

Evaluation of the Asia-Pacific Population Journal, 1986-2010

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Executive Summary

This evaluation of the Asia-Pacific Population Journal covers the period 1986 to 2010 and was undertaken during September 2011 to March 2012. The main purpose of the evaluation was to assess the value of the journal for its intended audience as a decision making tool for policy formulation and advocacy activities. More specifically, the evaluation was to develop concrete recommendations to improve the contribution of the journal to meet the specific needs of its key target audiences and identify ways to make the preparation, publication and dissemination of the journal more effective and sustainable.

Although several readership surveys and project reviews have been undertaken in the past, the present exercise is the first attempt to comprehensively assess the Journal's relevance in meeting its set objectives. The evaluation is timely given the rapidly growing significance of Asia on the world stage and the relevance of important population challenges faced in the Asia-Pacific region.

The evaluation reviewed 339 articles published in the journal during 1986 to 2010 with regard to their contents and the relevance and usefulness to researchers and practitioners. In addition, available documents of past user surveys and evaluations were examined. Interviews were conducted with selected researchers and practitioners in Malaysia, Sri Lanka and Thailand. The journal was also reviewed in relation to comparable journals in the field of population and its standing in the region and at the global level. The journal's work flows and processes with regard to its management and the web based format and its online presence were also reviewed.

In summary, the evaluation reveals the following:

- § The user survey conducted in 2011 shows (based on 91 responses received at the time of evaluation) that the overall quality of the journal has been highly rated by the readers. It is evident from the ratings, however that the contents of APPJ have been more useful to researchers and academics than to practitioners. This is evident from previous user surveys as well.
- § The project evaluations conducted in the past have indicated that, in general the APPJ has served as an important source of information for exchange of knowledge on all aspects of the field of population, reproductive health and gender issues in the Asia-

Pacific Region. Past evaluations have also indicated that the dissemination of information in the journal through electronic means has proved to be very effective. However, Asian Population Studies and Asia Pacific Migration Journal have emerged as important competitors.

- § Interviews conducted among academia and practitioners in selected countries indicate that while academia find the journal a useful source for research and teaching, practitioners see it as a technical journal with limited practical value.
- § Other than central Asia, the sub-regions of Asia and the Pacific have been generally well covered in the journal. However, within sub-regions, the articles in the journal have focused only on a few countries.
- § The distribution of articles by subjects show that mortality, morbidity, health, nutrition, gender and environment have been more thinly covered, than fertility and reproductive health. The rating of APPJ in Scopus has declined between 2005 and 2010. Its citations in Population and Development Review however, have increased during 2006 to 2010, but overall, articles in APPJ have been too infrequently cited.
- § A high turnover of Population Section Staff over the past few years has affected the workflows and processes with regard to the management of the journal, and delayed publication. Since 2010, APPJ has reduced the number of issues per year when most reputed academic journals have recently increased the number of issues.
- § An assessment of the contents of the journal show that the recommendations derived from the findings and conclusions to influence policy and programme related interventions are the weakest sections although there have been improvements during 2001 to 2010.
- § The Editorial Advisory Board has been heavily skewed towards personnel heading institutions who have institutional interest in the field. The current internal and external system to review submitted articles is weak.
- § The present website is not aligned to expected contemporary journal production. The 'Demographers Notebook' a periodic section in the journal is redundant. The mailing list of the journal is outdated and needs updating for electronic and postal mailing.

Evaluation of the Asia-Pacific Population Journal, 1986-2010

1. Introduction

The Asia-Pacific Population Journal (APPJ) launched jointly by ESCAP and the UNFPA in March 1986 is one of the leading journals on population in the Asia and Pacific region. Since its first publication, the APPJ has been published continuously over the past 25 years, initially by the Population Division and subsequently by the Social Development Division of ESCAP from its regular budget. Being part of ESCAP-UNFPA projects on population and development, the UNFPA had also funded one or two issues of the publication every year. In addition, the UNFPA has funded staff costs that added additional inputs to APPJ related tasks. However, since 2007, UNFPA funding has ceased and the Journal is now fully supported by ESCAP funds.

An important aim of the journal has been to keep regional governments informed of emerging population issues and programme experiences and share the findings of policy related research with governments officials, planners, program managers and researchers and civil society representatives in Asia and the Pacific region to influence population policies and programmes.

