**Forum:** Special Conference

**Issue:** Measures to mitigate the negative impacts of ageing populations

**Student Officer:** Carmen De Zuniga

**Position:** Chair of the Special Conference

Introduction

Population ageing is poised to become one of the most influential social changes of the century. Carrying with it implications and challenges that infiltrate nearly all areas of society and the economy.

The progress in life expectancy and health of older populations worldwide has been marked as a crucial achievement of the 20th century. However, these trends have also had adverse effects in many nations, on the economy and social life as a whole. Currently, governments are desperately investigating and adopting measures to mitigate the forthcoming challenges that co-exist with an ageing population.

Societal ageing can significantly affect economic growth along with patterns of work and retirement. On a wider scale, the ability of communities and governments to provide adequate resources can be hindered for older individuals. There is concern about modifications to government policies involved with the allocation of resources to different age groups, as well as the financial pressures impacting public pension systems. Furthermore, societal ageing is upheaving the economic decisions of families on a personal level and increasing economic strain on working adults due to the prevalence of disability and chronic disease . In short, the negative effects of ageing populations have many dimensions. And thus require many approaches to tackle them.

Definition of Key Terms

Population Ageing

“An increasing median age in a population because of declining fertility rates and rising life expectancy. Most countries have a rising life expectancy and an ageing population, trends that emerged first in developed countries but are now seen in virtually all developing countries.”

**Life Expectancy**

“The statistically determined average number of years of life remaining after a specified age for a given group of individuals.”

**Demographic**

“Statistics that describe populations and their characteristics. It relates to the statistical study of human populations - demography. It describes the size, structure, and movements of populations over space and time. “

**Public Pension**

“Someone who has a pension receives a regular sum of money from the state or from a former employer because they have retired or because they are widowed or have a disability.”

**Allocation of Resources**

Distribution of assets between various groups and individuals. Resource allocation is an issue because societal resources are in a limited supply, and a government needs to strategically allot scarce resources to where they are needed. Resource allocation will be impacted as more elderly will require more resources that the government needs to provide such as. medicine, health care, government funds, medical equipment etc.

**The Care Economy**

The part of the economy that is concerned with the process of caring for the past, present and future labour forces, and the human population as a whole. Includes the domestic provisioning of food, clothing, and shelter. The care economy, notably unpaid care work, is an overlooked but crucial contributor to economic and social development.

**Longevity**

‘’Refers to the duration of life of an individual. *Mean longevity* is the average duration of life of a population. This is often referred to as life expectancy. *Maximum longevity* is the age at death of the longest-lived member of the population.’

General Overview

The world’s population and issues

our population has more than tripled in less than 75 years, increasing from approximately 2.5 billion in 1950 to almost 8.1 billion in 2023. The distribution of this population is slowly transitioning towards older ages. This can be seen in virtually all countries, though at different levels and speeds.

 

*Caption 1: Proportion of Population Aged 65 years and over between 1940-2040*

Causes of ageing populations

Ageing is a triumph of development and advancements in the quality of life. Increasing longevity is one of humanity’s most notable attainments. Largely due to a general improvement in the standard of nutrition, sanitation, methods and access to health care, medical and scientific advances, and more widespread financial stability. Governments and policymakers must comprehend that population ageing is a natural by-product of the overall advances in the quality of life.

 Issues faced by the world’s elderly population

When discussing solutions for the negative effects of ageing populations, it is important not to standardize the elderly into a one-size-fits-all policy. The older generation should not be recognized as a single identical category but be seen as diverse as all other age groups. Each group of older persons, whether financially struggling, female, male, indigenous, literate or illiterate, has requirements and needs that should be recognized using tailored programs and discussions.

The way forward in an ageing population

Various methods are available to tackle the difficulties associated with ageing populations. Solutions encompass policy reforms and institutional reforms that tackle health and providing care services, development of new technologies and designs, and social insurance and pension reform. Promoting longer careers by elevating the ages for retirement would also generate more money for pensioners and more income tax revenues for government-funded support for the elderly.

