



# Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General  
16 February 2024

Original: English

## Commission on Population and Development

### Fifty-seventh session

New York, 29 April–3 May 2024

Item 3 (b) of the provisional agenda\*

**General debate: assessing the status of implementation of the Programme 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 during the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development**

## **Flow of financial resources for assisting in the further implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development**

### **Report of the Secretary-General**

#### *Summary*

The present report on the flow of financial resources for assisting in the further implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development consists of three main parts. In the first part, overall trends in official and private development aid are discussed; the second is focused on aid for population-related matters; and the third serves to address aid pertaining to the thematic focus of the fifty-seventh session of the Commission on Population and Development, which concerns the implementation of the Programme of Action, including aid flows to pertinent thematic areas of the Programme.

Between 2021 and 2022, total official and private aid reached a new record high, following on the increase between 2020 and 2021. However, when aid for control of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) and for refugees in donor countries is subtracted, total aid fell between 2020 and 2021, and the impact between 2021 and 2022 will not show until next year's data. Aid for population-related matters declined between 2020 and 2021 but remained at a high level compared with the 1990s and early 2000s. Between 2020 and 2021, aid for sexual and reproductive health measured in dollars per woman of reproductive age fell by 37 per cent to \$6.84.

\* E/CN.9/2024/1.



Aid for human rights, including support for women's institutions and movements, as well as efforts to combat violence against women and girls, also increased at a notable rate over the past two decades. However, it is still low overall, and its efficacy is strongly dependent on aid to other areas that support gender equality and the empowerment of women.

Aid for urban development has grown, but aid for rural development remains very low. While this is consistent with the rapid expansion of urban areas, in the poorest countries rural areas are still home to most of the population. Weak support for rural development can contribute to rural-urban migration, as well as international migration. The acceleration of international migration over the past decade is reflected by a large increase in aid for mobility, migration and refugees, and much of this aid is spent by donors in donor countries in support of the local refugee population.

## I. Introduction

1. In accordance with the reports prepared for discussion at the forty-ninth through fifty-first sessions of the Commission on Population and Development (E/CN.9/2016/5, E/CN.9/2017/4 and E/CN.9/2018/4, respectively), as well as the methodologic recommendations contained in the report to the Commission at its fifty-second session (E/CN.9/2019/4), the present report focuses on the costed components of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, notably sexual and reproductive health, comprising reproductive health, family planning and sexually transmitted infections, including HIV, as well as population data and policy analysis, and also includes information related to the special theme of each of those earlier Commission sessions.

2. Furthermore, in accordance with these recommendations, the analysis is based on official development aid data reported to and published by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), complemented by data on private aid flows reported to the Organisation. While the measure of grant equivalents is available for recent years and official aid flows, this measure cannot be used for trend analysis or private aid flows.<sup>1</sup> Hence, the report relies largely on aid disbursements, which provide a better view of actual aid allocations than aid commitments. Wherever possible, disbursements are expressed in net terms (amount disbursed less repayment of principal on earlier loans), but in the case of deeper sectoral analysis, they are expressed in gross terms (actual amount disbursed). In either case, aid flows are expressed in, or based on, constant United States dollars, unless otherwise specified.

3. The breakdown of aid by sector and thematic area is based on the Creditor Reporting System of the OECD International Development Statistics database. Unlike aggregate aid flows, which were available up to 2022 at the time of writing, disaggregated aid flows by sector were available only up to 2021. Thus, the disaggregated aid flows only partially capture the impacts of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, and they do not yet reflect the impacts of the conflicts in Ukraine and Gaza, including a further increase in the refugee population.

4. The report has three main parts. In the first part, the Secretary-General provides an update on overall trends in development assistance (section II); in the second, trends and recent changes in development assistance for population-related matters are highlighted (section III); and in the third, trends in development assistance for the implementation of the Programme of Action are discussed (section IV). The final section of the report contains a summary of key findings and recommendations (section V).

5. Unlike the previous reports in this series, in which section IV focused on the special theme of the Commission session, this year, on the occasion of the thirtieth anniversary of the Programme, that section contains a review of overall progress towards achieving the Programme of Action. To that end, the present report includes a longer-term view of trends in development assistance, data permitting.

6. Section III covers the linkages between population issues, social development, economic growth and the environment. These linkages have become even more complex over the 30 years of implementation of the Programme of Action. Today, the linkages are also shaped by unfolding megatrends, which include not only demographic change, such as continued population growth, population ageing,

---

<sup>1</sup> “The grant equivalent is an estimate, at today’s value of money, of how much is being given away over the life of a financial transaction, compared with a transaction at market terms. The grant equivalent is the grant element multiplied by the amount of money extended.” Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), “The modernisation of official development assistance (ODA)”, available at [www.oecd.org/dac/financing-sustainable-development/modernisation-dac-statistical-system.htm](http://www.oecd.org/dac/financing-sustainable-development/modernisation-dac-statistical-system.htm).

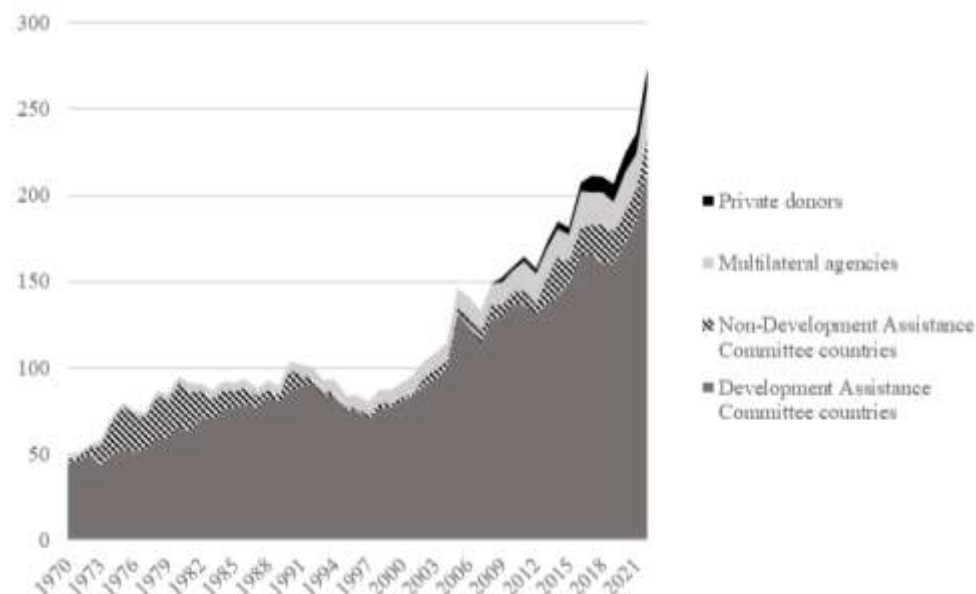
urbanization and migration, but also climate change and rapid technological progress. It is important to understand not only how each of these megatrends affects sustainable development in an isolated fashion, but also how the interplay of these megatrends affects, for instance, poverty, inequality and economic growth. With a view to informing these discussions, the report also provides a summary of key findings of previous reports on the flow of financial resources to the Commission, including the 2020 and 2021 reports, which focused on food security and nutrition; the 2022 report, which focused on sustained and sustainable economic growth; and the 2023 report, which focused on education. Together, these reports hold broader implications for the importance of creating greener economies and more inclusive societies and investing in human capital throughout the life course.