Nearly 2000 copies are printed of each issue of the journal and distributed among the relevant stakeholders in 72 countries. In addition, the website of the Asia-Pacific Population Journal has been attracting on average over 590,000 page-requests per year from 2000 to 2006. It means that on an average about 50,000 page requests per month. The website provides access to the complete collection of the journal in full-text. Since 2006, a complete collection of articles has been made available on CD-ROM. All these services are being provided free of costs to the recipients.

The purpose of the evaluation, therefore, is to assess the value of the journal for its intended audience as a decision making tool for policy formulation and advocacy activities. Although a few readership surveys and project reviews have been undertaken in the past, the present exercise is the first attempt to comprehensively assess its relevance in meeting its set objectives.

Against this backdrop, the main objectives of the evaluation are to:

- (i) Develop concrete recommendations to improve the contribution of the journal to meet the specific needs of its key target audiences; and
- (ii) Identify ways to make the preparation, publication and dissemination of the journal more effective and sustainable.

The review is timely given the rapidly growing significance of Asia on the world stage and the series of quite different important changes in population-related issues in the region. APPJ has a considerable opportunity to make a positive contribution to development in the region.

2. The Evaluation Team and Terms of Reference

The evaluation team comprised of Dr. A.T.P.L Abeykoon (Lead Consultant) and Dr. John Connell (Consultant). Together they have considerable experience in population planning, teaching and research. Dr. Abeykoon holds a Masters degree in population studies from Cornell University and Ph.D. in population planning from the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. He is the former Director of the Population Division, Ministry of Health, Government of Sri Lanka and in that capacity has been involved in the formulation and implementation of population policies and strategies. He is a member of the Editorial Advisory Board of the Sri Lanka Journal of Population Studies and has served as an external reviewer of the Asian Population Studies, the Asian and Pacific Migration Journal and the APPJ. Dr. Connell is Professor of Human Geography at the University of Sydney. He holds a Ph.D. in Social Geography from University College London. He is the Editor of the Australian Geographer and a member of the Editorial Boards of the Singapore Journal of Tropical Geography, Island Studies Journal and Asia-Pacific Viewpoint. His research interests span various themes in geography and development studies. Professor Connell has written more than 300 articles and over 20 books. Broadly the evaluators were required to evaluate the APPJ and related activities over the period 1986 to 2010 with respect to:

- a) Usefulness of APPJ from readership surveys and past evaluations.
- b) The suitability of APPJ in terms of contents and structure and ability to influence the policy process.
- c) Its relevance for formulation of population policies or programs or for advocacy on population issues.
- d) Its relevance and usefulness for demographers and practitioners.

- e) Its standing in relation to comparable journals in the population field.
- f) The relevance of web-based format of the journal and its online presence.
- g) The work flows and processes with regard to the management of the journal.

The detailed TOR are annexed (see Annexure 6 and 7).

3. Methodology

The methodology of the evaluation comprised the following:

(a) Review of results of the user surveys on APPJ conducted by ESCAP and previous evaluation reports on ESCAP which had reference to APPJ

The results of the user surveys and previous evaluation reports were reviewed from the data and documents made available by the Population Section of the Social Development Division of ESCAP.

(b) Interview relevant practitioners and academics/researchers to assess the suitability of APPJ in selected countries to assess the suitability of APPJ in terms of contents and ability to influence the policy process.

Three countries, namely Thailand, Sri Lanka and Malaysia were selected in view of their similar levels of literacy but at different stages in the demographic transition. A selected sample of available practitioners and academics/researchers were interviewed with the use of a structured and open-ended questionnaire. Most of the interviews were conducted on a one to one basis and some were group interviews. Given the limitations of time, availability of respondents and the flood situation in Bangkok, a larger sample could not be surveyed. The list of persons contacted is given in Annexure 2.

(c) Review the contents of APPJ with regard to its relevance and usefulness to researchers/academics and practitioners.

A total of 339 articles of APPJ published during 1986 to 2010 were assessed on their contents such as title, abstract, introduction, methodology, results, conclusions and recommendations. Each item was assessed on a five point scale from poor (1) to very good (5).

