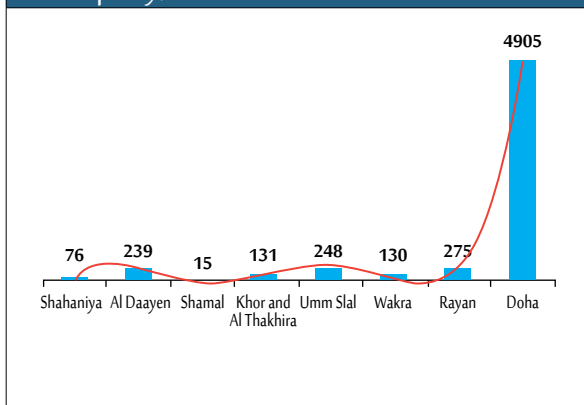
¹ *Despite the increase in the total size of population of Doha during the period 2010 -2018, the percentage of its population declined from 47% in 2010 to 39.8% in 2018 of the total population of the State of Qatar during the two years mentioned.



Source: Planning and Statistics Authority, Labor Force Sample Survey - Statistical Analysis 2018

There is no doubt that this rapid urban growth in Qatar in general, and the municipality of Doha in particular, is one of the fruits of comprehensive development and an evidence of the extent of economic and urban progress in Qatar. Yet, this urban growth has problems, foremost of which is the imbalance in the geographical distribution of the population. While Doha Municipality registered 4905 people per square kilometer, the North Municipality did not exceed 15, as shown in the following figure:

Population density per square kilometer by municipality, 2018



Source: Planning and Statistics Authority, Labor Force Sample Survey 2018

These and other indicators related to urban growth were the reason behind Qatar Population Policy's call for achieving the following goal:

"Transforming urban centers (existing and new) outside Doha to attractive areas for citizens and residents"



This goal has been shaped into a number of procedures, namely:

1. Expand the improvement of infrastructure of existing urban centers and provide such infrastructures to new (or planned) cities and areas in municipalities outside Doha
2. Expand the establishment of "Government Services" complexes, health facilities, cultural and sports clubs, shopping centers, libraries in areas and cities outside Doha.
3. Expand construction of schools (including foreign schools) by granting citizens special privileges, to motivate them towards investment in remote areas; open university branches and provide educational and training institutes and centers that correspond to the activities of existing urban centers outside Doha.
4. Provide job opportunities, promote traditional crafts and support SME for youth outside Greater Doha.
5. Provide appropriate facilities and benefits to encourage private sector investment at municipalities beyond Greater Doha borders.
6. Enact a legislation to pay "location" allowance for citizens residing outside Doha.

Second: Housing

With the great economic growth of Qatar and the rapid increase in population, especially in the Greater Doha, signs of the housing crisis appeared. Thus, rentals increased to an unprecedented scale, and it became difficult for citizens and residents of low income to find suitable housing. Therefore, securing a housing with suitable conditions and rentals has become urgent.

Hence, the housing sector in the State of Qatar, like

other sectors, received a great deal of attention, which was represented in Cabinet Resolution No. (4) of 2008 regarding the rules and procedures for granting Qataris the usufruct of the housing regulation the amount allocated for the purchase of a plot and housing loan at a value of QR 1.200.000. The interest in the housing issue in Qatar was not limited to the aforementioned resolutions. and legislation, but also included various development strategies and policies, especially the Population Policy of the State of Qatar 2017-2022, which stressed in its sub-goal the necessity of:

"Solving the housing problem for citizens and residents, especially those with low-income"

This goal has been shaped into a number of procedures, namely:

Expand the construction of labor cities and ensure they meet proper living conditions.

Enact a legislation to standardize housing systems among the three sectors (public, private and mixed), and regulate rents.

Implement the urban centers proposed in the Master urban plan for State of Qatar.

Implement of municipal spatial plans.

Prepare, approve and implement Qatar National Housing Strategy.

Third: Environment and Sustainable Development

Like other countries, Qatar faces various environmental challenges. Maintaining and protecting air quality from

several sources of emissions is one of the major global issues and an obsession for peoples who are suffering from the problems of overcrowding and Urban-industrial sprawl at the expense of green areas, in addition to the huge escalation in the numbers of vehicles on the roads and inside the main cities.

In order to avoid the negative effects of such challenges on the sustainability of development, the Population Policy of the State of Qatar focused on the issue of the environment and sustainable development, especially on providing a sound and clean urban environment, and ensuring the sustainability and rationalization of natural resources so that the present generations do not deplete the wealth and resources, but rather work to sustain their development for future generations.

This strategic goal has been translated into the following sub-goal:

"Providing a clean urban environment and to ensure sustainable natural resources, especially water and energy"

In order to achieve this goal, the Population Policy proposed the following procedures:

Activate Qatar green building code and encourage real estate investors and citizens by granting facilities for building permits when applying green building code.

Increase in green spaces and number of trees, gardens and parks.

Article

Singapore's Inclusive Family-Oriented Population and Social Policies and SDGs

BY Prof. We-Jun Jean Yeung¹

This article provides an overview of the key aspects of the changes occurred in Singapore's population and families during the last half of century, highlights the critical public policies that help shape the evolution, and identifies the challenges that Singapore's family and population trends oppose for its future development. A broad view of the shifting demographic and family landscape and related policies are presented in order to provide a context for understanding the continuity and changes in this country. Singapore provides a rare opportunity to examine the complex relationship between development and family changes with its unique hybrid of East and West, of cosmopolitanism and conservatism...

The Article focuses on its national ideologies about family and relevant policy measures designed to achieve family cohesion, an integrated society, and a sustainable population. Policies covered include marriage and fertility measures, immigration policies, as well as social protection programs such as the public housing policy, measures to encourage childbirth and marriage, and interventions for vulnerable populations such as low-income families and disadvantages elderly. It also highlights current major challenges in family and population issues faced by Singapore.

Introduction:

Singapore has experienced one of the most rapid modernization phenomena known in the world in terms of the rise in living standards, urbanization, increase in educational attainment and technological use. It is a unique case study for evaluating the relevance of Goode's work and of other subsequent theoretical frameworks that stress the importance of ideational changes in explaining global family changes, most notably, the developmental idealism

and second demographic transition perspectives (SDT). The developmental idealism paradigm posits that the modern form of family seen in Western Europe and United States is considered as desirable and attainable. A set of beliefs and values about modern western families including attributes of individualism, marriage at a mature age, courtship as a part of the process leading to marriage, intergenerational independence, gender equality, and planned and low fertility will spread and provide a model of world view for people in other regions as societies develop (Thornton 2001; Thornton et al., 2012).

Key Indicators of Singapore Population

(OVERALL POPULATION ('000	JUN 2018	JUN 2019
Citizen Population	3,471.9	3,500.9
Permanent resident (PR) population	522.3	525.3
Resident population	3,994.3	4,026.2
Non-resident population	1,644.4	1,677.4
Total population	5,638.7	5,703.6
AGE PROFILE OF CITIZENS	JUN 2018	JUN 2019
(%) Proportion aged 65 and above	15.2	16.0
(Citizen median age (years	41,7	42,02

Source: Singapore Department of Statistics, Population in Brief, 2019

Singapore's National Ideology, Family Values and Related Policies

Singapore is distinct in how the government has institutionalized the family system and officially upheld a set of family values as core national ideology. In January 1991, a white paper on Singapore's Shared Values was presented to the Parliament which, after two amendments in the phrasing, was adopted by the House as the nation's ideology (Straits Times, 1991). Note that this was proposed 25 years after the independence when the country's basic

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needs had been fulfilled and a range of social problems such as crimes, drug abuse, and abortion began to rise. The objective of establishing the Shared Values was to preserve Singapore's Asian values and identity by incorporating elements of the country's cultural heritage, attitudes and values in an era of globalization where Singaporeans would be exposed to external influences, primarily Westernization. The establishment of the Shared Values reflected Singapore leaders' desire to formulate a set of unified national ideologies and seek a developmental path that is distinct from the Western models for the country (Chua, 1995; Hill and Lian, 1995).

"Family as the basic unit of society" is one of these five core values. The government leaders were concerned over the health of the family as a central institution in the society. Some raised the fear of the "declining morality" exhibited in the more casual sexual behavior, declining fertility, rising divorce rates, and the increasing disputes between parents and children (Tarmugi, 1994).

It was under this context that the government later specified the "Singapore Family Values" in a report as: (1) love, care, and concern; (2) mutual respect, (3) filial responsibility; (4) commitment; and (5) communication (Ministry of Community Development, 1994). These family values are intended to facilitate both the private functions of family in providing emotional support and companionship to individuals as well as its public functions of socialization, maintaining social order and cohesion, and caring for the young and the old. The report begins with the proclamation: Family is the foundation of the society. It contributes to the formation of civilizations and the survival of human species. The family not only provides love, food, shelter, but security and sense of belonging. Strong family bonds provide a sense of shared identity and a life time of joy and fulfillment. (p.1)

It concludes, "Happy, harmonious, and healthy families make for a strong community and a cohesive society. The family is the heart of the nation, family values, its life blood" (p.16). Subsequently, the government has been depicting the ideal family types through many social policies. As a city state home to three major ethnic groups (i.e. Chinese, Malay, and Indian), another core national value of Singapore is "racial and religious harmony". The other three values adopted were:

- 1) Nation before community and society above self,
- 2) Community support and respect for the individual, and
- 3) Consensus, not conflict. Together, these constitute the

key for nation building in Singapore to achieve the national developmental goals of social stability and economic growth.