## II. Overall trends in official development assistance

Figure I

### Aid disbursements by official and private donors to all countries, 1970–2022

(Billions of constant United States dollars)



Source: Estimates for official donors based on OECD International Development Statistics: Development Assistance Committee, DAC1, “Total flows by donor”; and estimates for private donors based on Creditor Reporting System data (accessed on 1 October 2023).

7. The period around the International Conference on Population and Development in 1994 saw a notable decline in aid flows to developing countries (see figure I). One reason was the end of the Cold War, which encouraged a reconsideration of development assistance, among other things. Accordingly, the 1990s were a decade of major international conferences on key development issues organized under the auspices of the United Nations: the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in 1992; the International Conference on Population and Development, held in Cairo in 1994; the World Summit for Social Development, held in Copenhagen in 1995; and the Fourth World Conference on Women: Action for Equality, Development and Peace, held in Beijing in 1995. Each of these conferences concluded with a set of objectives, a minimal set of which was ultimately included in the Millennium Development Goals, which shaped development assistance for the years to come.

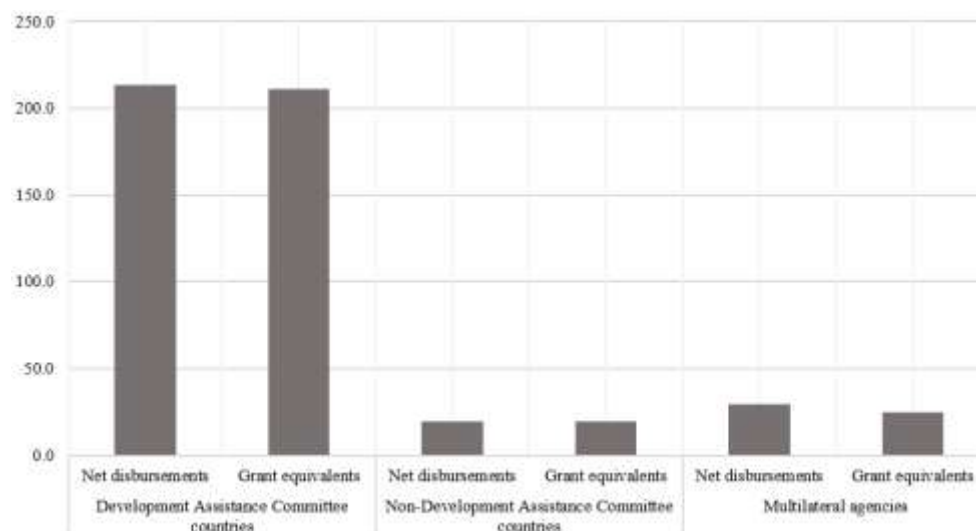
8. The inception of the Millennium Development Goals in 2000 inspired a large increase in aid. Between 2021 and 2022, Development Assistance Committee donor countries increased their net aid disbursements to all developing countries by \$28.4 billion, followed by multilateral agencies, which increased their aid to such countries by \$9.1 billion, and non-Development Assistance Committee donors, which increased their aid by \$0.8 billion. The 2022 data for private donors are a provisional estimate, but it is probable that private donors also increased their aid in 2021.

9. For 2022, a comparison between aid data in disbursement terms and grant equivalents – the new measure of aid allocations – shows only small differences for Development Assistance Committee and non-Development Assistance Committee donors (see figure II).<sup>2</sup> However, the analysis provided in the present report relies on aid in disbursement terms, as historical data are not available for aid in grant equivalents.

Figure II

**Differences in aid disbursements and grant equivalents for official donors, 2022**

(Billions of constant United States dollars)



Source: Estimates based on OECD International Development Statistics: Development Assistance Committee, DAC1 (accessed on 1 October 2023).

10. The notable increase in aid in 2022 compared with 2021 occurred against a background of fiscal tightening in donor countries. The economic environment has further worsened for many traditional donor countries, with significant inflationary pressures, much higher interest rates, further economic slowdown and growing demands on public resources.

11. Many resources of donor countries are now allocated to supporting Ukraine, as well as refugees from that country. Box 1 offers an initial view of how spending on COVID-19 controls, as well as refugees in donor countries, affected aid between 2020 and 2021.

<sup>2</sup> According to the new measure of aid, only resource allocations that have a minimum grant element qualify as aid. See [www.oecd.org/dac/financing-sustainable-development/modernisation-dac-statistical-system.htm](http://www.oecd.org/dac/financing-sustainable-development/modernisation-dac-statistical-system.htm).

## Box 1

**Aid allocations for coronavirus disease and refugees**

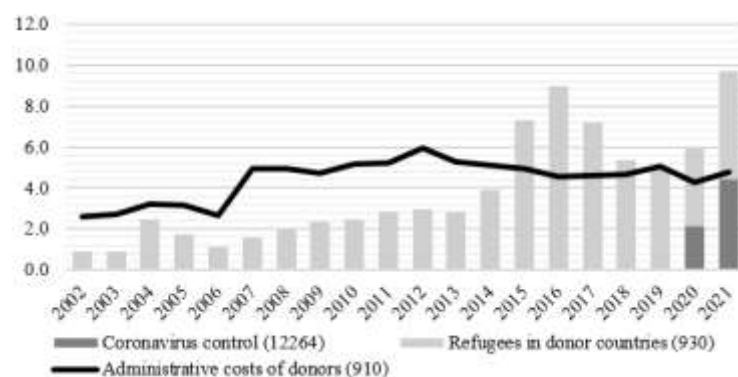
As discussed below in section IV, aid for migration has increased at a notable rate since 2002. Only a fraction of this aid is for orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility, however; on average, 96 per cent was spent on refugees in donor countries between 2015 and 2022. Between 2020 and 2021, development aid increased by about \$11.6 billion, but, if aid to refugees in donor countries and COVID-19 control are subtracted, such aid decreased by \$12.4 billion during that period.

The figure below shows an upward trend in aid for both refugees in donor countries, which can be expected to continue, and COVID-19 controls. Adding the administrative cost of aid (4.8 per cent of the total in 2021), represented by the grey line, and aid allocations for refugees in donor countries (5.3 per cent of the total) means that 10 per cent of aid money was spent in donor countries themselves.

## Figure

**Aid disbursements by official and private donors for coronavirus disease (COVID-19) control, refugee support and administrative costs of donors, 2002–2021**

(Percentage of total aid)

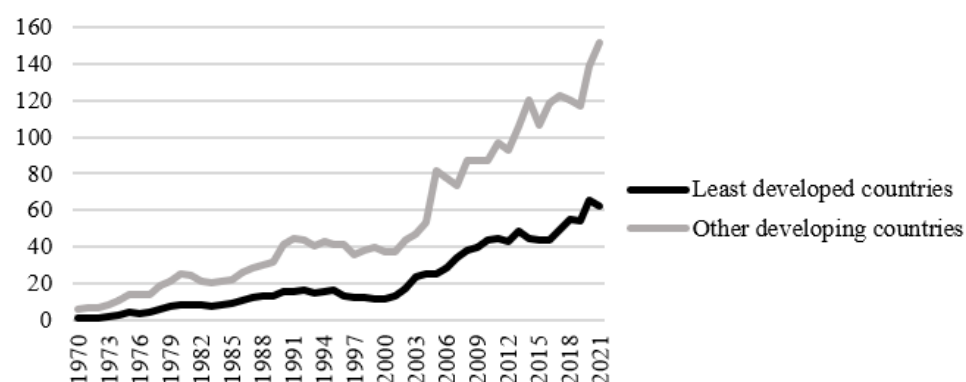


Source: Estimates based on Creditor Reporting System data (accessed on 3 November 2023).