In addition, the articles were analyzed by distribution according to country and region and by subject area.

(d) Examine the standing of APPJ in relation to comparable journals in the population field.

The Asia-Pacific Population Journal's standing was assessed in relation to journals such as Asian Population Studies, Asia-Pacific Migration Journal, Population and Development Review,

Demography, Population Studies and Population . The APPJ's rating in SCOPUS in relation to other population journals as well as its citations in Population and Development Review (a journal that closely matches the objectives of APPJ) were examined.

(e) Examine the web-based format of the journal with those of other comparable journals.

The web-based format of the journal was assessed in relation the formats of other journals such as the Population Development Review and further ascertained as to whether the researchers and practitioners find it useful and are aware of its online presence at no cost.

(f) Examine the workflows and processes with regard to management of the journal.

The work processes from the time the manuscripts are received from authors to the publication and distribution of hard copies as well as uploading of the journal on the website were examined in consultation with the staff of Population Section of the ESCAP.

4. Readership Surveys and Project Reviews

4.1 Readership Surveys

This section is based on the review of available documents on past readership surveys and the preliminary results of the 2011 readership survey. A readership survey conducted during 1997-1998 period has drawn 402 responses from a subscription list of 1,302 with a response rate of 30 per cent. Ninety three per cent of readers rated the journal as excellent or good and stated that it was a unique source of information on population matters. More than three fourths found it a source of practical ideas for their day to day work.

The readership survey undertaken in 2004 with the aim to update the journal's mailing list and ensure its relevance to its audience gave an impressive response rate of 41 per cent. The survey covered 1,638 readers from 72 countries worldwide. It drew 670 responses from 30 countries. In terms of ratings on the quality of the journal, it was revealed that over 92 percent rated presentation/format of the journal either good (51%) or excellent (41%). Over 92 percent of the respondents rated its readability either as good (56%) or excellent (36%). About 86 percent of the respondents rated the coverage of subject matter either as good (60%) or excellent (26%). Over 93 percent rated the overall quality either as good (64%) or excellent (29%). Over 97 percent rated its usefulness as a source of information as excellent or good. About 77 percent found the recommendations very good (57%) or excellent (20%). Nearly 60 percent of the readers had received a personal copy while 37 percent accessed it through libraries or research centres. Majority

(55%) stated that it would be useful to have the entire collection of the journal in a CD-ROM.

Over 80 percent of the readers indicated that they make use of journal articles for further research work, over 62 percent use them as reference for teaching, over 35 percent use them to formulate policies and 27 percent use for advocacy purposes (multiple responses).

The readership survey conducted in 2006 showed a lower response with only 106 responding from 19 countries. In 2006, no reminder was sent and that may partly explain the reason for the low response. Despite the low response rate, in this survey too there were high ratings on the quality of the journal. Over 86 percent of respondents rated the presentation/format of the journal either as good (57%) or excellent (29%). About 86 percent rated the readability of the journal as good (57%) or excellent (29%). The coverage of subject of subject matter was rated as good by 51 percent and as excellent by another 34 percent. The overall quality was rated as good by 59 percent and excellent by another 29 percent. As in the case of 2004 survey, over 80 percent indicated that they make use of journal articles for further research work. About 67 percent use them as reference for teaching, 28 percent for policy formulation and 23 percent for advocacy purposes.

Table 1: Ratings on the Quality of the Journal (percent), 2004 and 2006

| Category | Excellent | | Good | |
|----------------------------|-----------|------|------|------|
| | 2004 | 2006 | 2004 | 2006 |
| Presentation/Format | 41.1 | 29.2 | 51.3 | 57.5 |
| Readability | 36.1 | 29.2 | 56.2 | 56.6 |
| Coverage of subject matter | 27.3 | 34.0 | 59.3 | 51.9 |
| Overall quality | 29.6 | 29.2 | 62.7 | 59.4 |

Source: UNESCAP Readership Surveys, 2004 and 2006

Table 2: The Use of Journal Articles by the Readers (percent), 2004 and 2006

| Category | 2004 | 2006 |
|----------|------|------|
|----------|------|------|

| | | |
|------------------------------------|------|------|
| As reference material for teaching | 59.5 | 67.0 |
| For research work | 82.7 | 81.1 |
| For policy formulation | 30.6 | 28.3 |
| For advocacy | 25.0 | 22.6 |
| Other | 12.2 | 14.1 |

Source: UNESCAP Readership Surveys, 2004 and 2006

In the surveys described in the preceding sections showed that the overall quality of the journal has been rated high by the readers. It also appears from the ratings that the contents of the journal articles have been more useful to researchers and academics than to those engaged in policy formulation. The use of journal articles for policy formulation and advocacy show a slight drop during 2004 to 2006, but these ratings are not strictly comparable as there has been a much lower response rate in 2006.