In order to build an integrated and vibrant country, the Singapore government has rolled out a set of critical developmental policies. The government has long taken an interventionist strategy with regard to both population and family policies by influencing marriage and fertility behavior as well as intergenerational relations. In the early years, the focus has been to reduce the rapid population growth due to a combination of a decline in mortality rate and the high fertility rate. The family planning policies were implemented with the aim of bringing down the total fertility rate of about 6 children per women in the 1960s. Family planning programs such as the one with the "Please stop at 2" slogan launched in 1972, along with the very rapid economic and social development during that time, brought down fertility rates at an astonishing rate to a replacement level in 1975. Since then, fertility rates have continued to decline to a level that were much lower than expected, which has subsequently raised concerns among policy makers about population sustainability. In 1987, the government started to reverse the population strategy and launched pro-natal policies, which have since been expanded to an expansive set of measures to promote marriage and parenthood (detailed in Saw, 2012). Currently, these measures include providing cash incentives of the one-time baby bonus, establishing a child development account with government matching of family savings for a child's education and health expenditures, a 4-month maternity leave, 2-week paternity leave, child care leave, child care subsidies, and so on. Other social policies introduced in the country include its public housing policy and social assistance programs that reward marriage, parenthood, filial piety, and prioritize family as the first line of defense and self-sufficiency. Examples include priorities for public housing for married couples, particularly those with children, and substantial subsidies for choosing to live with or nearby one's parents. Singles do not have access to public housing until 35 of age. Despite these efforts, fertility rates had continued to decline. During these decades of low fertility, a carefully calibrated immigration policy has brought a large number of immigrants into the country to help maintain economic vitality and growth. Through these policies, state defines ideal family types and behavior, and set limits around the formation and dissolution of Singapore families. Specifically, the policies have largely

awarded heterosexual two-parent families with children and three-generation families. Other family forms such as never-married or divorced single-parent families have received limited social benefits. Behaviors such as cohabitation and divorce have been discouraged. Out-of-wedlock births are treated as illegitimate and same-sex marriage as illegal. Today, Singapore faces a different set of challenges in its family and population.

As the country culminates its national history of half a century in celebration of its vibrant economic growth and multiculturalism, the issues of population sustainability and social integration have become vital concerns that need to be addressed for its next phase of development. The Singapore story can shed light on global social changes and contribute to studies on the relationships among families and populations, public policy, and stratification in an international comparative context.

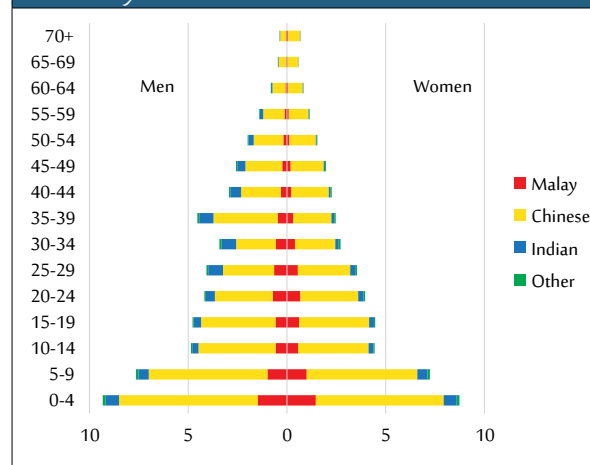
Changing Demographic Landscape

The total population of Singapore in 1965 was slightly shy of 2 million. In the subsequent few decades, with an annual population growth rate between 1 to 3 percent, the population had doubled to about 4 million by 2000. By 2010, the population had further increased to about 5 million through a combination of natural growth and immigration. In recent years, however, the annual growth rates have declined rapidly to the current level of 0.1 percent in 2017 due to a conscious effort to reduce immigrants. These fluctuations in growth rates can largely be explained by changes in marriage, fertility rates, and the country's migration policies. As of 2016, Singapore's total population has tripled from its original size to 5.6 million. Among its total population, 3.4 million are Singapore citizens, 0.53 million are permanent residents, and the remaining population, that is, 1.65 million or about 30 percent of the total population, consists of non-residents, including dependents, international students, and individuals who have come to Singapore to work.

Age, Gender and Ethnic Compositions

Across the three major ethnic groups, the population of Singapore in the late 1950s was characterized by a large proportion of children and young people, as indicated by the acute triangle shape of the age-gender structure of the population in the following figure.

Figure 1: Singapore Population Structure by Ethnicity in 1957



As of 1957, the population comprised approximately three-quarters Chinese, 15 percent Malays, 8 percent Indians, and a small “other” category consisting of people of other ethnic origins. Since then, the ethnic composition of the Singapore population has remained quite stable due to a conscious calibration in the immigration policy.

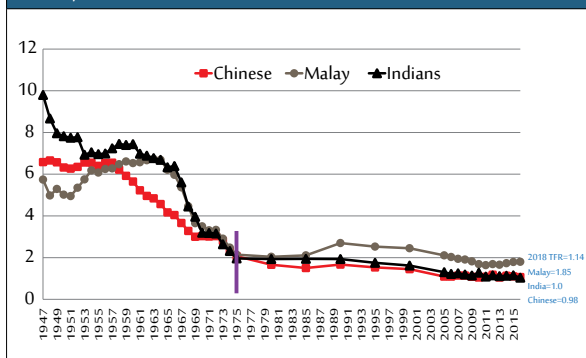
Declining Fertility

Over time, Singapore has witnessed a combination of declining fertility and the continued gains in longevity (Saw, 2012). Figure 2 shows the trends in total fertility rates (TFR) by ethnicity from 1947 to 2016 (Saw, 2012; Singapore Department of Statistics, 2017a). A steady decrease in fertility had been observed for all the three ethnic group, though the decline has varied in terms of the time when it started and the speed at which it has continued. Prior to the late 1950s, Malays had the lowest TFR (5.7) and Indians the highest at almost 10, with Chinese hovering around a fertility level of about 6.5. For Chinese Singaporeans, the high fertility rates at that time reflected the remnant influence of their traditional view of “More sons, more blessing”. In the late 1950s, the decline in TFR first started among the Chinese population, making them the ethnic group with the lowest TFR until 2016. Although Indians maintained the highest TFR during the earlier period until the late 1960s, they have thereafter experienced a consistent decline in fertility, and especially since the early 1990s, they have held very similar levels of TFR to those of the Chinese. In the case of the Malays, the TFRs even increased during the 1950s and mid-1960s, before moving downwards since the late 1960s. Consequently, they have maintained the highest TFR since 1970.

Singapore, along with a few other countries, has

experienced the most rapid fertility decline ever recorded in the world. As has been noted above, by 1975, the TFRs for all the three racial groups had reached replacement level, and even fallen below it in the case of both the Chinese and Indians. The TFRs have fallen further and further over the past four decades despite the increasingly expansive policy measures to encourage marriage and parenthood, adding Singapore to the list of societies where the phenomenon of “ultra-low fertility” has worried demographers and policymakers (Jones, Straughan, & Chan, 2009). Over the years, the trend has shown a temporary rise in the years of the Dragon followed by a retreat in the year after. However, the general declining trend is evident though there is a clear variation for the three race groups. In 2015, the TFRs were as low as 1.10 and 1.15 for the Chinese and Indians, respectively. In contrast, among the Malays, after a rapid decline between the mid-1960s and mid-1970s, the TFR leveled off at the replacement rate between the mid-1970s and mid-1980s, climbed to around 2.5 in the 1990s and early 2000s, and then started falling again since the mid-2000s. Since 2006, the TFR has also been declining for all the groups along with the TFR for Malays, which was 1.8 in 2014. In 2016, the TFR for the Indian population dipped to 1.04, even lower than that for the Chinese (1.07).

Figure 2: Total Fertility Rates in Singapore by Race, 1947-2018



Source: Yeng & Hu (2018) Family and Population Changes in Singapore

Note: Total fertility rate refers to the average number of live-births each female would have during her reproductive years if she were to experience the age-specific fertility rates prevailing during the period.

With the drastic fertility decline between the 1960s and the 1970s and increased longevity for all ethnic groups, the composition of the population age has changed significantly, though the ethnic composition has remained largely constant. The figure demonstrates the evolving age structures of the Singapore population from 1957

to 2010, by ethnicity. As can be seen from this figure, Singapore has gone through a dramatic process of aging over the contemporary period. As a result, the shape of the population pyramid has changed from that of an acute triangle to a flipped trapezoid. In 1957, those aged 0-14 years accounted for about 42 percent of the total population, but by 2010, this age group constituted only about 13 percent of the total population. At the other end of the age spectrum, those aged 65 and above account for less than 2 percent of the total population, and the share of this category in the total population increased to 9.0 percent in 2010, and further to 14.4 percent in 2017. The old age dependency ratio has declined from 10.4 in 1990 to 4.4 in 2017. Moreover, this aging process applies to all the major ethnic groups. However, it is most pronounced among the Chinese Singaporeans, as a result of the lowest fertility rates and longest life expectancy among the Chinese over the last four decades (Lim et al., 2013).

Figure 3: Singapore population 1970 by Ethnic Group

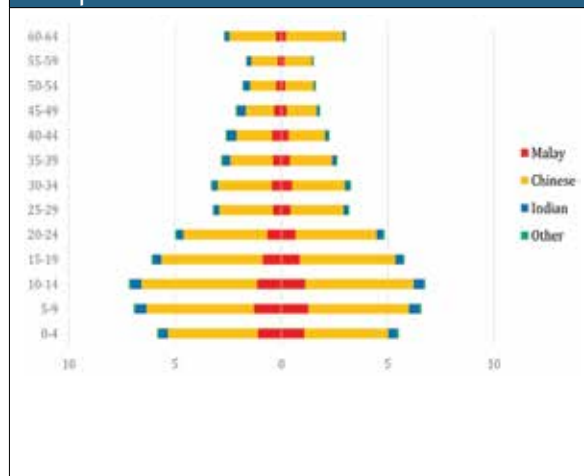


Figure 4: Singapore population 1990 by Ethnic Group

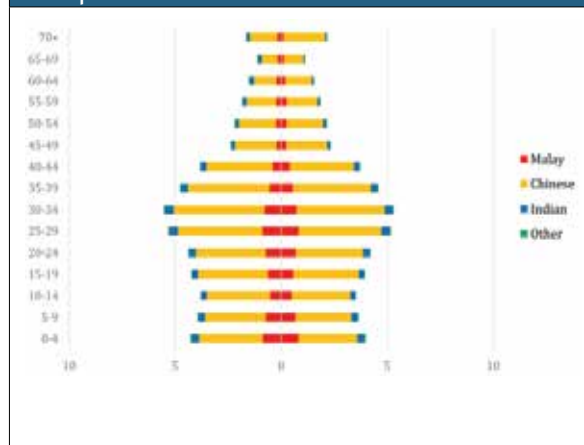
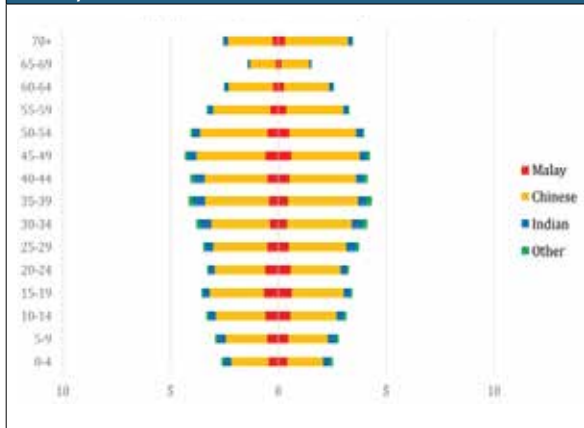