12. The large increase in aid over the past several decades has benefited the least developed countries, as well as other developing countries (see figure III).

Figure III  
**Aid disbursements by Development Assistance Committee donors to least developed countries and other developing countries, 1970–2021**

(Billions of constant United States dollars)

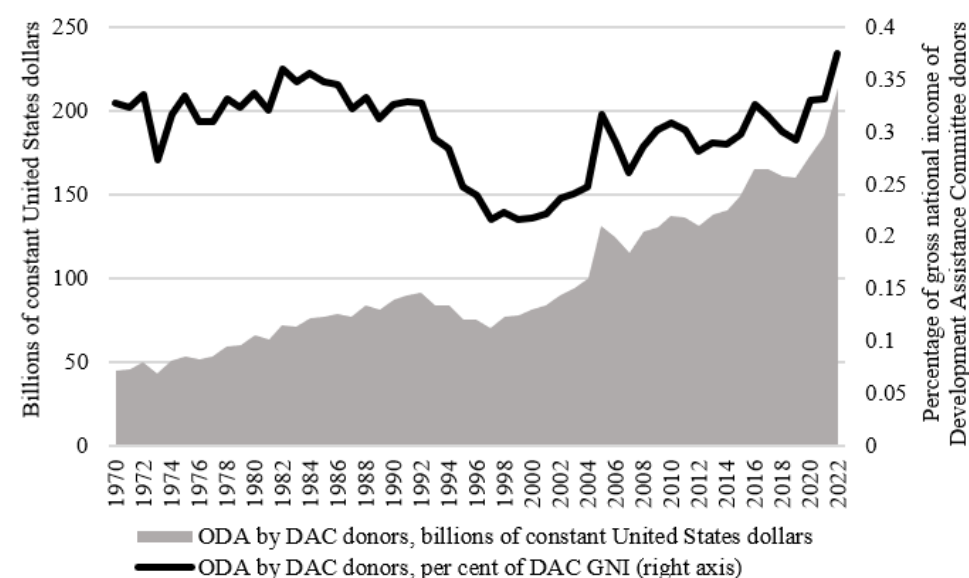


Source: Estimates based on OECD International Development Statistics: Development Assistance Committee, DAC1 (accessed on 1 October 2023).

13. Despite the increase in aid over the past two decades in particular, most donor countries fall short of aid targets. Measured as a share of the gross national income (GNI) of Development Assistance Committee donor countries, official development assistance (ODA) declined steeply in the 1990s, and only in 2022 did it climb back to about 0.37 per cent, where it had stood 40 years earlier (see figure IV). Today, only a few countries are reaching the long-standing target of allocating 0.7 per cent of GNI to ODA, and only few reach the target of allocating between 0.15 and 0.20 per cent of GNI for the world's least developed countries (see [E/CN.9/2023/4](#)).

Figure IV  
**Aid disbursements by Development Assistance Committee donors to all developing countries, 1970–2022**

(Billions of constant United States dollars and as a percentage of the gross national income of Development Assistance Committee donor countries)



Source: Estimates based on OECD International Development Statistics: Development Assistance Committee, DAC1 (accessed on 1 November 2023).

14. The efforts to combat the COVID-19 pandemic have contributed to record levels of debt for many of the poorest countries, and the fallout of the war in Ukraine has resulted in a large increase in food and fuel prices. This, too, has serious negative effects on the balance of payments of most of the poorest countries, which are net importers of food and fuel products. As a result, a growing number of the poorest countries are increasingly likely to be experiencing debt distress and in need of significant debt relief.<sup>3</sup> The mounting debt challenge of developing countries, on the one hand, and substantial needs for public investment in infrastructure, health and education, on the other, further increased the need for development assistance. The war in Gaza has further exacerbated many of these challenges. Yet, ever higher levels of development assistance appear increasingly unlikely.

15. The increase in aid has also been associated with major changes in the sectoral distribution of aid. Table 1 shows that the large increase in aid to developing countries is attributable to an increase in aid to social sectors, especially population and reproductive health, health more generally, and governance and civil society support, as well as a substantial increase in aid for humanitarian purposes.

16. Within the social sector, aid for population-related matters and reproductive health (sector I.3. in the OECD aid database) has increased at the most significant rate. It increased by no less than 1,170 per cent between the 1990–1991 and 2020–2021 periods, far outpacing the increase in social aid of 274 per cent. It is important to note, however, that aid for population and reproductive health increased from very low levels in 1990–1991, when it stood at about \$1 billion globally. The following section provides a more detailed discussion of this change.

Table 1  
**Aid disbursements by official and private donors, annual average 1990–1991 and 2020–2021**

(Billions of United States dollars)

	<i>Annual average</i>		<i>Percentage change</i>
	<i>1990–1991</i>	<i>2020–2021</i>	
Total aid disbursements	124.1	265.8	114.2
Developmental aid (sectors I, II, III, IV and VI.1)	76.0	190.6	150.6
Social aid (sector I)	29.3	109.6	273.7
Education (sector I.1)	11.1	18.2	63.7
Health (sector I.2)	3.8	31.1	714.5
Population and reproductive health (sector I.3)	1.0	13.1	1 170.4
Water supply and sanitation (sector I.4)	4.6	9.1	98.7
Government and civil society (sector I.5)	3.9	26.5	581.8
Other (sector I.6)	4.9	11.7	138.2
Economic aid (sectors II and III)	43.2	62.3	44.4
Multisector (sector IV)	3.6	18.7	426.0

<sup>3</sup> According to the list of the International Monetary Fund on debt sustainability analyses of low-income countries, 10 countries were in debt distress, 26 countries were at high risk of debt distress, 26 countries were at moderate risk and 7 countries were at low risk as at 30 November 2023. See [www.imf.org/external/Pubs/ft/dsa/DSAlist.pdf](http://www.imf.org/external/Pubs/ft/dsa/DSAlist.pdf).



	<i>Annual average</i>		<i>Percentage change</i>
	<i>1990–1991</i>	<i>2020–2021</i>	
Emergency (sectors VI, VII and VIII)	38.7	54.0	39.7
Commodity aid (sector VI)	16.9	16.9	0.2
Action related to debt (sector VII)	18.5	1.2	(93.3)
Humanitarian aid (sector VIII)	3.3	35.9	990.3
Unallocated/unspecified (sector IX)	9.4	21.2	125.9

*Source:* Estimates based on OECD International Development Statistics: Development Assistance Committee, DAC5, “Aid (ODA) by sector and donor” (accessed on 1 November 2023).

17. Furthermore, the large relative increase in aid for social sectors has been mirrored by a notable decline in aid for economic sectors. As noted in earlier reports, the relative decline in aid for economic infrastructure and services, as well as the relative decline in aid for production sectors, is especially difficult for the world’s least developed countries (see [E/CN.9/2022/4](#) and [E/CN.9/2023/4](#)).