 The Second World Assembly on Ageing

The Second World Assembly on Ageing occurred in Madrid, Spain in 2002. It convened to discuss solutions to the problems of rapidly ageing populations. The assembly adopted the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, which focuses on cultivating long-term health services and ensuring well-being at older ages. It effectively calls for changes in perceptions and prejudices, challenging the view that older individuals are simply viewed as “welfare beneficiaries” but, rather, as active participants and contributors to society. Not seeing the older generations as a burden, but rather striving to foster an inclusive environment that will recognize the contributions of older individuals.



*Caption 2: The Second World Assembly on Ageing Logo*

 Ensuring income security for the elderly

Along with health concerns, income security remains most pressing in the lives of older individuals and their families. This issue is translated into a broader concern for governments managing an ageing population. Investments in pension systems are seen as crucial methods to ensure financial prosperity and reduce poverty levels in elderly age. This is particularly a challenge in LICs, where social protection and pensions often remain a broader societal challenge, not just regarding population ageing.

Major Parties Involved

United Kingdom

The aging of the UK’s population is rapidly augmenting, with over 11 million individuals, which accounts for 18.6% of the total population, being 65 years or older. The decision to raise the retirement age is a policy that generates political and social controversy. However, it appears that the UK government is poised to implement this policy in the coming years. According to the current government plan, the state pension age for both men and women will gradually increase from 65 to 68 between 2024 and 2046.

World Health Organization

The World Health Organization (WHO) is leading the efforts to implement the United Nations Decade of Healthy Ageing (2021-2030), working in cooperation with other UN organizations and serving as the Secretariat for the Decade. The goal is to actively engage governments, international and regional organizations, civil society, the private sector, and the media in contributing to the achievement of the Decade's objectives. This can be done through direct actions, collaboration with others, and participation in the Healthy Ageing Collaborative.

Japan

Worldwide Japan has the largest number of elderly people. According to estimates, there are now more than 1 in 10 people in Japan over the age of 80. In response to this, the Government of Japan is implementing various measures. The revision of legislation, such as mandating employers to make efforts to secure employment past 70 years and providing support for companies which employ or increase the retirement age, is also part of this. If no measures are taken to address the issue of an ageing population, it can lead to significant economic challenges in the long run. This is because a shrinking labour force can not only reduce overall economic output but also put a strain on government-provided pensions. The economic stability of Japan and many other countries could be threatened if this issue is not handled appropriately.

China

According to state media, the Chinese government is planning to add new strategies to its 2021-2025 "five-year plan" to tackle the challenges posed by its ageing population and decreasing workforce. These strategies aim at encouraging more births and include introducing cost-effective nursery services and modifying the current limits on the number of children permitted for each Chinese couple.

UN Involvement, Relevant Resolutions, Treaties and Events

The United Nations has launched a global initiative called the Decade of Healthy Ageing (2021-2030) aimed at enhancing the lives of older people, their families, and communities. The initiative encourages collaboration between governments to promote healthy ageing and support the elderly. The UN proposes measures such as building a coalition to tackle ageism and providing technical support to states implementing a minimum package of long-term care as part of universal health coverage. The UN has also published various reports outlining different approaches to alleviate the challenges of an ageing population. One such report is the World Social Report 2023: Leaving No One Behind In An Ageing World. It asserts that while the shift towards older populations is irreversible, collective actions and policy decisions taken now shape the future effects of ageing populations. Governments can effectively manage the difficulties that arise from demographic shifts while enhancing opportunities for all people to thrive and ensuring that no one is left behind.