Figure 3: Singapore population 1970 by Ethnic Group



A remarkable feature of Singapore's declining fertility is the prevalence of childlessness among Singapore's women. Official data shows the percentage of childless women and the percentage of childless among ever-married women by birth cohorts, based on the 2010 Census data. While less than 5 percent of the women who were born before 1925 did not have any child, nearly a quarter (23.2 percent) of those born between 1966 and 1970, who are now beyond their childbearing age, were childless. Even among those who were married, many did not have any children. For example, 10.6 percent of the ever-married women born between 1966 and 1970 did not have any children, while this figure was only 1.6 percent for women who were born between 1925 and 1930.

Changing Marriage Patterns

The sustained sub-replacement fertility in Singapore is a direct result of the incidence of delaying marriage and rising non-marriage. In Singapore, out-of-wedlock birth remains a rarity. In 2014, there were only 446 babies, or about 1 percent of the total live births, born to single mothers in Singapore (Registry of Births and Deaths, 2015). For all the four population groups, there has been a steady increase in the median age at first marriage from 1965 to 2016. The singlehood rate has been on the rise over the past few decades though the trend varies by ethnicity. The most dramatic increase has been occurring among Chinese women. At the age cohort of 30-34 years, the percentage of females who remained single tripled between 1970 and 2010. Specifically, 11 percent of the women in 1970 remained single, and this figure rose to 30 percent in 2010. By the age cohort of 35-39 years, 6 percent were still not married in 1970. This rate more than tripled to 20 percent in 2010. The singlehood rates among Malay women aged

30-34 years started at a much lower level but rose just as quickly, tripling from 3.9 percent in 1970 to 12.7 percent in 1980, then declining slightly in 2000 and rising again to 16 percent in 2010, accounting for half of the rate for the Chinese. For Malay women aged 35-39 years, the singlehood rate increased until 1990 and then leveled off, hovering at 9-10 percent. Most intriguingly, the singlehood rate among Indian Singaporean women increased just as quickly between 1970 and 1990, but declined sharply in the following two decades. As of 2010, the Indian women accounted for the lowest level of singles—8.5 percent among those aged 30-34 years, and about 6 percent among those aged 35-39 years, that is, less than one-third of those for the ethnic Chinese. The reason for this sharp drop in the number of single Indian women since 1990 is unclear. One potential explanation is that the waves of selective Indian immigrants since the 1990s mostly consisted of married families, which could have brought down the overall singlehood rates among Indian residents. Overall, the singlehood rates among those 30-34 years old for all race groups combined are 9.7%, 20.9% and 25.1% in 1970, 1990, and 2010. In 2015, the singlehood rate has increased to 25.5% for those aged 30-34 and 17% for those aged 35-39.

To help understand the high rate of singlehood in Singapore, an in-depth interview conducted with 30 never-married Chinese Singaporeans in 2010/11 identifies a few factors. Among the reasons cited, long work hours and work pressure are a hindrance to active social life and dating (Jones, Zhang & Chia, 2012). In addition, young adults tended to prioritize freedom and career success and do not think marriage or childbearing necessary life goals. They were hesitant to become married before establishing financial security and success in career, concerned about losing freedom and the opportunity for self-development after marriage, feared to fail in marriage, and felt the pressure of high living cost in Singapore. Most of them felt little social pressure in getting married or to bear children and consider these as personal choices rather than familial or social duties (Jones et al., 2012).

Delaying Parenthood

Parenthood is largely coupled with marriage in Singapore. As Singaporeans enter marriage at progressively later ages, mothers give birth at older ages too, although the change in the timing of childbearing is much less drastic than that seen in fertility or in marriage. Married couples, in general,

still start entering parenthood relatively soon after marriage. The median age of mothers of first-order births increased from 29.3 in 2004 to 30.5 in 2016. Over the same time period, the median ages of mothers of second and third-order births also increased by about one year to approximately 33 and 34, respectively.

Despite the general trend of rising age at first birth, mothers of different ethnic groups enter parenthood at significantly different ages. Overall, first-time mothers among the Chinese are four years elder than their Malay counterparts, and two years elder than their Indian counterparts. In 2016, on an average, Malay Singaporean women had their first birth at 27.6 years, as compared to 29.4 years for Indian and 31.2 years for Chinese Singaporeans.

Increased Diversity

In addition to the changes occurring due to ageing and declining fertility rates, delaying marriage rates, and increasing singlehood, the diversity of the contemporary Singapore's population has also increased due to a significant increase in immigration, inter-ethnic and cross-border marriages over time. Since independence, Singapore has adopted a model of multiracialism; each racial category——“Chinese”, “Malay”, “Indian”, and “Others”, (officially condensed as CMIO)——has its own culture and language. Over time, the state has managed to maintain a nearly constant proportion of these ethnic groups through calibrated immigration regulations, with the majority Chinese accounting for about three-quarters of the population, the Malays accounting for about 14 percent, and the Indians for 9-10 percent of the total population. Despite the stable proportion by race over the years, there has been much “mixing and matching” across the cultures.

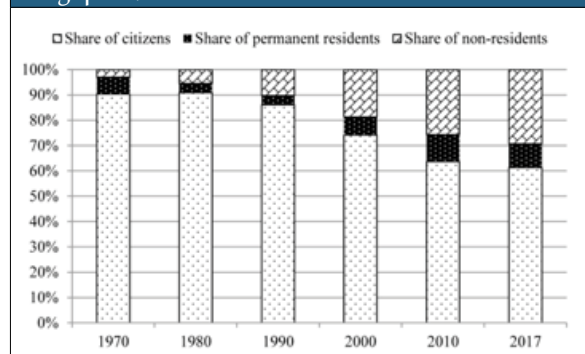
Immigration

The phenomenon of immigration is nothing new to Singapore, which has been an immigrant society since the late nineteenth century. As of the 1940s, more than 40 percent of Singapore's total population was born in foreign lands (Yap, 2015). Amidst the rapid industrialization and economic development after its independence in 1965, Singapore began to reopen its doors to foreign manpower. Calibrated immigration has been an important policy in Singapore, implemented with the aim to achieve two purposes: (1) to meet the labor market demand and ensure economic growth and global competitiveness; and (2) to alleviate the impact of the persistent ultra-low fertility rate

on the aging and decline of the workforce and population.

The figure shows the relative share of citizens, permanent residents, and non-residents among Singapore's population from 1970 to 2017 (Singapore Department of Statistics, 2016a, 2017a). In 1970, Singapore had a population of 2.07 million, of which 90.4 percent were citizens, 6.7 percent permanent residents, and 2.9 percent non-residents.

Figure 5: Changing Proportions of Citizens, Permanent Residents, and Non-residents in Singapore, 1970-2017



The non-resident population had increased at an unprecedented pace in the first decade of the twenty-first century, accounting for 25.7 percent of the total population, up from 18.7 percent in the previous decade. Since the global recession of 2008–09, the growth rates for both non-residents and residents have declined dramatically. In 2010, as an effort to stabilize the country's population size and composition, the annual number of new permanent residents granted was cut drastically from a peak of about 80,000 in 2008 to about 30,000, and has since remained at that level. As of 2017, of the total population of 5.6 million, citizens account for 61.3 percent, permanent residents comprise about 9.4 percent, and the share of non-residents has risen to 29.3 percent.

Foreigners living, working, or studying in Singapore are subject to distinct regulations for residency, employment, and settlement (Yap, 2015; Yeoh, 2007). A majority of the non-resident population in Singapore comprises low-skilled and semi-skilled laborers, referred to as “foreign workers”. In 2016, among 1.67 million non-residents, 44 percent were laborers engaged in construction and other manual work, 14 percent were domestic workers, and 11 percent were workers in various industries such as retail, manufacturing, and healthcare (Singapore Department of Statistics, 2016b). These foreign workers are expected to leave Singapore when their work permits expire, when their contracts are completed, or when they are no longer employed. They

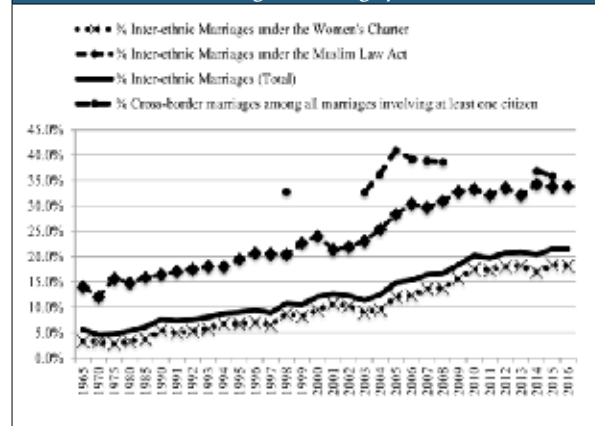
may not marry a Singaporean citizen or permanent resident without the prior approval of the Controller of Work Passes, or have children or settle in the country.

In contrast, with a two-prong policy, the skilled laborers working in managerial, executive, or specialized jobs and investors, or “foreign talent”, are not restricted by such regulations and are even encouraged to settle in Singapore as the country values human resources for its development. These skilled employment pass holders may also apply for dependent or long-term visit passes for their spouses, unmarried minor children, and parents. Foreign students are also encouraged to study, work, and eventually take up residency in Singapore. These two groups of foreigners constitute about 15 percent of the non-resident population in 2016. The remaining non-resident population includes dependents of Singapore citizens, permanent residents, and work pass holders (16 percent).

