



The International Catholic Committee of Nurses and Medico-Social Assistants (CICIAMS)
Comite International Catholique des Infirmieres et Assistantes Medico-Sociales
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Theme: Changing population age structures and sustainable development.
CICIAMS Board and Nurses Delegates: M. Arvonio, M. Nowak, P. Sayers and P. Staley.

Oral Statement Presented by: Marian Nowak DNP, MPH, RN

Commission Chair, Distinguished Panel Members, National Representatives, and Guests:

The suppression of births over the last 50 years has resulted in cascading births and dangerous problems for millions of people. Age and family structures have been altered and too high a regard placed on the work force and economics rather than on the world's greatest renewable resource- our children. The top age structure, is the over 65 group, which is increasing and offers benefits as well as challenges. On the bottom, is the birth decline, a reversible factor. In keeping with today's theme, we offer the following statements regarding: (1) fertility (2) aging population and (3) replacement migration.

(1) Fertility

Nicole Mum Sim Lai of the Division of Population stated in 2016 that fertility decline is the “driver” of the aging population. As we reflect on the UN "Report of the Meeting" October, 2017, we recognize the desirable manpower, economic, and productivity benefits, referred to as 1st stage and 2nd stage demographic dividends. These benefits lure couples and societies to suppress fertility. However, these benefits are short term. We are more concerned with the deleterious effects of fewer children, resulting in nations experiencing crises. By the creation of a dearth of young people who would contribute to society and care for the aging, post-dividend countries are stressed at their foundations. This leads toward collapsing economies and decreased availability of healthcare workers to care for the sick and elderly. Furthermore, the promotion of abortion; the use of contraceptives; and child limiting policies have contributed towards the normalization of birth suppression and the age structure imbalance.

We propose that if we begin to immediately encourage fertility and eliminate all forms of contraception and abortion mandates, then by 2035 we will have a stream of young adults to begin to rebalance the population age structure.

(2) Aging population

By 2050, the numbers of older persons worldwide is projected to more than double to 2 billion. As nurse scientists, we propose a new gerontologic paradigm. This includes opportunities to assist people in preventing chronic health challenges and disabilities. The increase of cognitive affluence through continued education has benefitted people over 65, by allowing them to work and contribute to society much longer.

The new paradigm of increased education and valued life experience in that age group coupled with improved nutrition, and healthful lifestyles will lessen dependency.

(3) Replacement migration

The UN recommends replacement migration has a solution to the age structure imbalance however it is causing more harm than good. Identified healthcare concerns include: the breakdown of childhood immunization programs, shortage of drugs, insufficient time to develop health systems for refugees, lack of health records, as well as concerns regarding HIV, Hep C, TB, internal parasites, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) due to people leaving their ancestral homes. Presently the global replacement birth rate is rapidly nearing and anticipated to decline below the 2.1 children per woman. Therefore, replacement migration will in time fail to be a remedy.

In conclusion, we leave you with a quote from St Mother Teresa's address to the United Nations at Cairo : "Let us bring the child back... The child is God's gift to the family. Each child is created in the special image and likeness of God for greater things - to love and to be loved... This is the only way that our world can survive because our children are the only hope for the future. As older people are called to God, only their children can take their places." (Saint Mother Teresa of Calcutta. September 5-13, 1994) ¹

Thank you: The International Catholic Committee of Nurses and Medico-Social Assistants from Africa, Asia, Europe, North America, Central America, South America, and Oceania.

¹ Saint Mother Teresa of Calcutta. (September 5-13, 1994). Excerpts of Mother Teresa's address at the United Nations, International Conference on Population and Development. Cairo, Egypt.