Timeline of Events

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Description of event** |
| July 26, 1982April 8, 2002January, 2006 | The First World Assembly on Ageing in ViennaThe Second World Assembly on Ageing in MadridJapan becomes the world’s first “super-aged” society |
| January, 2020 | The number of people aged 60 and above rose to 1 billion worldwide, almost 15% of the world’s population |
| December 14, 2020 | UN General Assembly declares the United Nations Decade of Healthy Ageing (2021-2030) |

January 9, 2023 World Social Report 2023: Leaving No One Behind In An Ageing World is published

Previous Attempts to Resolve the Issue

As this is a relatively recent issue, there has been limited international coordinated action. However, many individual governments have introduced measures to guarantee a stable, sustainable population distribution. To prevent the adverse effects of ageing populations, several states have increased the length of maternity and paternity leave, built new nurseries and kindergartens, improved economic stability for young families and introduced laws forbidding firing women when pregnant or on maternity leave. Many states are also actively encouraging citizens to have more children, posting government-issued posters and advertisements illustrating national statistics about low birth rates. The effect of this, however, has been limited.

Poland's government has taken decisive action in response to the country's £10 billion annual pension system deficit. To address the issue, they launched a program aimed at boosting birth rates by providing 500 PLN per child in monthly support, which roughly equals 1000 yuan. This initiative is targeted at low-income families with one child or those with two or more children. This approach is not unique to Poland, as many governments worldwide are increasing retirement age and promoting higher birth rates to combat pension system deficits.

Possible Solutions

Possible solutions include:

1. **Designing an environment to support and provide for a healthy ageing population** encompasses creating smart cities, expanding accessible public transportation, and facilitating services and support for older individuals so their rights are upheld as full citizens of a state.
2. **Prioritizing investing in the healthcare sector,** due to the increase in the elderly population, the need for healthcare and nursing homes is expected to rise significantly. According to the OECD, 40-50% of healthcare spending is attributed to pensioners. To address this issue, governments should be ready to provide increased financial support and improve the availability of health services for the elderly.
3. **Supporting Caregivers and the “Care economy”,** thus spreading awareness about unpaid care work done regarding the elderly and providing financial support to care providers. This includes investing in technologies that can help the elderly be increasingly self-sufficient eg apps to monitor their symptoms and medical appointments.
4. **Modernizing and tailoring pension systems**, to prevent heavy pension deficits but simultaneously ensure each older individual has access to basic resources and has enough to uphold a healthy, sustainable life.
5. **Encouraging the ‘silver economy’,** as the population gets older, there will be new economic trends and opportunities emerging. This will result in more people participating in the "silver economy", which will be a significant contributor to the economy. Older people tend to have more purchasing power, travel more, and consume specific services more than the younger generation. Therefore, countries should take steps to prepare their workforce for the expanding industries that will be supported by the older population.

Research Guide

**Find out more here:**

Here are a few short videos I found that explain the issue and solutions very well:

[**https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CgSOl-01yjg**](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CgSOl-01yjg)

[**https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wp\_SaMtMSZM**](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wp_SaMtMSZM)

[**https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2aRfuBomzTw**](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2aRfuBomzTw)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ShmemfpkVLQ>

**How can you find out more about your country and its position on this?**

Remember to research not only the issue at hand but also your individual country’s position on it – this is the key to a successful Opening Speech.

Begin with Basic Search Terms:

Type in the search bar: “[Country Name] position on x (measures to mitigate the negative impacts of ageing populations)”.

Type in the search bar: “[Country Name] position on UN Security Council reform”. This

Look for Official Statements:

Refine your search to official government statements. Use terms like “[Country Name] government statement on population ageing” Remember – maybe your country might not believe this is a personally urgent issue - what other matters should be addressed first?

Refine your search to access official government statements. Use terms like “[Country

Name] government statement on UN reform” or “[Country Name] foreign ministry on

Explore News Articles:

To gather current opinions and developments, include news sources in your search.

Search for news sources in your research. Try “[Country Name] x (e.g., problems with an ageing population) news”.

Type “[Country Name] UN assembly speeches” or “[Country Name] voting record at

Cross-reference Multiple Sources:

To ensure accuracy, compare information from various reputable sources. This can include contrasting news reports, official statements, and academic papers.

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Check the Date:

Make sure the information is up-to-date. Look at the publication or update date of the

Make sure the information is up to date. Look at the publication or update date of the sources you find.

Summarize Your Findings:

After gathering information, summarize the key points of the country’s position, noting

Summarize the key points of the country’s position, ready for the conference

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