Increasing Inter-ethnic and Cross-border Marriages

Inter-ethnic marriage has been used as a barometer of ethnic relations and social integration, as social scientists perceive intermarriage as the signal of the final erosion of social distance between groups (Qian & Lichter, 2007). As a society modernizes, credentials and skills are expected to matter more than ascribed characteristics such as ethnicity in advancing socioeconomic mobility. Widespread urbanization and universal education may weaken the strength of traditional ethnic and religious boundaries characterizing marriage formation (Hirschman, 1983). Over the past few decades, Singapore has experienced enviable economic development and social transformations. Various studies have suggested that the period from the 1960s to the mid-1980s displays little change in the overall rate and types of intermarriage (Kuo & Hassan, 1976; Lee, Potvin, & Verdieck, 1974; Lee, 1988). As shown in Figure 1.10, intermarriages constituted only 5–6 percent of the total marriages prior to the 1990s, although the number of intermarriages has been increasing. Also, the inter-ethnic marriage rate for Muslims was about three times larger than that for non-Muslims. Starting from the 1990s, intermarriage rates have been increasing steadily. As of 2016, one in five marriages in Singapore involved brides and grooms from different ethnicities. About 34 percent of the total marriages under the Muslim Law Act are inter-ethnic, and so are about 18 percent of the total marriages under the Women’s Charter.

Figure 6: Proportion of inter-Ethnic Marriages and Cross-border Marriages in Singapore, 1965-2016

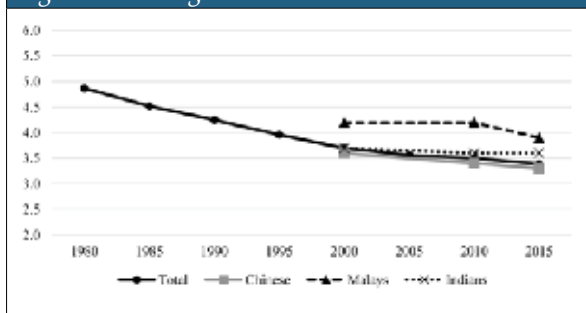


Another distinctive feature of the Singaporean population and family life is the high prevalence of cross-border marriages. Over time, transnational marriages have continued to account for more than one-third of all marriages involving citizens (see Figure 1.10). The trends in transnational marriages from the 1960s to the early 1990s are not clear due to lack of relevant data. From 1998 to 2016, the proportion of transnational marriages among all marriages involving citizens ranged between 33 percent and 41 percent.

Changing Family Size and Compositions

As a result of declining fertility and marriage, the average household size in Singapore has been decreasing. In 1980, the average household size was 4.9. thirty-five years later, an average household in Singapore includes about 3.4 persons. Household size also varies by ethnicity. From 2000 to 2015, data show that among the 3 major ethnic groups, the Malay households are the largest in size, followed by the Indian households, and then the Chinese households. Based on the three data points (data for early years are not available), the size of the Malay households did not change between 2000 and 2010, but declined significantly between 2010 and 2015. In contrast, the size of the Indian households declined slightly between 2000 and 2010, and remained stable in the following five years. The Chinese household size continues to decline across the observation years. In 2015, the average household size was 3.9 for Malay, 3.6 for Indian, and 3.1 for Chinese households.

Figure 7: Average Household Size 1980-2015



Three-generational Households

The three-generation family structure has been seen as an ideal family type by Singaporean leaders since the beginning of independence. The country's first Prime Minister, Mr. Lee Kwan Yew, believed that such a family form has been "a great strength for continuity in bringing up of the next generation" and has "transmitted social values, more by osmosis than by formal instruction" (Lee, 1982). As a strong advocate of the three-generational household, he once said, "We must preserve this precious family structure if our society is to regenerate itself without loss of cultural vigor, compassion and wisdom" (Lee, 1982). Over time, Singapore has had various measures, such as housing policy or tax incentives that provide larger financial incentives for adult children to live with their parents, to encourage this family type.

With the demographic shifts and socioeconomic changes, three-generational households have nevertheless become a smaller share of the households. Between 2000 and 2014, the proportion remain stable, with about 10 percent of all resident households comprised three generations (Ministry of Social and Family Development, 2015). A vast majority (more than 85 percent) of the three-generational households include a married head and his or her spouse living with parent(s), while the rest of the households are headed by a single parent who was never married, or is divorced, separated, or widowed. Among these three-generational households, the proportion with at least one family member aged 65 years and above increased from 70 percent to 72 percent from 2004 to 2014 with an increase in the age of the Singaporean population.

Although the prevalence of three-generational households has declined, about a quarter of the elderly live in the same estate with their children, and another quarter of them live in an estate near-by their children. Intergenerational ties remain strong. For example, the 2005 National Survey of Senior Citizens revealed that nearly 95 percent of the elderly respondents aged 55 years and above were

in contact with their children at least once a week and 74 percent of them talked to their children on a daily basis (Ministry of Community Development Youth and Sports, 2005). The 2006 Survey on the Social Attitudes of Singaporeans shows that a great majority (91–99 percent) considered their family as close-knit both emotionally and financially (Ministry of Community Development Youth and Sports & National Family Council, 2006; The National Family Council and the Ministry of Community Development, 2009). In order to promote intergenerational ties, The Singapore government has introduced various social policies over the years to encourage families to live together or to live close their parents' homes, such as providing tax credits for caring for elderly parents, a bigger housing subsidy when living in close proximity to parents, or building bigger public houses to accommodate three-generational families. These policies help create the "pseudo-extended families" that are common in Singapore and maintain intergenerational ties among Singaporeans (Shantakumar, 1995). Family relations have, however, become more complicated as gender role and intergenerational norms change over time. Yun and Yun (2004) investigated three-generation families in Singapore to examine how family members of different generations and of different genders negotiate with both traditionally defined modes of conduct and newly emerging norms as they deal with work and family demands. They documented the process of family members creating and recreating their own unique roles in the family and challenged the view that the family is eternal and unchanging, observing rather that it is in a state of flux and uneven transformation.

In addition to the decrease in three-generational households and the trend of a smaller family size, other family forms in Singapore, such as single-parent families, blended families, and one-person households, have emerged over time. In the next section, we review the various new family forms exemplified by divorced families, stepfamilies, single-parent household, and one-person households.

Divorces and Remarriages

In the case of marriages registered under the Women's Charter, the divorce rates have been on the rise since the mid-1970s, reaching their peak since the mid-2000s but seem to have plateaued since 2010. In the case of marriages registered under the Muslim Law Act, the divorce rates have risen more dramatically, reaching a peak in 2003 and starting to decline rapidly. This decline is possibly due to the government's

increased effort to support families through counseling and a reduction in the number of Muslim marriages among couples marrying at a young age. The divorce rates for marriages registered under the Administration of Muslim Law Act are consistently higher than for those solemnized under the Women's Charter. This may be a reflection of the relatively weaker legal barriers against divorce and the higher social tolerance for divorce among the Malay community, as compared to those under the administration of the Women's Charter.

The "non-traditional" family forms have increased over the years. The proportion of stepfamilies is likely to rise before reaching a plateau or starting to decline. The proportion of marriages in which one or both partners had previously divorced, by ethnic group between 1980 and 2015 has raised. The trends reflecting the share of stepfamilies are similar to those pertaining to divorce rates. Under both systems governing marriage and divorce, the share of stepfamilies continued to rise until the late 2000s, and then started to level off or decline. Under the Women's Charter, remarriages are more prevalent among inter-ethnic marriages than among the co-Chinese or co-Indian marriages. Given the higher divorce rates for marriages solemnized under the Muslim Law Act, it is not surprising that the share of stepfamilies is higher than those under the Women's Charter.

Single-parent Households

Unlike western countries such as the United States, and similar to its East Asian counterparts, Singapore is associated with a relatively low prevalence of single-parent families. This is partly due to the persisting social stigma attached to out-of-wedlock childbearing in Singapore and the lack of social assistance for single-parent families. Most of its single-parent households have thus resulted from widowhood, divorce, or separation. The proportion of single-parent two-generation households declined slightly from 8.6% in 1990 to 7.2% in 2000 and has since remained fairly stable at around 7 percent out of the total Singapore's resident households. This proportion, however, does not include households with single parents residing with their parents which are counted as a three-generation household. However, over time, the proportion of divorced or separated single-parent households increased from about 39 percent in 2000 to 47 percent in 2014, while the proportion of households with widowed or never-married single parents declined from 61 percent to 53 percent (Ministry of Social and Family Development, 2015).

Increasing Prevalence to Live Alone

As a consequence of delaying marriage, increasing singlehood, declining fertility, growing childlessness, and aging, many Singaporean residents find themselves living alone. The proportion of one-person households rose from 5.2 percent in 1990 to 11.9 percent in 2015. Of all the households headed by an elderly person (aged 65 years and above), 9.4 percent consisted of only one person in 1990. This rate doubled to 18.6 percent in 2015. More elderly women than men live alone, due to widowhood. Among households wherein the head is younger than 35 years, about 7–9 percent were one-person households in 1990. These households mostly comprised those where the household head had remained unmarried. It is not clear why there was a sudden peak of such households in 2010. Between 2000 and 2015, there was an increasing proportion of one-person households among those aged 55 years and above. In 2000, about 19 percent of those who lived alone were aged 65 years and above, 14 percent were aged 55–64 years, and 67 percent were below 55 years. In 2015, about 28 percent of those who lived alone were 65 years and above, 26 percent were from the second oldest age group, and 56 percent were below 55 years. There was a large decline in the share of those aged below 35 years among the one-person households between 2010 and 2015. We do not fully understand the reasons for this drop. It may be related to the large reduction of immigrants who tend to be of young ages, or a potential data issue in the survey. In 2014, those who had never been married constituted more than half of the one-person households (Ministry of Social and Family Development, 2015). Statistics by ethnicity are not available for this household type. Research shows that the main factors leading to the increasing proportion of persons who live alone include the aging trend, increased singlehood and divorce rates, and migration (Yeung and Cheung, 2015). We can thus expect that one-person households will continue to grow in Singapore. The data presented here show that today's Singapore family and population landscape looks distinct from what it was 50 years ago. As the population grows in size, becomes older and more ethnically mixed than ever, it is useful to understand the antecedents and consequences of these changes. These trends have much to do with the Singapore government's family, housing, and immigration policies that uphold the ideal family value in two-parent heterosexual families, strong intergenerational ties, and multiculturalism. It is timely to reflect on the extent to which these policies have helped achieve the developmental objectives for the country.