A readership survey was conducted in 2011 by the Social Development Division of ESCAP to provide an input to the Evaluation Team. However, at the time of the completion of the evaluation, only a small proportion had responded (less than 10%) as the returns were coming in at a slow pace despite the reminders. Thus the following analysis of the survey data is based on 97 respondents. The questionnaire of the survey is given in annexure 3.

Table 3: Institutional Affiliation of Respondents, 2011

| Institution | Percent |
|-------------------------------|----------------|
| Government | 23.7 |
| University/Research Institute | 45.4 |
| Non-governmental organization | 15.5 |
| United Nations Agency | 3.1 |
| Private Foundation | 3.1 |
| Other | 9.3 |
| Total | 100.0 |

Source: UNESCAP Readership Survey, 2011

Table 4: Educational Level of Respondents, 2011

| Educational Level | Percent |
|--------------------------|----------------|
| Secondary | 2.1 |
| Degree | 27.8 |
| Post-graduate degree | 70.1 |
| Total | 100.0 |

Source: UNESCAP Readership Survey, 2011

Nearly half of the respondents are employed in universities or research institutions (Table 3) and 70 percent have had post-graduate qualifications (Table 4). About 73 percent of the respondents are males (not shown in Table).

Table 5: Ratings on the Quality of the Journal (percent), 2011

| Category | Excellent | Good | Average | Total |
|---|------------------|-------------|----------------|--------------|
| Presentation/Format | 46.4 | 47.4 | 6.2 | 100.0 |
| Readability | 39.2 | 55.7 | 5.2 | 100.0 |
| Subject matter relevance to population issues | 41.2 | 55.7 | 3.1 | 100.0 |
| Coverage of subject matter | 28.9 | 64.9 | 6.2 | 100.0 |
| Analytical rigour | 25.8 | 58.8 | 14.4 | 100.0 |
| Overall quality | 38.1 | 56.7 | 5.2 | 100.0 |

Source: UNESCAP Readership Survey, 2011

It is evident from Table 5 that high ratings of more than 90% (excellent and good) are reported for both presentation/format and readability. Similar results are observed with regard to the overall quality of the journal. These ratings are higher than those observed in the 2004 and 2006 surveys. Almost all respondents have indicated that they are satisfied with the new format of the journal (not shown in Table).

Table 6: Ratings on the Usefulness of the Journal, 2011

| Category | Very useful | Useful | Not useful | Total |
|--|--------------------|---------------|-------------------|--------------|
| Provision of timely information | 43.3 | 55.7 | 1.0 | 100.0 |
| In-depth coverage of population issues | 48.5 | 50.5 | 1.0 | 100.0 |
| Policy and programme related information and recommendations | 47.4 | 50.5 | 2.1 | 100.0 |

Source: UNESCAP Readership Survey, 2011

Very high ratings (nearly 98%) are observed with regard to the usefulness of the journal with regard to providing timely information, in-depth coverage of issues and policy and programme related information (Table 6). About 73 percent have indicated that they would like to receive a printed copy of the journal (not shown in Table).

Table 7: The Use of Journal Articles, 2011

| Category | Percent |
|------------------------------------|----------------|
| For advocacy | 26.8 |
| For policy formulation | 21.6 |
| For research work | 78.4 |
| As reference for teaching material | 40.2 |
| For professional development | 40.2 |
| Other | 11.3 |

Source: UNESCAP Readership Survey, 2011

A large percentage (78%) use the journal articles for research work. This was expected as nearly half the respondents are from universities and research organizations. By contrast the use of information in articles for advocacy and policy formulation is relatively low despite the choice of multiple responses (Table 7). Similarly, only 21 percent have cited examples of messages or material that they have drawn from APPJ to directly or indirectly influence policy or decision making (not shown in Table).