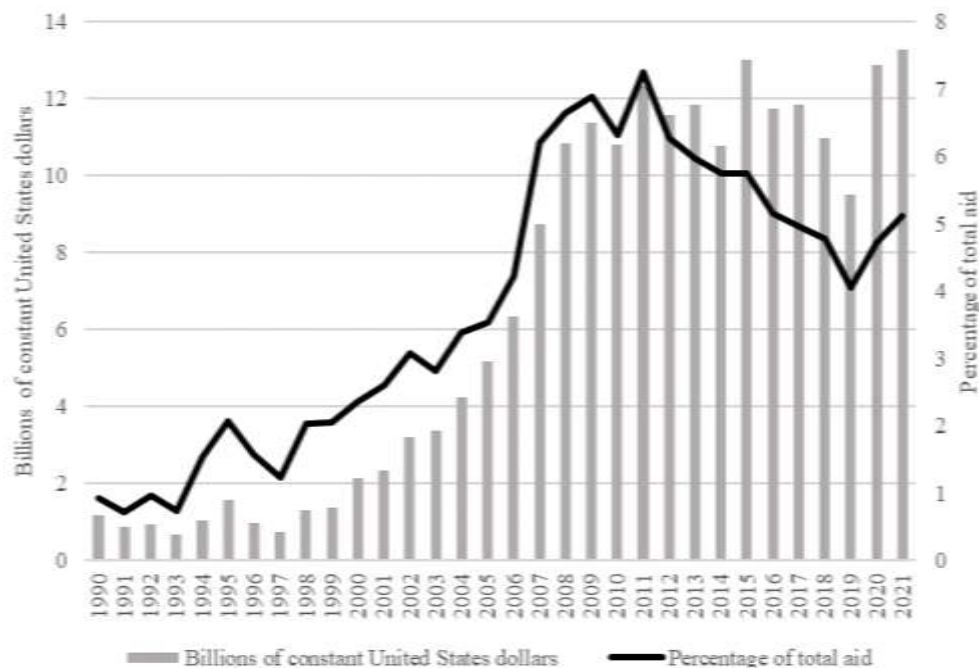
18. While the amount of aid resources spent on the category of emergency assistance has remained relatively stable over the years, aid distribution within this category has been characterized by major changes. Commodity aid, which helps countries import food in times of balance-of-payment crisis, has remained unchanged over the past three decades, but debt relief measures, which help countries reduce debt service payments in times of mounting fiscal pressure, have decreased to very low levels. The mounting debt of developing countries is increasing the need for additional debt relief measures. The recent increase in efforts to ensure debt sustainability are not yet reflected in the aid data.

### **III. Aid allocations for the costed components of the Programme of Action**

19. The sustained increase in aid for population-related matters (see figure V) began with the inception of the Millennium Development Goals in 2000 and, notably, the focus on HIV, maternal mortality and increased access to sexual and reproductive health care. The increase in aid for population-related matters was unabated for more than a decade, climbing to \$12.3 billion in 2011; since then, such aid has been much more erratic around a rather flat trend line. Thus, since 2011, aid for population-related matters has not kept up with the general increase in aid and, consequently, has fallen as a share of total aid disbursements.

Figure V  
**Aid disbursements by official and private donors for population matters, 1990–2021**

(Billions of United States dollars and percentage of total aid)



Source: Estimates based on Creditor Reporting System data (accessed on 1 December 2022).

Note: Information on aid targeted at the social mitigation of HIV (funding code 16064) is available only from 2002 onwards and thus included only in the more recent analysis of aid for population matters, including in the figures presented below.

20. As noted in previous reports, between 2018 and 2019, aid for population-related matters declined at an unprecedented rate, but, between 2019 and 2020, it more than made up for the previous decline (see E/CN.9/2022/4 and E/CN.9/2023/4). In 2020, aid for population-related matters reached \$12.9 billion, climbing to \$13.3 billion in 2021, its highest level yet.

21. The Nairobi Summit on the International Conference on Population and Development, which was held in November 2019, commemorated the twenty-fifth anniversary of the 1994 Conference and put a price tag on the global ambition to eliminate preventable maternal mortality, ensure universal access to family planning and end violence against women. To achieve these three transformative results, it was estimated that \$264 billion would be needed between 2020 and 2030, and it was suggested that at least \$42 billion of that would need to come from donor assistance. The remaining \$222 billion would be covered by a variety of external and national public and private sources, including out-of-pocket expenditure (see E/CN.9/2021/4).<sup>4</sup>

22. A breakdown of the main categories of aid for population-related matters shows that the largest share of such aid has always focused on sexual and reproductive health, and that a much smaller share has been allocated to population data and policy analysis. However, over time, this contrast has become even more pronounced. Whereas aid for sexual and reproductive health has increased in absolute and relative terms (see figures VI and VII), aid for population data and policy analysis has declined in both absolute and relative terms.

<sup>4</sup> For a list of commitments, see [www.nairobisummiticpd.org/commitments](http://www.nairobisummiticpd.org/commitments).

Figure VI  
**Aid disbursements by official and private donors for population-related matters, by main category, 2002–2021**

(Billions of United States dollars)

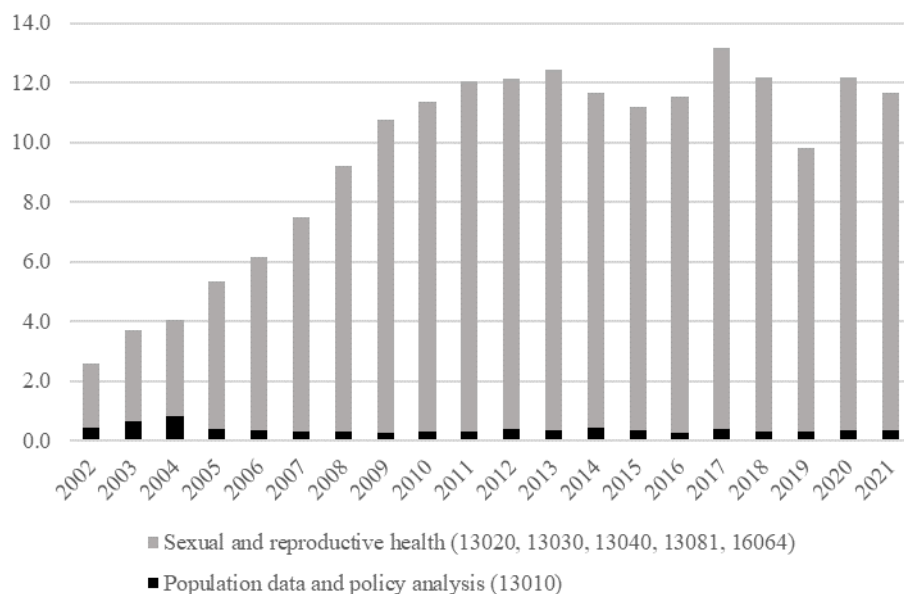
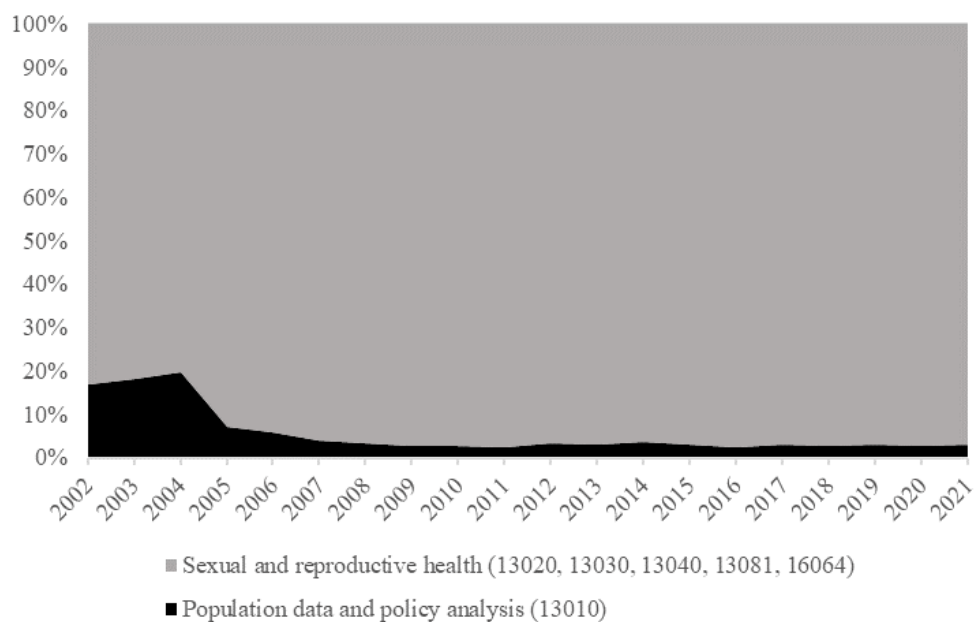