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Interview

with H.E. Salah Bin Ghanem Al-Ali

Minister of Culture and Sports in the State of Qatar



1. Since youth are the mainstay of the present, strength of the future and the main pillar of the progress and prosperity of nations, the Emiri Decree of 2016 defined a set of competencies related to youth. So what are these competencies?

Qatar National Vision 2030 constitutes a beacon that guides the aspirations of the nation's wise political leadership and is considered a bridge that connects the present and the future. It aims to nurture and build Qatari human who is capable of dealing with the requirements of his age while preserving his value system in which he maintains the protection of his society. The wise political leadership's attention to youth as the momentum of development and construction is evident in assigning the responsibility for their advancement to the Ministry of Culture and Sports (MCS) as stipulated in Emiri Decree No. 4 of 2016 that indicated its mandates and functions in sharpening the capacities of young people; strengthening their role in building and developing the country; sponsoring the talented and the gifted among them; and working to develop their skills. In addition, MCS is assigned with the general supervision of the bodies concerned with youth welfare in the state to support and coordinate their works; issuing licenses for them and setting conditions and criteria for the establishment of youth clubs, centers, committees and associations.

The Ministry of Culture and Sports (MCS) defines young people as person between the ages of 15 and 40. This definition is consistent with the definition of the United Nations which sets the beginning of youth stage at the age of 15, as it is the year that witnesses the actual beginning of progress towards individual and societal responsibility of the person with the beginning of the secondary school stage. But MCS's definition extends to the age of 40 as it is the year constituting the stage of the real transition to maturity and bearing responsibility as stated in the Holy Qur'an in Surat Al-Ahqaf in the Almighty saying, "[He

grows] until, when he reaches maturity and reaches [the age of] forty years, he says, "My Lord, enable me to be grateful for Your favor which You have bestowed upon me and upon my parents and to work righteousness of which You will approve and make righteous for me my offspring. Indeed, I have repented to You, and indeed, I am of the Muslims."

In order to carry out its mandate related to the youth, MCS established within its institutional structure a department which is the Department of Youth Affairs. It consists of three main sections which are the Section of Youth Centers and its competencies can be summarized in supporting and sponsoring different youth institutions and supervising their activities. For the first time ever, the Ministry has developed Youth Development and Empowerment Section, whose tasks can be summarized in increasing youth participation in the society, while discovering, refining, and supporting youth talents culturally and scientifically, in addition to organizing youth participation in various events, such as festivals, conferences, and camps, etc. The third section is the youth work organization and development section which is responsible for controlling the establishment of youth institutions according to the criteria set by MCS and granting them the necessary licenses, collecting and analyzing statistical data related to youth in addition to proposing policies and preparing the general plan to develop youth work in the country.



2. The Ministry of Culture and Sports is the authorized entity to develop an integrated strategy for youth. Do you seek to develop such a strategy, or do you see that the general strategy of MCS is sufficient because it includes youth issues?

Since the number of institutions and bodies working in the youth field is clearly increasing, the need has become more urgent for a national youth policy that forms an agreed upon national framework. Through this policy, the general directions shall be defined for the youth advancement and empowerment to play their role in development. On the level of strategies, attention to youth is one of the three pillars of the strategy of the Ministry of Culture and Sports, supported by the Second National Development Strategy 2018-2022. The strategy works to empower young people in order to promote the effectiveness of their role in the society and prepare a generation that has entrepreneurship as an essential part of its character formation and identity, and with positive participation and pursuit of excellence and creativity as part of its personal traits and qualities. One of the most important goals of the strategy is to prepare the national youth policy, develop life skills for young people and build their capacities in order to enable them to consciously interact with the requirements of the age, and promote youth participation in public affairs, as well as to engage them in managing their affairs by establishing an advisory committee to HE the Minister of Culture and Sports for youth affairs. The strategy aspires to develop to form a space in which young people address their issues, concerns, aspirations and ambitions through the project of establishing the Qatar Youth Council within MCS's strategy.



3. What are MCS's plans to help young people (as individuals) establish small developmental projects? Do you have future directions to enable youth clubs (as a group) to establish such investment projects?

MCS seeks and actively works to embrace youth initiatives and encourage entrepreneurs to establish their developmental projects and establish investment projects. Over the past few years, MCS implemented the youth work pioneers program in three batches, with the total of graduates reached 82, among them a good number of girls. The graduates were able to conclude 18 contracts with MCS alongside youth and cultural centers, and a number of them established companies that were able to conclude 3 contracts to provide different services.



4. What about volunteering work? Does MCS have specific programs and plans to encourage young people for this type of work and promote the spirit of civil and community participation?

MCS works to motivate youth to acquire the culture of volunteerism through training courses, interactive workshops and theoretical lectures aimed at consolidating the culture of volunteering and social responsibility by enhancing youth participation in managing public work, while making room for them to launch initiatives and organize community activities that turn volunteering into a culture and a practice. In this context, Ministerial Resolution No. 59 of 2019 was issued approving the statute of the Qatar Center for Voluntary Work as an incubator for youth initiatives of a voluntary nature for young people from Qataris and residents.

Tamm Volunteer Network also works as an electronic platform for volunteer work. It comes in response to the State's efforts to promote social work participation and enhance the awareness of youth on the importance of volunteering at both individual and establishment levels. TAMM Network seeks to gather the scattered volunteering forces into one melting pot in an administrative, scientific, and up-to-date method. The Network contributes to building a database of volunteers and connecting volunteer pioneers with establishments / volunteering opportunities across the State of Qatar. It

aspires to instill the values of solidarity and synergy among youth in order to develop their personal capacities to contribute to the service of society.



5. Based on our belief in youth capacities and their creative abilities, does the Ministry have specific programs and plans to discover and refine youth talents, both culturally and scientifically, and to nurture and support them in coordination with the competent authorities?

The Ministry is keen to develop its programs and plans to discover and refine young talents through projects translated into clearly defined activities in coordination with all concerned authorities. The Ministry oversees the implementation of sectoral projects in the second national development strategy 2018-2022, concerned with discovering and refining talent through the Youth Capacity Development Project. Through implementing these projects during the coming years, we hope to achieve the desired impact and expected result on the youth category.



6. Among the successful tasks of any institution concerned with young people is to help them move to the world of work by providing resources and services in vocational guidance, e-learning, employment, and entrepreneurial training. What are your ministry's efforts in this field?

The Ministry works through public and specialized youth centers to provide an incubating environment for training and learning for entrepreneurship, by urging youth centers to adopt these projects and support them by training associates on planning and implementing mechanisms related to entrepreneurship and business. The Ministry also organized three courses from the Youth Work Pioneer Program, in addition to several workshops and training courses in this field.



7. What are the strategic directions of the Ministry of Culture and Sports to protect youth from delinquency, terrorism and extremist tendencies?

We are fortunate that young people in Qatar are very aware and that have , and is, protected them from the pitfalls of extremism. A survey conducted by the Ministry on youth participation in public life indicated that young people are dealing with a high level of vigilance with social media platforms that have become a fertile field for spreading destructive thoughts. As well, the ministry works through its national identity promotion program aimed at spreading a value system that works to preserve the elements of the national identity for all groups of society, especially young people, and motivate them to have loyalty and devotion for the sake of the country in light of the challenges presented by the current circumstances.

8. What efforts has your ministry made in organizing

the engagement of youth in local, Arab and international conferences, courses, competitions, camps, trips and festivals?

Within the framework of empowering the Qatari youth, the Ministry of Culture and Sports is keen to engage the youth in organizing youth, cultural and sports events. It strives to coordinate with a number of partners so that youth attend training courses and intellectual and cultural competitions. Moreover, the Ministry is working on compiling a database with the names of distinguished youth to represent the State of Qatar in various Gulf, Arab and international events in light of activating international agreements and memoranda of understanding that link the State of Qatar to brotherly and friendly countries, as well as ensuring the representation of the state in international organizations and what it organizes of youth events. For example, the State of Qatar participated in the following events in 2019:

- Arab Youth and Social Media Event - Lebanon, April 2019
- ECOSOC Eighth Youth Forum at the UN Headquarters in New York, April 2019
- East Youth Forum, Malaysia – May 2019
- 7th International Competition For Children and Youth, Baku, Azerbaijan - June 2019
- Youth Leadership Program in Amman, Jordan – July 2019
- Qatari youth delegation participation in the International Youth Meeting, Morocco – August 2019
- 38th International Arab Youth Congress, Jordan - August 2019
- Gulf Joint Youth Action, Jordan- September 2019
- Scientific Forum for Arts, Media and Future Trends - Kuwait, October 2019
- Euro-Arab Youth Forum, Budapest, Hungary - November 2019
- Conference of Young Ambassadors on Road Safety, Tunisia – December 2019.



9. How young people spend leisure time has become an urgent issue today and requires attention, so what has the Ministry of Culture and Sports done in this regard? What are the programs and plans that MCS has put in place to help young women and men spend their leisure time positively?

Through its various executive branches (cultural centers and sports clubs), MCS is working to be the incubator of youth hobbies and creativity that would occupy the free time. The number of participants in the activities organized by youth centers in 2018 reached more than 32,000 young men and women from Qataris and residents. The percentage of Qataris participants was 57%, of whom 32% were girls. The majority of young people participated in five activities: cultural activities, heritage identity -enhancing activities, scientific and sports activities, photography, cinematography and video.