4.2 Project Reviews

There has also been reference to the Asia Pacific Population Journal in the evaluation reports of ESCAP/UNFPA project cycles. The evaluation report of the project during 1996-1998 has noted that APPJ is generally valued highly for purposes ranging from policy formulation and programme implementation to research, teaching, general information and advocacy. The Report has however, noted that publication delays are caused by the submission of uninvited papers which have to be often rewritten or revised considerably in line with comments received during peer review. The final project report on the use of information technology to improve the quality of population information services and products during 1996 to 2000 has indicated that a full-text database of the Asia-Pacific Population Journal was mounted on the internet covering 41 issues during 1991 to June 2000. The website was visited 23,074 times during 1999 and 34,784 times during the first six months of 2000. Thus even at the initial stages, dissemination of information in the journal through electronic means has proved to be very effective. At that time, it was also recommended to disseminate information to those who do not have access to the internet information by CD-ROM.

The report of the evaluation of publications at UNESCAP undertaken in 2002 noted “although there are many international journals in their fields, the Asia-Pacific Development Journal and Asia-Pacific Population Journal fill an otherwise unoccupied market niche. Much of the material they publish is of particular interest to the region and would not find space in the mainstream European and North American journals in their fields.” (Evaluation of Publications at UNESCAP, 2002, p.10).

The evaluation report of the ESCAP/UNFPA project cycle during 2000-2003 stated that “overall the production and the distribution of the journal merit commendation. It has been published and distributed with regularity. The quality of the papers included in the various issues has generally been high. Special issues of the journal have also provided a focus on specific key issues. The Country Offices and national institutions the Team visited value the journal highly and cited using it for reference purposes.” (Evaluation Report of the Asia Pacific Population Information Programme, 2003 p.4). However, the report cautioned by saying that “the journal continues to be a good academic publication, it hardly has any value as an advocacy tool. Articles written by researchers would most likely be read by other researchers, not the wider public” (op.cit. p.4).

The evaluation report of the ESCAP/UNFPA project cycle 2004-2007 noted that “the Asia-Pacific Population Journal since its inception in March 1986, has grown and developed in terms of content and quality into a highly respected publication. It provides population professionals in the Asia and Pacific region the opportunity to share their research findings and opinions on population policies and programs. It has become an important medium for the international exchange of knowledge, experiences, ideas, technical information and data on all aspects of the field of population, reproductive health and gender”. It further notes that “as recommended by the Advisory Board of the Journal at its Fourth Meeting, the Journal should bring out highly relevant and evidence-based policy recommendations in the articles as a separate section or in the ‘Abstracts’ of the articles”.

5. Content Evaluation of APPJ

In the content evaluation, each journal published between 1986 to 2010 has been appraised. A total of 339 articles out of 424 excluding those in ‘Demographers Notebook’ were analyzed by (a) distribution of articles by region and country and subject matter and (b) each article was assessed for their components such as Title, Abstract, Introduction, Methodology, Results and Conclusions and Recommendations. Each item was rated on a 1-5 scale ranging from poor to very good. Studies by Parry (1987) and Marshall (2005) were taken note of in appraising the articles in the Journal. Although the rankings have a subjective element, it gives an idea as to how the quality of the journal has changed over time and the relative assessment of its contents. The appraisal was undertaken by the lead consultant.

(a) Distribution of Articles by Region and Country

Table 8: Percentage Distribution of Articles by Region and Period

| Region/Country | 1986-90 | 1991-95 | 1996-00 | 2001-05 | 2006-10 |
|----------------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| East and North –East Asia | 19.1 | 20.3 | 6.2 | 8.6 | 9.8 |
| South-East Asia | 22.1 | 23.4 | 26.1 | 14.8 | 18.0 |
| South and South West Asia | 29.4 | 39.1 | 40.0 | 44.5 | 30.0 |
| Pacific | 7.3 | 3.1 | 9.2 | 1.2 | 1.6 |
| Cross Country Studies | 22.1 | 14.1 | 18.5 | 30.9 | 41.0 |

| | | | | | |
|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Total | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|