Figure VII  
**Aid disbursements by official and private donors for population matters, by main category, 2002–2021**

(Percentage)



Source: Estimates based on OECD International Development Statistics, Creditor Reporting System data (accessed on 2 November 2023).

23. In 2002, the earliest year for which a breakdown of aid for population-related matters by these two main categories was available, aid for population data and policy analysis stood at \$0.4 billion; by 2004, it had climbed to \$0.8 billion, its highest level ever. In 2005, it fell, and it has remained between \$0.4 and 0.3 billion ever since, including in 2021, the most recent year for which data are available. In relative terms, aid for population data and policy analysis fell from a share of almost 20 per cent of total aid for population matters in 2004 to only 3 per cent of such aid in 2021.

24. The low aid allocations for population data and policy analysis are concerning given that population data and policy analysis are critical for evidence-based, people-centred and forward-looking development strategies. For instance, only a small proportion of countries completed a census during the 2020 round.<sup>5</sup> Today, many countries still have limited or outdated population data and thus have no or outdated population estimates and projections. Many are unable to identify the most fundamental demographic characteristics of their population, such as the number of people living in the country, the age structure of the population and the distribution of the population by geographical region, which makes planning and crisis management very difficult. Without this knowledge, it is very hard to anticipate the national and local demand for education and health care, energy and housing, among other things, as well as to deploy adequate emergency assistance to people in times of crises.

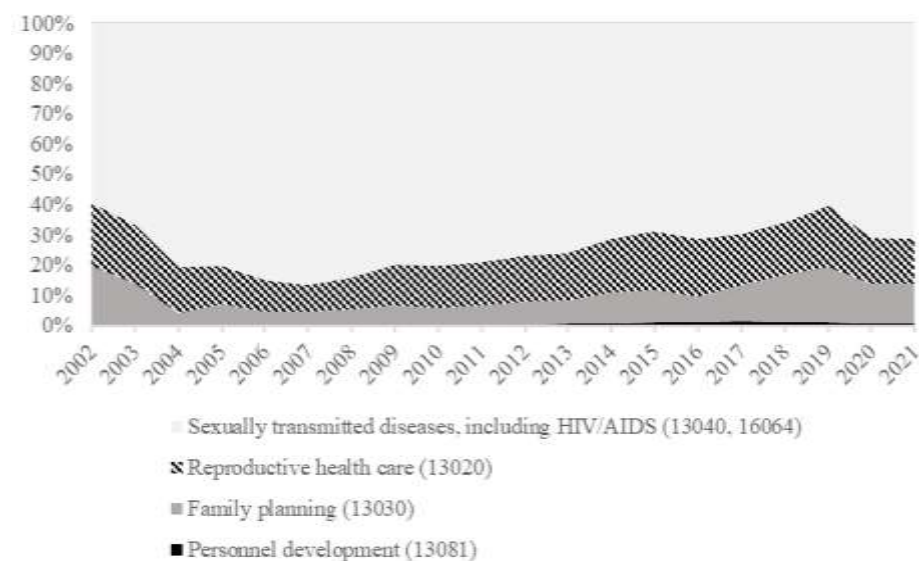
25. A breakdown of aid for sexual and reproductive health is difficult, as has been noted in earlier reports (see, for example, [E/CN.9/2019/4](#)); therefore, such a breakdown must be interpreted with care. This is because of the difficulties in delineating aid for sexual and reproductive health, which can lead to donors classifying very similar aid under different subcategories. For example, efforts to ensure access to condoms can be classified under the subcategories of family planning, reproductive health or prevention of sexually transmitted infections. Such efforts might even accompany the training of personnel and thus fall under the subcategory of personnel development. Notwithstanding these difficulties, figure VIII provides a breakdown of aid for sexual and reproductive health by main subcategory of the Programme of Action.

---

<sup>5</sup> For a tracker of census activity by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), see [www.unfpa.org/census](http://www.unfpa.org/census).

Figure VIII  
**Aid disbursements by official and private donors for sexual and reproductive health, by main subcategory, 2002–2021**

(Percentage share of total aid for sexual and reproductive health)



Source: Estimates based on OECD International Development Statistics, Creditor Reporting System data (accessed on 2 November 2023).

Note: The OECD uses the terms sexually transmitted diseases and HIV/AIDS; however, the present report uses the terms sexually transmitted infections and HIV to align with United Nations terminology.

26. From 2002 to 2007, the breakdown shows a large increase in the share of aid dedicated for the fight against sexually transmitted infections, including HIV, and from 2008 to 2018 it shows a steady decline of the share of aid for this purpose. In 2007, such aid amounted to 87 per cent of total aid dedicated for sexual and reproductive health; by 2018, it had shrunk to 60 per cent. However, the share of aid for combating sexually transmitted infections rose again by about 11 percentage points between 2019 and 2020, and this is mirrored by a fall in the share of aid for family planning and reproductive health of about 11 percentage points. The former saw a further slight increase of 0.4 percentage points between 2020 and 2021, whereas the latter saw a further slight decrease of 0.2 percentage points.

27. Throughout the period, the share of aid for personnel development in reproductive health was low and is thus hardly visible in figure VIII. However, it reached a high in 2017, amounting to 1.4 per cent of total aid for sexual and reproductive health, representing a total of \$0.2 billion, but it has since declined, and stood at only 0.7 per cent of total aid for sexual and reproductive health in 2021.

28. Measured not as a share of aid for sexual and reproductive health, but in dollar terms, aid for all subcategories of sexual and reproductive health declined in most recent years. Between 2020 and 2021, aid to combat sexually transmitted infections declined by \$0.3 billion to \$8.1 billion; aid for reproductive health declined by \$0.1 billion to \$1.7 billion; and aid for family planning declined by \$0.1 billion to \$1.5 billion. Aid for personnel development remained low and declined by about \$14 million during this time.