10. Among the main axes of the population policy of the State of Qatar is "Education, Training and Youth" axis, which aims to promote qualitative education and training opportunities of youth, generalize academic and professional advising among their ranks, and ensure their societal participation ... etc. This intersects with many of your ministry's programs. So, how do you envision the possibility of strengthening and consolidating the bonds of cooperation between you and the Permanent Population Committee in this field (axis of Education, Training and Youth)?

MCS seeks to strengthen and consolidate the bonds of cooperation with the Permanent Population Committee as it plays some roles in implementing the national population policy. It plays a participatory role in achieving the first goal of the first axis where it cooperated with the Ministry of

Education to review curricula for various educational stages in order to confirm their consistency with the National identity values. At the level of the third axis concerned with education, training and youth, MCS assumes the primary responsibility for achieving the fourth goal of this axis, namely: "Ensuring youth participation". The "Life Skills Development among Youth" project was approved as a joint project with Namaa Center within the projects of the second national development strategy 2018-2022. This project helps empower youth to play an active role in society by raising their life skills and leadership capabilities, encouraging them to innovate, sharpening their motivation and enhancing their participation in public affairs. With regard to the axis of "ensuring equal opportunities for young men and women", MCS has established independent centers for girls and provided equal opportunities for both sexes in membership of youth committees and delegations, so that discrimination has become for efficiency rather than gender. The percentage of girls in the membership of

the ministerial advisory committee is 50%. As a result of MCS's encouragement for girls to visit youth centers and participate in their various activities, the number of female participants reached 26,602, equivalent to 45% of the total participants in youth activities in the centers. A significant number of girls participated in youth work pioneers courses aimed at developing the capabilities of youth in entrepreneurial and leadership skills.



Spotlight

Regional Workshop on Modernization of Official Statistics in the State of Qatar

4-5 November 2019, The Ritz-Carlton, Doha, Qatar



The Planning and Statistics Authority in Qatar (PSA) has organized a workshop on Modernization of Official Statistics in the State of Qatar on 4-5 November 2019, in collaboration with statistical leaders, experts and specialists in the State. The Workshop hosted representatives of a number of international, regional and local research organizations and centers amounting to 189 participants representing 73 entities, including 25 international and regional organizations and NSOs from Arab countries to get acquainted with the experience of Qatar and benefit from its expertise in the modernization of its statistical system. A number of UN organizations, such as the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD), the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Human Settlements Program (UN-Habitat), the International Labor Organization (ILO), the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and the World Bank (WB) also participated in the Workshop. At the regional level, UN Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), Statistical, Economic and Social Research and Training Centre for Islamic Countries (SESRI), GCC Statistical Center (GCC-STAT), the Arab Institute for Training and Research in Statistics (AITRS) and the Arab Planning Institute also participated. At the national level, a number of ministries, government agencies and research centers also participated in the workshop, such as the Qatar Computing Research Institute (QCRI)

of Hamad bin Khalifa University, the Doha International Family Institute (DIFI) of Qatar Foundation, and the Social and Economic Survey Research Institute (SESRI) of Qatar University, the Permanent Population Committee, Microsoft Corporation, Qatar Charity and a number of civil society organizations. The total number of these ministries and institutions reached 48 represented by 166 participants. (See Annex 1 for more information on participants and the entities they represented).



Objectives of the Workshop:

The workshop aimed to advance its promising project for the transformation of the national statistical system in partnership with national and international bodies. It aimed in particular to:

- Share information and experiences regarding the

modernization of official statistical systems.

- Identify priority areas in the process of modernization of the National Statistical System.
- Provide modern methodologies that contribute to the improvement of the statistical process, such as the use of data science, innovation and artificial intelligence in official statistics.

Expected Outputs of the Workshop:

- Raise awareness of the importance of modernization of official statistics in support of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
- Effective sharing of knowledge, best practices and modern technologies in official statistics.
- Identify new data sources that can be used in official statistics.
- Identify aspects of innovation in official statistics.
- Release the Doha Declaration on Modernization of Official Statistics in the State of Qatar.

At the outset of his opening statement, HE Dr. Saleh bin Mohammed Al Nabit, President of the Planning and Statistics Authority, emphasized the importance of the objectives and outputs that PSA seeks to achieve through this Workshop, which comes in light of the State's need to make fundamental changes in its statistical system in order to collect and disseminate timely, coordinated, reliable

and accessible high-quality data and indicators. He noted that the Workshop is also a continuation of PSA's efforts in the implementation of the project on the Transformative Agenda for Official Statistics adopted by the UN Statistical Commission in 2016, where Qatar was selected as a pioneering country in this field.

His Excellency stressed that this event came in response to the calls of the United Nations on more than one occasion, including the Declaration of the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, adopted last September, where emphasis was placed on investment in data and statistics related to the 2030 SDGs, and encouragement of international cooperation in the statistical field.

Dr. Al-Nabit explained that the Workshop is also a continuation of the dialogue that started in Doha two years ago on the modernization of official statistics to determine the priorities of transformation in the national statistical system in order to take practical steps towards a new structure of the local statistical system, taking advantage of the rapid technological and professional development at the statistical level.

His Excellency pointed out that the modernization of statistical system includes the promotion of methodologies and tools related to socio-economic and environmental aspects in order to enable them to produce high-quality data that bridge the gaps in databases in support of the sustainable development policies and others. It further



includes building human capacity and applying modern technology in the statistical process, as well as using advanced techniques, developing standards and guidelines and innovating technology and technical means related to statistical production processes.

He also stressed the importance of building effective partnerships with stakeholders to achieve the desired progress in the modernization of statistical system, enabling it to produce, organize and use the necessary data in decision-making, monitor progress in development processes, assess their societal impacts, improve performance and identify the State's ranking in published indices and indicators at the regional and international levels. Finally, Dr. Al Nabit expressed hope that the Workshop will contribute to the modernization of the national statistical system of all stakeholders and partners in order to support the implementation of the Second National Development Strategy 2018-2022, the Population

Policy for the same period, and Sustainable Development Goals to achieve Qatar National Vision 2030.

The workshop agenda included six sessions as follows:

1. Scope of Modernization of Official Statistics in the State of Qatar 2016-2030
2. Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030
3. Non-Traditional Data Sources on Official Statistics
4. Innovations in Official Statistics
5. Methodology and Data Collection
6. Adoption of Doha Declaration on Modernization of Official Statistics in Support of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

Finally, the Doha Declaration was adopted by the participants in the Regional Workshop on Modernization of Official Statistics in Support of the Sustainable Development Agenda 2030, held in Doha - Qatar, during the period 4-5 November 2019.



Doha Declaration On Modernization of Official Statistics in Support of the Sustainable Development Agenda 2030

Adopted by the participants of the Regional Workshop on Modernization of Official Statistics in Support of the SDGs, held in Doha, Qatar on 4- 5 November 2019.

We, the heads of national statistical councils, the chief statisticians, deputy chief statisticians, representatives of UN and regional organizations, universities, research centers, private sector, and NGOs,

Recalling the United Nations General Assembly Resolution on Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics¹ and the role of official statistics as an indispensable element in the information systems of democratic societies;

Recalling the adoption of the Cape Town Global Action Plan for Sustainable Development Data² (CTGAP) by the Statistical Commission at its 48th session in March 2017 to support the implementation of the Sustainable Development Agenda 2030³, which requires the collection, processing, analysis and dissemination of an unprecedented amount of data and statistics at local, national, regional and global levels and by multiple stakeholders;

Recalling the Doha Declaration on Data Revolution in the Arab Region⁴, which emphasized in 2016, that the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals requires a fundamental change and transformation of the national statistical systems in order to produce the quantity and quality of data needed to monitor the progress of the SDGs, recognizing that the data ecosystem is rapidly evolving, with new demands, new data suppliers and new data sources;

Recalling the Second UN World Data Forum Declaration on measuring the progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals adopted on 19-24 October 2018; Highlighting that the CTGAP calls upon the global statistical community to take action on the strategic area of modernizing and strengthening the national statistical systems with a focus on modernizing the governance and institutional framework; on applying statistical standards and new data architecture for data sharing, exchange and integration; and on facilitating the use of new technology and new data sources in statistical production processes; Recalling the report of the Secretary-General's Independent Expert Advisory Group on a Data Revolution for Sustainable Development A World That Counts: Mobilizing the Data Revolution for Sustainable Development, and the basic principles for the data revolution for sustainable development⁵;

Highly appreciating the Political Declaration of the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, adopted in 24 and 25 September 2019, entitled "Gearing up for a Decade of Action and Delivery for Sustainable Development";

Recognizing the critical role of high-quality official statistics in informed decision-making and taking into account the setup of the statistical system in a particular country; Bearing in mind that additional efforts and investments will be required to maintain the necessary infrastructure for

¹ General Assembly Resolution 68/261

² See <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/hlg/cape-town-global-action-plan/>

³ See <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015/transformingourworld>

⁴ See <https://unstats.un.org/unsd/statcom/48th-session/documents/RD-DOHA-Declaration-09112016-E.pdf>

⁵ See <http://www.undatarevolution.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/A-World-That-Counts.pdf>

the production of statistics and indicators for sustainable development⁶;

And Call upon national governments to support national statistical systems in their key coordinating role in measuring and monitoring SDGs,

We declare that the national statistical systems are committed to contributing their expertise to measure SDGs in a professional, independent and impartial way.

We are committed to:

- (A). Contributing actively to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Agenda 2030 through the measurement of a focused set of SDGs indicators that are limited in number, based on a systematic framework and relying on high quality statistics;
- (B). Increasing availability of statistics on SDGs indicators disaggregated by vulnerable groups, committing to the principle of leaving no one behind, while focusing on people to achieve the Principle of People-Centered SDGs;
- (C). Facilitating greater sharing of data among government departments and other partners;
- (D). Using the best methods for producing these statistics in the most efficient and timely way, while ensuring data quality and protecting privacy of respondents, including the use of administrative sources, geospatial information, alternate data sources, remote sensing, social media and "big data";
- (E). Utilizing new and open access methodologies and techniques to accelerate learning, transparency, and reproducibility to better respond to the rapidly changing data ecosystem, and to implement the Data4Now initiative to close the gap on data for development;
- (F). Increasing the use of GIS techniques to enhance the accessibility of small area disaggregation according to SDG indicators;
- (G). Engaging effectively with data producers within the official statistical system, in partnership with civil society, academia and the private sector, and providing advice on methods to ensure high quality of data that are produced;
- (H). Implementing innovative financing strategies and coordinated country-led actions for data and statistics to bridge the current funding gap and deliver on national priorities.