It is evident from Table 8 that as expected, the highest proportion of journal articles have focused on South and South-West Asia which comprise the largest population in the Asia-Pacific region. However, during the period 2006 to 2010, that proportion has declined whereas studies on South-East Asia and cross-country analyses have relatively increased. Articles on countries in East and North-East Asia have also declined over time, as have articles on South- East Asia. It is significant to note that more cross country studies have been published during the past decade. In terms of country specific papers, the largest number is from Bangladesh (46) followed by China (33) and India (31). The other prominent countries are Vietnam, Nepal and Thailand (see Table 9). Although only a few Pacific countries are listed, some are included in the cross country studies. In South East Asia, more than 50 percent of the articles have come from Vietnam and Thailand. The most significant geographical gap in coverage is of central Asia. No articles have been published on any of the former Soviet entities that are now independent states and where there are interesting demographic changes, especially in the area of migration and remittances. Similarly, no articles have been published on North Korea (DPRK). The recent census conducted in DPRK would provide valuable information on the demographic situation in that country. Smaller countries such as Laos and Cambodia, despite their demographic significance, are also poorly represented. However, few articles were published on the Philippines and Malaysia, despite their having interesting and contrasting population and development issues. In East and North-East Asia, Japan and South Korea, with very low fertility levels, could provide useful policy related information on how challenges of population ageing are addressed.

Table 9: Distribution of Articles by Country in Asia and the Pacific

| Region/Country | 1986-90 | 1991-95 | 1996-00 | 2001-05 | 2006-10 | Total |
|----------------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|--------------|
| East and North –East Asia | 13 | 13 | 4 | 7 | 6 | 43 |
| China | 11 | 11 | 2 | 5 | 4 | 33 |
| Japan | - | - | - | - | 1 | 1 |
| Mongolia | - | 1 | 2 | - | - | 3 |
| Republic of Korea | 2 | 1 | - | 1 | 1 | 5 |
| Brunei | - | - | - | 1 | - | 1 |
| South-East Asia | 15 | 15 | 17 | 12 | 11 | 70 |
| Cambodia | - | - | 1 | - | 1 | 2 |
| Indonesia | 2 | 1 | 2 | - | 1 | 6 |
| Lao | - | 3 | 1 | - | - | 4 |

| | | | | | | |
|----------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------|
| Malaysia | 2 | 1 | - | 1 | - | 4 |
| Myanmar | - | 2 | 1 | - | - | 3 |
| Philippines | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 6 |
| Singapore | 4 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 9 |
| Thailand | 5 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 4 | 17 |
| Vietnam | 1 | 2 | 7 | 6 | 3 | 19 |
| South and South West Asia | 20 | 25 | 26 | 36 | 18 | 125 |
| Afghanistan | - | - | - | - | 1 | 1 |
| Bangladesh | 5 | 12 | 17 | 9 | 3 | 46 |
| India | 5 | 1 | 3 | 16 | 6 | 31 |
| Iran | - | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 5 |
| Maldives | - | - | 1 | - | - | 1 |
| Nepal | 5 | 5 | 2 | 4 | 3 | 19 |
| Pakistan | 1 | 2 | - | 3 | 2 | 8 |
| Sri Lanka | 4 | 4 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 14 |
| Pacific | 5 | 2 | 6 | 1 | 1 | 15 |
| Fiji | 1 | - | - | - | - | 1 |
| Papua New Guinea | 1 | - | - | - | 1 | 2 |
| Tonga | - | - | 1 | - | - | 1 |
| New Zealand | 1 | 1 | - | 1 | - | 3 |
| Other Pacific Countries | 2 | 1 | 5 | - | - | 8 |
| Cross Country Studies | 15 | 9 | 12 | 25 | 25 | 86 |
| Total | 68 | 64 | 65 | 81 | 61 | 339 |