29. Other areas that are essential for realizing sexual and reproductive health and rights and that are not fully captured by the costed components of the Programme of

Action include efforts to ensure comprehensive sexuality education and eliminate gender-based violence. However, data on aid for comprehensive sexuality education are not available, and data on aid for eliminating gender-based violence are very limited, as discussed below.

30. Table 2 shows the increase in aid for sexual and reproductive health per woman of reproductive age in the developing world. Measured as gross aid disbursements, this aid climbed from \$1.62 per woman in 2002 to \$7.37 per woman in 2010; more recently, however, it fell to \$7.21 per woman in 2020 and to \$6.84 per woman in 2021.

31. Development Assistance Committee countries continue to give the most aid for sexual and reproductive health, whereas non-Development Assistance Committee countries reported little or no aid in this area. However, since 2010 the aid allocations of Development Assistance Committee donors have been falling, and in 2021 they reached their lowest level since 2010. In 2010, their aid accounted for \$5.40 per woman, but in 2021 it had fallen to \$4.21 per woman. By contrast, multilateral agencies have slightly increased their aid since 2010, and private donors have done so as well. Furthermore, aid by private donors, measured in absolute terms, more than doubled over the same period. A notable share of the increase in aid for sexual and reproductive health is attributable to the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, which remains by far the largest donor of aid in this area. The Foundation raised its aid from \$0.30 per woman in 2010 to \$0.39 per woman in 2021. However, the increase in aid by private donors is especially attributable to the fact that more private donors are reporting aid for sexual and reproductive health.

Table 2

### Aid from official and private donors for sexual and reproductive health, per woman of reproductive age in the developing world, 2002, 2010, 2020 and 2021

(United States dollars per woman)

	<i>Gross disbursements</i>				<i>Grant equivalents</i>			
	<i>2002</i>	<i>2010</i>	<i>2020</i>	<i>2021</i>	<i>2002</i>	<i>2010</i>	<i>2020</i>	<i>2021</i>
Official and private donors	1.62	7.37	7.21	6.84	..	..	..	..
Official donors	1.62	7.07	6.50	6.16	..	..	7.77	7.07
Development Assistance Committee countries	1.14	5.40	4.57	4.21	..	..	7.74	7.00
Non-Development Assistance Committee countries	..	0.00	0.01	0.00	..	..	0.01	0.00
Multilateral agencies	0.48	1.66	1.92	1.94	..	..	0.02	0.06
Private donors	..	0.30	0.71	0.69	..	..	..	..
Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation	..	0.30	0.37	0.39	..	..	..	..
Other private donors	..	..	0.34	0.30	..	..	..	..

*Source:* Estimates based on OECD International Development Statistics: Creditor Reporting System data; Creditor Reporting System grant equivalents; and United Nations, World Population Prospects 2022 revision, available at <https://population.un.org/wpp/Download/Standard/Population> (both accessed on 3 November 2023).

## IV. Aid allocations for other priority areas of the Programme of Action

32. While, in previous reports, section IV has generally focused on an issue of pertinence to the special theme of the session, on the occasion of the thirtieth review of the Programme of Action, there is a mandate for the present section to consider aid

flows with relevance to the overall Programme of Action. Given the breadth of the Programme of Action, this is a formidable mandate.

33. The Programme of Action is comprised of 16 chapters (see box 2). Chapters I and II are the preamble and the principles that govern its implementation, and chapters XIII to XVI discuss national actions, international cooperation, partnership with non-governmental sectors and the follow-up to the Conference. The intermediate chapters (III to XII) are focused on substantive matters (see [A/CONF.171/13](#), chap. I, annex).

Box 2

**Chapters of the Programme of Action**

**I. Preamble**

**II. Principles**

**III. Interrelationships between Population, Sustained Economic Growth and Sustainable Development**

- A. Integrating population and development strategies
- B. Population, sustained economic growth and poverty
- C. Population and environment

**IV. Gender Equality, Equity and Empowerment of Women**

- A. Empowerment and status of women
- B. The girl child
- C. Male responsibilities and participation

**V. The Family, Its Roles, Rights, Composition and Structure**

- A. Diversity of family structure and composition
- B. Socioeconomic support to the family

**VI. Population Growth and Structure**

- A. Fertility, mortality and population growth rates
- B. Children and youth
- C. Elderly people
- D. Indigenous people
- E. Persons with disabilities

**VII. Reproductive Rights and Reproductive Health**

- A. Reproductive rights and reproductive health
- B. Family planning
- C. Sexually transmitted diseases and prevention of human immunodeficiency virus (HIV)
- D. Human sexuality and gender relations
- E. Adolescents

**VIII. Health, Morbidity and Mortality**

- A. Primary health care and the health-care sector

- B. Child survival and health
- C. Women's health and safe motherhood
- D. Human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) infection and acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS)

**IX. Population Distribution, Urbanization and Internal Migration**

- A. Population distribution and sustainable development
- B. Population growth in large urban agglomerations
- C. Internally displaced persons

**X. International Migration**

- A. International migration and development
- B. Documented migrants
- C. Undocumented migrants
- D. Refugees, asylum-seekers and displaced persons

**XI. Population, Development and Education**

- A. Education, population and sustainable development
- B. Population information, education and communication

**XII. Technology, Research and Development**

- A. Basic data collection, analysis and dissemination
- B. Reproductive health research
- C. Social and economic research

34. The further implementation of the Programme of Action is critically dependent on progress in all of these areas. In practice, the focus is often on the so-called costed components of the Programme of Action – family planning, reproductive health, sexually transmitted infections, including HIV, and population data and policy analysis – whereas other areas of the Programme of Action generally receive less attention. The costed components are discussed on an annual basis in section III of the present report (mostly in relation to chapters VII, VIII and XII), and the other aspects are reviewed in section IV when they are discussed by the Commission. Box 3 offers an overview of some of the issues that were discussed in section IV of the present report during the past years, including food security and nutrition (2020 and 2021), sustained and sustainable economic growth (2022) and education (2023).

Box 3

**Population and development links: key findings of the 2022 and 2023 reports**

The International Conference on Population and Development programme of action makes a strong case for the systematic integration of demographic change into development strategies. Against this background, previous reports on resource flows focused on the links between population issues and sustainable development.



### **2020 and 2021 reports (E/CN.9/2020/4 and E/CN.9/2021/4)**

The 2020 report was prepared at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic and was ultimately updated and presented as the 2021 report. The reports focused on food security and nutrition and their links to population issues.

It was noted in the reports that, while aid to ensure food security in emergencies saw a significant increase between 2010 and 2018, aid for the agricultural sector overall rose at a much slower pace. Furthermore, aid for agriculture in developing countries remained low compared with the total agricultural support provided by developed countries for their own agricultural activities.

It was found that the largest share of aid for the development of the primary sector was dedicated to policy and governance, and that only a fraction of this was allocated to developing production and processing capacities in the primary sector. In 2018, aid for policy and governance accounted for 6.0 per cent, aid for production and processing for 2.0 per cent, aid for research and extension for 0.8 per cent and aid for business support, including seeds, fertilizers and finance, for only 0.5 per cent of total aid allocations to all sectors. To promote the sustainable development of the primary sector and to combat food insecurity and malnutrition will require an increase in development assistance for these areas.