- (I). Providing leadership in the dissemination and communication of data on SDGs, and advising in the interpretation of data;
- (J). Developing statistical capacity in countries to ensure good quality reporting on SDGs.
- (K). Scaling up new and innovative forms of capacity development to achieve the modernization and strengthening of national statistical systems, toward implementing the CTGAP

To live up to these commitments, we acknowledge the importance of sharing experience and learning from each other through the established mechanisms in the Arab region provided by UN ESCWA, GCC-STAT, SESRIC, Arab Planning Institute, and AITRS.

We recognize the importance of good cooperation in monitoring SDGs at local, national, sub regional, regional and global levels.

We recognize the importance of work of the international and regional organizations with their technical expertise in measuring sustainable development and developing broader measures of progress.

We emphasize the importance of efficient coordination of SDGs monitoring and reporting at the regional level between international organizations (such as UN ESCWA, UNSD, UNFPA, WHO, ILO, FAO, UN HABITAT, UNICEF, World Bank and United Nations regional and country offices and other relevant organizations), and between international organizations and national statistical systems.

We emphasize the importance of efficient coordination of sharing information and good practices on the implementation of 2020 population and housing census round.

6 See <https://unstats.un.org/unsd/statcom/50th-session/documents/Report-on-the-50th-session-of-the-statistical-commission-E.pdf>

Activities and events of PPC and its Technical Bureau during 2019

In addition to periodic meetings, the Permanent Population Committee and its Technical Bureau in 2019 completed a number of reports, the most important of which are:

❖ A study entitled:

"Approved Results of the Implementation of Population Policy (2017-2022)": In pursuance of the content of an official letter received from the Director of the Office of His

Excellency the Prime Minister, PPC completed a comprehensive study that includes the results of the first stage (November 2017 - October 2018) of the follow-up on the implementation of the population policy, specific statistical data and tables for the period from 2014 to 2018, difficulties and problems facing the implementation authorities and ways to overcome them, as well as the views and recommendations of the Planning and Statistics Authority in this regard.



❖ Issuing PPC Annual Report 2018: In accordance with its time plan, the Technical Bureau of the Permanent Population Committee at the end of January 2019 has completed the recently published Annual Report 2018, which documents PPC achievements over the course of a full year in various fields, the most important of which are: Population Policy, meetings and training courses, and participation in internal and external activities and events related to population and development, as well as the efforts exerted by the committee and the information material it publishes in order to publicize its work and raise awareness of population issues.

❖ The Technical Report of the State of Qatar on the follow-up on the Implementation of the General Framework of Population Strategy of the GCC States for the years 2015-2016-2017: Pursuant to the recommendation of the 17th meeting of the GCC Population Policy Committee held on Wednesday and Thursday, 10-11 March 2018 in Kuwait, The

Technical Bureau completed a questionnaire to follow up the implementation of the General Framework of Population Strategy of the GCC States for the years 2015- 2016-2017. It has submitted its technical report in this regard to the General Secretariat of the Cooperation Council for the Arab Gulf States.

❖ Report on "PPC Most Important Achievements (April 2018 - March 2019) and the key projects to be implemented": The Ministry of State for Cabinet Affairs was provided with a brief report on the achievements of the Permanent Population Committee during the period from April 2018 to March 2019, along with the projects planned for the future. The report is to be published in the Qatar's Internal Achievements book, which is issued annually by the General Secretariat of the Council of Ministers.

❖ The Final Report on the Implementation of Proposed Solutions To Address The Demographic Imbalance: Pursuant to the decision of the Council of Ministers, the General Secretariat of the Council of Ministers was provided with the first report on the implementation of proposed solutions to address the demographic imbalance in its final form. This is in light of the recommendations of the Permanent Population Committee for the general supervision and follow-up on the achievements of national development strategies.

❖ Qatar Population Status Report 2019: The Technical Bureau of the Permanent Population Committee completed at the end of September 2019 the draft of the national report named "Qatar Population Status 2019", which monitors the progress made in implementing the Program of Action of the Second Population Policy of the State of Qatar (2017-2022) through a group of quantitative and qualitative indicators that were adopted as tools to define the rates of implementation, assessing the efficiency of the measures that were adhered to, measuring the extent to which the goals of each of its axes are achieved, and the change caused by a program or intervention, the obstacles impeding effective application of the various procedures, and the proposed recommendations

to address these obstacles. This enables decision makers to re-examine the goals and objectives of this policy or measures and procedures designed for its implementation.

In addition to the above, the Permanent Population Committee organized or participated in a number of local, regional, Arab and international activities and events, the most important of which are:

1. Locally

- ❖ Forum organized by the Doha International Family Institute on the topic "Family Well-being: Towards Evidence-Based Family Policies", February 26-27, 2019.
- ❖ "Doha Islamic Youth Forum" from 7 to 11 July 2019, within the framework of the activities of "Doha OIC Capital 2019" event which was held in cooperation between the Ministry of Culture and Sports and the Islamic Cooperation Youth Forum (ICYF), the youth wing of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, under the supervision and organization of Qatar Center for Cultural and Heritage Events.
- ❖ The National Conference on "Rights of the Elderly in the State of Qatar" organized by the National Human Rights Committee (NHRC) and the Center for Empowerment and Care of the Elderly (Ehsan), which was held on 1/10/2019 in Doha on the occasion of the International Day for Older Persons
- ❖ Second International Congress on Behavioral Health organized by Qatar University under the theme: "Contemporary Issues and Problems of Field Practice in Behavioral Health" on 11 and 12 November 2019. The congress aimed to provide a multi-disciplinary platform for scholars, researchers, instructors and practitioners to present and discuss the latest findings, developments, dilemmas and solutions related to behavioral health, which are described as an indicator of the interaction between behavior, mood, biology, and physical, psychological, and emotional health.
- ❖ Regional Workshop on Modernization of Official Statistics in the State of Qatar, Organized by Planning and Statistics Authority on 4-5 November 2019, at The Ritz-Carlton.

The Technical Bureau of the Permanent Population Committee participated in the Regional Workshop on Modernization of Official Statistics in the State of Qatar organized by the Planning and Statistics Authority on 4-5 November 2019. The workshop brought together experts, specialists and leaders of statistical work in Qatar and the representatives of a number of international, regional and local research organizations and centers. They represented 73 entities, including 25 international and regional organizations and NSOs from Arab countries to get acquainted with the experience of Qatar and benefit from its expertise in the field of the modernization of its statistical system.

Objectives of the Workshop:

The workshop aimed to advance its promising project for the transformation of the national statistical system in partnership with national and international bodies. It aimed in particular to:

- Share information and experiences regarding the modernization of official statistical systems.
- Identify priority areas in the process of modernization of the national statistical system.
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Expected Outputs of the Workshop:

- Raise awareness of the importance of modernization of official statistics in support of the Sustainable Development Agenda 2030.
- Effective sharing of knowledge, best practices and modern technologies in official statistics.
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- Release the Doha Declaration on Modernization of Official Statistics in the State of Qatar.



- The Technical Bureau of the Permanent Population Committee participated in the Regional Conference on the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration: Implementation and Policy Implications for the Arab region" that took place in Cairo during the period 3-4 December 2019. The conference is organized by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for West Asia (ESCWA), the League of Arab States (LAS) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM), in cooperation with members of the Working Group on International Migration in the Arab Region.



The Global Compact for Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration, adopted in Marrakesh, Morocco on 11 December 2018, constituted an important step in global cooperation towards a common framework for migration challenges and opportunities. It is the result of an inter-governmental and international process led by states based on participation that included three stages of consultations, stocktaking, and intergovernmental negotiations. It expresses a common understanding of the challenges facing countries as well as migrants, and the commitment of the United Nations Member States to work on a cooperative framework that includes 23 goals and a set of actions proposed to achieve them.

The Global Compact for Migration recognizes the shared responsibility to respect, protect and fulfill the human rights of migrants, safeguard the security and prosperity in all local communities, minimize the adverse drivers and structural factors that compel people to leave their country of origin and reduce the risks and vulnerabilities migrants face at different stages of migration.

Building on the efforts made to increase awareness on this agreement and to enhance regional coordination towards its implementation, and improve migration governance in the region, the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), the League of Arab States and the International Organization for Migration, in cooperation with

members of the Working Group on International Migration in the Arab Region, organized this conference.

2. Regionally

- The Technical Bureau also participated in the eighteenth meeting of GCC Committee for Population Policies, which was held during the period from 2-3 October 2019, at the GCC headquarters in Riyadh. The meetings discussed a number of issues, foremost of which are: a note by the General Secretariat on the follow-up to the implementation of the general framework of the population strategy in the GCC States, and a note by the General Secretariat on the demographic reality report for the years (2015-2017).

3. At the Arab Level

- A workshop on "Enhancing Statistical Capacity and Sustainable Development Goals" that was held in Amman - Jordan during the period from 11/3/2019 to 16/3/2019 at the invitation of the UNFPA regional office in coordination and cooperation with ESCWA. The workshop was attended by a group of experts and technical statisticians in GIS and information systems, along with representatives of regional statistics agencies in the region, as well as experts from international organizations.

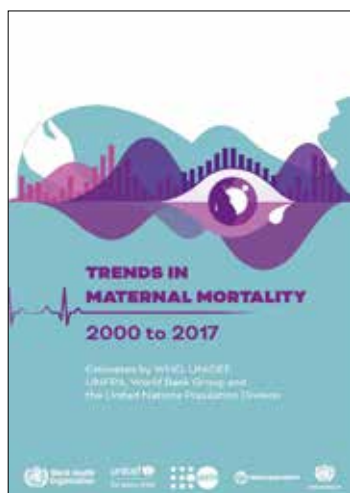
Participation in the extensive discussions and debates, which led to the establishment of the "Arab Council for Population and Development" and the adoption of its statute by Resolution No. (8452) dated 10/9/2019 issued by 152nd regular session of the Arab League Council at the level of Arab foreign ministers, and Resolution No. (2250) dated 5/9/2019 issued by the Economic and Social Council at its regular session (104).