### **2022 report (E/CN.9/2022/4)**

In line with the 2021 report, it was argued in the 2022 report that sustained economic development was contingent not only on productive capacities and growth-oriented economic policies, but also on a more sustainable use of natural resources. In addition, it was argued that decent work and social protection were essential for people to benefit from economic growth and that one critical investment to that end was in the development of human capital.

Notable aid allocations for the strengthening of human capital were found, including education, health and water and sanitation, but with an uneven distribution of aid within those categories. For example, aid for secondary education, as well as aid for the efforts to combat non-communicable diseases, was relatively low compared with needs. The same was true for aid allocations to create jobs and extend social protection – the two most direct and important interventions for the promotion of more inclusive economies – and aid allocations for greening economies and making economic growth more sustained.

### **2023 report (E/CN.9/2023/4)**

While an emphasis on the development of human capital was placed in the 2022 report, the analysis of aid flows for education was deepened in the 2023 report. It was found that, while official and private aid disbursements for education had increased over the past decade, they had increased by less than the aggregate aid flows. The increase was strongest for higher education, followed by vocational training. Aid for secondary education also grew, but less so for lower secondary education.

Efforts to strengthen human capital must be informed by a focus on the life course. Naturally, spending on education will focus mostly on younger generations and formal education, but there is a need to significantly step up spending on other forms of education and learning, which also target the adult population.

Commitments to fulfil Sustainable Development Goal 4 and the ambitions of the Transforming Education Summit will require substantial new investment. Furthermore, aid allocations must also cover recurrent expenditure, especially in the poorest countries, to ensure that the schools that are built are offering essential facilities and services and that they have the teachers whom they need.

35. Chapters and issues that have not yet been a focus of the annual reviews by the Commission of Population and Development since 2020 include chapter IV, on gender equality; chapter V, on the family; chapter VI, on population growth and structure, covering various population groups, including young people, older persons, Indigenous persons and persons living with disabilities; chapter IX, on population distribution; and chapter X, on international migration. However, aid data are often not available at sufficiently disaggregated levels to offer an in-depth discussion of aid flows to these areas. Support for young people is often subsumed under education programmes, and support for older persons under social protection efforts. Furthermore, support for various population groups, including Indigenous persons and persons living with disabilities, is subsumed under aid allocations for human rights. Although many countries are beginning to lend greater support to families – often to support families with children and improve family-work life balance – disaggregated aid flows that would show such support to families are not available.

36. In recent years, donors have begun to report aid allocations to prevent gender-based violence and promote gender equality, and donors have also begun to report aid allocations aimed at supporting refugees and other international migrants. Limited aid data are also available for human rights, albeit it is a broad category that defies a more detailed analysis. Aid data in support of rural and urban development are also limited.

37. Accordingly, the present report will focus in the next two sections on aid allocations to promote gender equality and human rights more broadly, and support for spatial development and refugees, including in the host countries.

### **Human rights, women and girls**

38. Between 2002 and 2021 – the earliest and most recent years for which disaggregated aid data were available – aid allocations saw major changes. Aid allocations for human rights, women and girls increased by 520 percent, or 2.7 times the rate of aid overall, and aid for women and girls increased by 1,531 per cent, or 2.9 times the rate of aid for human rights, women and girls. Therefore, the increase in aid for human rights is attributable mainly to an increase in aid for women and girls. However, this increase was based on very low initial levels.

39. In 2002, aid in support of women's institutions and movements amounted to only \$114 million, and by 2021 aid in support of the same amounted to \$1,051 million. Furthermore, since 2013 selected donors have begun to report aid allocations with the specific purpose of combatting violence against women and girls, and from 2016 onwards, this aid has also seen a marked increase (see table 3). In 2016, it stood at \$164 million, and by 2021 it had climbed to \$815 million.

Table 3  
**Official and private aid disbursements for human rights, women and girls, 2002–2021**

(Millions of United States dollars, constant)

	2002	2010	2021	Change, 2002–2021	
				163 617.3	195.8
<b>Total aid (1000)</b>	<b>83 574.6</b>	<b>157 431.1</b>	<b>247 191.9</b>	<b>163 617.3</b>	<b>195.8</b>
<b>Governance (150: I.5.+152: I.5.b-15112-15190)</b>	<b>7 230.6</b>	<b>17 358.6</b>	<b>20 269.4</b>	<b>13 038.8</b>	<b>180.3</b>
Human rights, women and girls (15160, 15170, 15180)	540.7	1 310.5	3 353.4	2 812.7	520.3
Human rights (15160)	426.2	903.7	1 487.2	1 061.0	248.9
Women and girls (15170, 15180)	114.4	406.8	1 866.2	1 751.8	1 531.2
Women's rights institutions and movements (15170)	114.4	406.8	1 051.0	936.4	818.5
Violence against women and girls (15180)	–	–	815.3	–	–
<b>Memo</b>					
Conflict, peace and security (152: I.5.b)	1 139.0	3 854.8	4 831.2	3 692.2	324.2
Other governance	5 551.0	12 193.4	12 084.8	6 533.9	117.7

Source: Estimates based on OECD International Development Statistics: Development Assistance Committee, Creditor Reporting System (accessed on 3 November 2023).

40. Notwithstanding the increase in aid to women's movements, within the broader category of governance the aid for human rights, women and girls remained well below other aspects of governance-building. Aid for conflict, peace and security increased by a lesser percentage over the entire period but increased by a larger volume owing to higher initial aid levels. In 2021, aid for conflict, peace and security amounted to \$3,692 million, compared with an overall aid volume of \$2,813 million for human rights, women and girls, and aid for other aspects of governance, including general administration, public finance, public procurement, anti-corruption, and legal and judicial development stood at \$6,534 million.

41. As indicated by progress towards the three transformative results of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), violence against women and girls remains a large challenge globally, and as indicated by UNFPA estimates of resource needs, much larger aid allocations are required to eliminate gender-based violence.<sup>6</sup> These efforts must be embedded in a broader approach to strengthen human rights and build effective governance systems, including strong legal and judicial systems.

#### **Subnational development, population distribution, mobility and migration**

42. As noted by classical development economists,<sup>7</sup> the development of subnational areas, including the countryside and cities, has important implications for the distribution of the population. Aid for subnational development is in part subsumed under the broader category of governance in the OECD aid database and in part under the category of multisectoral and cross-sectoral interventions. For analytical purposes, the present report merges aid for subnational development – including for

<sup>6</sup> For a cost of estimate of achieving the three transformative results by 2030, see UNFPA, *Costing the Three Transformative Results* (New York, 2019).

<sup>7</sup> See, for example, W. Arthur Lewis, "Economic development with unlimited supplies of labour", *Manchester School*, vol. 22, No. 2 (May 1954); S.B. Saul, "The theory of economic growth. By W. Arthur Lewis. Homewood, Ill.: Richard D. Irwin, 1955", *Journal of Economic History*, vol. 18, No. 1 (1958); Gustav Ranis and John C.H. Fei, "A theory of economic development", *American Economic Review*, vol. 51, No. 4 (September 1961); and John C.H. Fei and Gustav Ranis, *Development of the Labor Surplus Economy: Theory and Policy* (Homewood, Illinois, R.D. Irwin, 1964).

decentralization and local governments, rural and urban development, and alternatives to agricultural development – in a single category under multisectoral interventions.