4. Internationally

- Participation in the fifty-second session of the United Nations Commission on Population and Development, which took place at United Nations Headquarters in New York from 1 to 5 April 2019. The main topic of the session was: "Review and appraisal of the Program of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and its contribution to the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development".

Studies and Research

World Health Organization.- Trends in Maternal Mortality: 2000 to 2017 (Estimates by WHO, UNICEF, UNFPA, World Bank Group and the United Nations Population Division), 2019



This process generated additional data for inclusion in the maternal mortality estimation model, demonstrating widespread expansion of in-country efforts to monitor maternal mortality. This report presents internationally

comparable global, regional and country-level estimates and trends for maternal mortality between 2000 and 2017. The results described in this report are the first available estimates for maternal mortality in the SDG reporting period; but since two years (2016 and 2017) is not sufficient to show trends, estimates have been developed and presented covering the period 2000 to 2017. The new estimates presented in this report supersede all previously published estimates for years that fall within the same time period. Care should be taken to use only these estimates for the interpretation of trends in maternal mortality from 2000 to 2017; due to modifications in methodology and data availability, differences between these and previous estimates should not be interpreted as representing time trends. In addition, when interpreting changes in MMRs over time, one should take into consideration that it is easier to reduce the MMR when the level is high than when the MMR level is already low. The full database, country profiles and all model specification codes used are available online.⁵ Global estimates for 2017 and trends for 2000–2017 The global estimates for the year 2017 indicate that there were 295 000 (UI 279 000 to 340 000)⁶ maternal deaths; 35% lower than in 2000 when there were an estimated 451 000 (UI 431 000 to 485 000) maternal deaths. The global MMR in 2017 is estimated at 211 (UI 199 to 243) maternal deaths per 100 000 live births, representing a 38% reduction since 2000, when it

was estimated at 342. The average annual rate of reduction (ARR) in global MMR during the 2000–2017 period was 2.9%; this means that, on average, the global MMR declined by 2.9% every year between 2000 and 2017. The global lifetime risk of maternal mortality for a 15-year-old girl in 2017 was estimated at 1 in 190; nearly half of the level of risk in 2000: 1 in 100. The overall proportion of deaths to women of reproductive age (15–49 years) that are due to maternal causes (PM) was estimated at 9.2% (UI 8.7% to 10.6%) in 2017 – down by 26.3% since 2000. This means that compared with other causes of death to women of reproductive age, the fraction attributed to maternal causes is decreasing. In addition, the effect of HIV on maternal mortality in 2017 appears to be less pronounced than in earlier years; HIV-related indirect maternal deaths now account for approximately 1% of all maternal deaths compared with 2.5% in 2005, at the peak of the epidemic. Regional and country-level estimates for 2017 MMR in the world's least developed countries (LDCs) is high,⁷ estimated at 415 maternal deaths per 100 000 live births (UI 396 to 477), which is more than 40 times higher than that for MMR the in Europe (10; UI 9 to 11), and almost 60 times higher than in Australia and New Zealand (7; UI 6 to 8). In the world's LDCs, where an estimated 130 000 maternal deaths occurred in 2017, the estimated lifetime risk of maternal death was 1 in 56. Sub-Saharan Africa is the only region with very high MMR for 2017, estimated at 542 (UI 498 to 649), while the lifetime risk of maternal death was 1 in 37, compared with just 1 in 7800 in Australia and New Zealand. Moderate MMR (100–299) was estimated in Northern Africa, Oceania (excluding Australia and New Zealand), Southern Asia, South-Eastern Asia and in small island developing states. Four sub regions (Australia and New Zealand, Central Asia, Eastern Asia, Western Asia) and two regions (Latin America and the Caribbean, and Europe and Northern America) have low MMR (< 100 maternal deaths per 100 000 live births). Sub-Saharan Africa and Southern Asia accounted for approximately 86% (254 000) of the estimated global maternal deaths in 2017 with sub-Saharan Africa alone accounting for roughly 66% (196 000), while Southern Asia accounted for nearly 20% (58

000). South Eastern Asia, in addition, accounted for over 5% of global maternal deaths (16 000).

United Nations - Escwa. - Arab Horizon 2030: Innovation Perspectives for achieving SDGs in the Arab Region, 2019

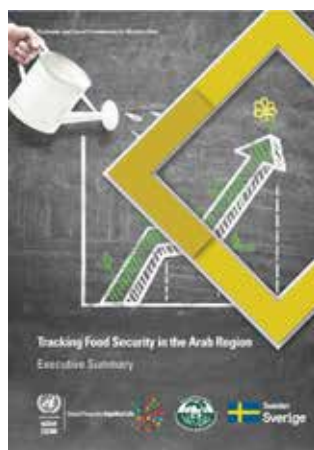


Digital technologies have an impact on all socioeconomic endeavors in developed and developing countries, and constitute key elements of the next industrial revolution. This study discusses digital technologies for development in the Arab region in the context of

the United Nations Agenda for Sustainable Development and the horizon it sets for the year 2030. Publishing this study is part of efforts to promote radical policy changes in utilizing digital technologies for sustainable development in Arab countries. It sets out proposals and recommendations for harnessing these technologies in social, economic and human development opportunities. Digital technologies have been important on the international agenda since the World Summit on Information Society (WSIS) of 2003 and 2005, and have a central role in the implementation of the new sustainable development agenda. This document addresses an array of issues related to digital technologies and lying at the intersection of two international agendas, with complementary and consistent challenges; most importantly, how to improve the use of digital technologies for the benefit of sustainable development and fulfilment of the sustainable development goals (SDGs). Part I sets the scene by providing, in chapter 1, a brief outline of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its accompanying Addis Ababa Action Agenda on financing development, with emphasis on the role they attribute to digital and information and communication technologies (ICTs). It also discusses the 10-year review of the World Summit on Information Society (WSIS+10), including the new challenges and priorities in the period leading to 2030. Chapter 2 discusses two important dimensions of technology for development and United Nations processes related to digital technologies and the SDGs. It also provides an analytical framework to outline

the relationship between the thematic issues addressed in part II and the SDGs. Finally, chapter 3 summarizes the situation of Arab countries for each of the 17 SDGs of the 2030 agenda as reflected in the first Arab sustainable development report (as well as other ESCWA publications) and the potential role digital technologies could play in addressing them; this provides the reader with a global overview of the developmental challenges faced by the region and the potential of ICT to help address them. Part II surveys the situation in Arab countries under thematic policy areas of relevance to digital technologies and their impact on development goals, including: digital strategies; the ICT sector; ICT infrastructure; cybersecurity; digital divide; e-applications; and e-government. Although no formal grouping is suggested for the policy areas, governance, as it relates to digital strategies, is dealt with in chapter 4, addressing the general question of how public policy could enhance digital technologies for development. Chapters 5 and 6 address the ICT sector, focusing on industrial aspects of digital technologies and their impact on the economy.

United Nations - Escwa. - Tracking Food Security in the Arab Region, 2019



The Arab region is facing rising economic, socio-political and environmental challenges, which are impacting food security for its growing and rapidly increasing population. The region is witnessing a rise in the prevalence of undernutrition, over

nutrition and nutrient deficiency, classified as the triple burden of malnutrition. Undernourishment is increasing in conflict-plagued and Least Developed Countries, obesity is a high concern in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), the Maghreb and the Mashreq countries, while nutrient deficiency is spreading in all countries and is especially rife among Arab women. Ensuring food security and good nutrition remains a top priority on the agenda of Arab countries, whether rich or poor, or in conflict or not. Food security strategies in the region focus on increasing food

production that is complemented by trade and market subsidies to cover the consumption gap. This has impacted food availability and access on the short run. However, current strategies might also contribute to worsening the situation by, among others, increasing natural resource degradation and encouraging over-consumption. Thus, understanding the status and determinants of food security in addition to factors affecting it has become a necessity for Arab countries to design context-based food security strategies and policies. Food security exists “when all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life.” It has four dimensions (availability, access, utilization and stability); it can be evaluated at individual, household, national, regional or global levels; and it can be seasonal, transitory or chronic. Food security is multifaceted and multidimensional with an interactive nature and requires a comprehensive approach to monitoring it. For this reason, there is a need to broaden the regional perspective on food security in the Arab region beyond the current dimension based on evidence. The Arab region needs a comprehensive and integrated approach for food security monitoring that supports cross-sectoral and informed food security policy-making efforts.

In this report, developing the Arab Food Security Monitoring Framework The Arab Food Security Monitoring Framework is developed through extensive consultations. A wide variety of country-level and region-wide strategies and plans were also closely examined to identify potentially relevant food security determinants.

A list of food security determinants or indicators is identified. Indicators were thoroughly reviewed and filtered

to retain those which are measurable; reflect the Arab context; and have data available for at least fifty percent of the countries or fifty percent of the regional population or both. Thus, twenty-four food security indicators were retained, which consist of ex post or outcome indicators and ex ante or observed indicators. The selected indicators are global in nature with some catering to regional concerns such as increasing obesity or the rapidly depleting water resources.

Regarding Food Security in the GCC, the core indicators show low levels of undernourishment and of prevalence of severe food insecurity while obesity affects about 34% (18 million) of the population with an increasing trend. The prevalence of obesity in the GCC is higher than the Arab average of 28%. Regarding indicators under the food security dimensions, the GCC is performing well among the most consequential such as unemployment levels and for most related to the utilization dimension aside from the prevalence of anemia among women which affected about 38% of women. The GCC region witnessed worsening trends for the critical issues of obesity, food import dependency and food supply variability. A number of indicators are also lacking data for adequate monitoring. The region witnessed an increase in the food import dependency ratio. While this is an unfavorable trend, given the limited natural resources endowment, and the high income status, food availability is relatively secured. In fact, GCC countries are using a combination of strategies to ensure food security, including enhancing physical food storage capacities and promoting locally-owned entities to produce, trade and purchase food internationally (example investing in or leasing farmland in other countries).

Issue Picture