43. Aid to those areas outperformed the overall increase on aid between 2002 and 2021, and that increase in aid was driven mainly by an increase in aid for urban development (see table 4). By contrast, aid for rural development increased by much less than the overall aid flows and aid for the development of alternatives to agriculture declined in both absolute and relative terms.

Table 4

### Official and private disbursements for subnational development, population distribution, mobility and migration, 2002–2021

(Millions of United States dollars, constant)

	2002	2010	2021	Change, 2002–2021	
				Change	Percentage
<b>Total aid (1000)</b>	<b>83 574.6</b>	<b>157 431.1</b>	<b>24 7191.9</b>	<b>163 617.3</b>	<b>195.8</b>
<b>Multi-sector (400: IV.+15112+15190+930)</b>	<b>6 335.6</b>	<b>20 423.0</b>	<b>34 949.8</b>	<b>28 614.2</b>	<b>451.6</b>
Population distribution (15112, 43030, 43040, 43050)	1 284.1	4 010.1	4 999.4	3 715.3	289.3
Decentralization and local government (15112)	305.8	1 155.9	1 339.0	1 033.2	337.8
Urban development (43030)	222.8	1 317.4	2 192.5	1 969.8	884.2
Rural development (43040)	700.5	1 530.7	1 458.9	758.4	108.3
Non-agricultural alternatives (43050)	54.9	6.1	8.9	(46.1)	(83.9)
Mobility and migration (15190, 930)	749.3	3 845.6	14 028.6	13 279.3	1 772.2
Migration and mobility (15190)	–	–	1 019.6	–	–
Refugees in donor countries (930)	749.3	3 845.6	13 009.0	12 259.7	1 636.1
<b>Memo</b>					
Disaster risk reduction (43060)	71.2	339.6	1 544.1	1 472.9	2 069.8
Other multi-sector	4 231.0	12 227.8	14 377.8	10 146.8	239.8

Source: Estimates based on OECD International Development Statistics: Development Assistance Committee, Creditor Reporting System (accessed on 3 November 2023).

44. In short, the past two decades saw a notable shift in aid for subnational development towards the urban areas. On the one hand, this is consistent with a continuous rural-urban migration and the continuous growth of cities in the developing world; on the other, it might also help to reinforce rural-urban migration. Notwithstanding rapid population growth in urban areas in the world's poorest countries, the rural areas remain home to the largest share of the population. The inability of the rural population to make a sustainable living inside or outside agriculture will force many to leave rural areas and move to the cities. Notwithstanding this fact, the migration of young people to the cities has other motivations.

45. In the developing world, the rapid expansion of cities has posed a series of development challenges. One is the increase in the urban slums and the slum population, which is associated with a lack of access to water, sanitation, energy, transport, health and education, among other services, and another is the increase in urban underemployment and precarious employment. Furthermore, some of the people who arrived in the cities – many of those with greater human capital and

stronger social connections – are eventually moving on to look for opportunities in other countries.<sup>8</sup>

46. The increase in international migration, and related considerations – such as the ability to ensure adequate services for migrants while en route or support their integration into the host countries – are also reflected in an increase in related aid. Between 2002 and 2021, aid for mobility and migration – including the facilitation of orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility, and support for refugees in host countries – increased by 1,772 per cent, or \$13 billion. However, the largest share of this aid within that period, 92.3 per cent, was for support for refugees in the host (donor) countries.

## V. Conclusions and recommendations

47. **The review of financial resource flows for the further implementation of the International Conference on Population and Development programme of action over the past decades suggests the following overarching recommendations, as well as a series of more specific conclusions.**

48. **Notwithstanding record levels in aid, most donors need to make greater efforts to reach aid targets. Very few donors are managing to allocate 0.70 per cent of gross national income in aid to developing countries overall, including 0.15 to 0.20 per cent of gross national income in aid to the world's least developed countries.**

49. **The past decades have seen a large increase in aid for humanitarian purposes, but greater attention needs to be paid to promote sustainable development. A breakdown of aid for sustainable development shows a notable increase in aid to the social sector – especially population, health and governance – but a much weaker development of aid for the economic sector and the environment.**

50. **Progress in the implementation of the International Conference on Population and Development programme of action, and indeed in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, must place greater focus on the interrelationship between population dynamics and sustainable development. Meeting the needs of current and future generations will place greater pressures on natural resources unless there is a greater effort to promote greener and more inclusive economies. The low level of aid for productive capacities, environmental protection and social protection hampers progress towards sustained and sustainable economic growth (see [E/CN.9/2021/4](#) and [E/CN.9/2022/4](#)).**

51. **Aid for population and reproductive health continues to fall short of aid requirements, notwithstanding a very large increase over the past decades. The increase in aid for population and reproductive health since the early 1990s has outperformed the increase in aid to all other major categories. This increase can be seen as a direct result of the International Conference on Population and Development conference, which underscored the importance of population matters and of the Millennium Development Goals, which put a spotlight on the importance of health, including sexual and reproductive health, women and girls. However, since 2010, the aid rally for population-related matters stopped**

---

<sup>8</sup> Such patterns have been identified, for example, by a joint research project of the Danish Refugee Council and UNFPA, which focused on “gateway cities” in Africa and the Middle East. The study covered several gateway cities. See also the report for Beirut, UNFPA, “Youth mixed migration in Beirut: driving factors, lived experiences, sexual and reproductive health and rights – pilot study”, 2019.

and, between 2020 and 2021, the most recent year for which data were available, that aid fell.

52. Between 2020 and 2021, total official and private aid disbursements for sexual and reproductive health per woman of reproductive age in the developing countries fell from \$7.21 to \$6.84. A significant increase in aid for population-related matters is needed to eliminate preventable maternal mortality, meet the unmet need for family planning, stop gender-based violence and ensure the collection and use of population data for planning and policy development.

53. Aid for women's empowerment and gender equality needs to be broadened. In the past few years, aid to end violence against women and girls, as well as aid for women's institutions and movements, has seen a large increase. However, the efficacy of this aid is dependent not only on concomitant support to the legal and judicial system, but also on broader efforts to support women's empowerment and gender equality.

54. The increase in aid for urban planning was mirrored by a decrease in aid for rural areas. This is consistent with the challenges emanating from rapid urbanization in the poorest countries, but it is problematic because, in the poorest countries, the rural areas remain home to most of the population. Without greater investment in rural areas and the development of alternatives to agriculture, people will tend to migrate to the cities.

55. The increase in international migration in the past years – including the increase in the refugee population due to wars and social and economic hardship – has been associated with an increase in aid for mobility, migration and refugees. However, the largest share of aid to this area is spent by donors at home on refugee support. Given that migration pressures are rising, it is probable that aid to this area will follow suit. However, a greater share of aid will also need to be allocated to address migration at the point of origin and transit and to support migrants in other host countries in the global South.

56. Aid for population-related matters remains very small. Knowledge of how many people live, where they live and how old they are, and how population numbers, spatial distribution and age structures will change, is essential for people-centred and evidence-based planning and governance. The systematic consideration of demographic data and projections is critical for countries to understand the changing characteristics and needs of the population, and design policies and programmes to ensure that no one is left behind (see [E/CN.9/2024/2](#)). It is also indispensable for understanding how demographic change interacts with other megatrends, such as climate change and technological change, and what opportunities and challenges such interactions can pose for sustainable development. However, aid for population data and policy analysis has declined as a share of total aid for population-related matters and remains very small.