(b) Distribution of Articles by Subject

It is evident from Table 10 that the largest number of articles have been on the subject of reproductive health. This partly follows the greater emphasis on reproductive health after ICPD. The next most important topic is fertility which was an important issue in many countries of the region during the early period 1986-1995, and the trend to a greater focus on aging is scarcely unexpected. Migration and urbanization which is of some significance in the Asia-Pacific region has also received the attention of researchers. However, there has been a significant drop in the number of articles published on the subject during 2006-2010. Population and Development and Ageing are the other subject areas that have been adequately covered. Adolescents and youth, mortality and morbidity, health and nutrition, nuptiality and gender have received less emphasis. A subject area that has received much public attention in recent years and not covered at all

is environment and climate change which has important effects on population movements and distribution. It is not clear to the Team whether this is due to fewer articles being received or the editors giving less emphasis to this area. While maintaining the “open-call” approach to bring in quality articles on different population subjects, it is invaluable to have particular thematic issues periodically to fill in gaps in subject areas, or regions, that do not get covered adequately, or develop new themes.

Table 10: Distribution of Articles by Subject and Period

| Subject | 1986-90 | 1991-95 | 1996-00 | 2001-05 | 2006-10 | Total |
|-----------------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|--------------|
| Fertility | 19 | 11 | 8 | 11 | 9 | 58 |
| Mortality and Morbidity | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 5 | 17 |
| Migration and Urbanization | 4 | 7 | 11 | 19 | 5 | 46 |
| Reproductive Health | 14 | 16 | 16 | 25 | 8 | 82 |
| Adolescents and Youth | - | 3 | 3 | 3 | 8 | 14 |
| Population and Development | 6 | 9 | 8 | 12 | 8 | 43 |
| Ageing | 7 | 8 | 7 | 3 | 12 | 37 |
| Nuptiality | - | 4 | 4 | - | - | 8 |
| Gender | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 5 | 13 |
| Health and Nutrition | 10 | 1 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 18 |
| Other | 3 | - | - | - | - | 3 |
| Total | 68 | 64 | 65 | 81 | 61 | 339 |

(c) Content Review:

(i) Title

The title of articles in the Journal were assessed as to whether they were informative, interesting, concise and adequately reflected the contents of the article. Taking into account the above points, the Title of articles were rated on a 1-5 scale ranging from poor to very good.

The ratings in general have been good over the period 1986 to 2010 (Table 11). However, there has been a drop in the mean score since 2001. If non-academics are part of the target audience, then the titles should stimulate the interest of the readers and encourage

them to read it. Some of the titles were too long and loaded and some were too academic as shown below.

“Changing Demographics, Emerging Risks of 63 Economic-Demographic Mismatch and Vulnerabilities Faced by Older Persons in South Asia: Situation Review in India and Pakistan” (2006, No.3, p.63).

“Current Status of Sexual and Reproductive health: Prospects for Achieving the programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the Millennium Development Goals in the Pacific” (2007, No.3, p.31)

From the above it is thus clear that the titles of journal articles should be edited if necessary, in consultation with the author, to provide greater clarity.

Table 11: Ratings on the Title of Articles

| Period | Mean | Standard Deviation |
|------------------|-------------|---------------------------|
| 1986-1990 | 4.47 | 0.51 |
| 1991-1995 | 4.58 | 0.71 |
| 1996-2000 | 4.63 | 0.65 |
| 2001-2005 | 4.49 | 0.65 |
| 2006-2010 | 4.41 | 0.76 |
| 1986-2010 | 4.56 | 0.67 |

(ii) Abstract

The abstract should summarize the main points of the article accurately including the main findings. It should be generally structured to cover purpose, method, results, conclusions and, where appropriate, recommendations. It is the section of the article which allows readers to judge its appropriateness to their needs. In other words, the Abstract should give an indication to the reader as to whether the article is worth reading. Taking the above factors into consideration, the Abstract of articles were rated on a 1-5 scale ranging from poor to very good. It is evident from Table 12 that the ratings have an overall mean of 3.57. There appears to be a slight improvement in the ratings from the period 1986-90 to 2001-05.

Most of the articles have not included a brief account of policy recommendations in the Abstracts even when such recommendations were made in the concluding section. This is certainly a limitation in a journal which has as one of its main objectives to influence

policies and programmes. The need to include policy and programme related recommendations in the abstracts had also been recommended in the Evaluation Report of the ESCAP/UNFPA project cycle 2004-2007. Many Abstracts ended by merely stating that the study concluded with policy recommendations. To quote a few:

“The article concludes with a number of recommendations for policy purposes” (1996, No.2, p.2).

“ The article also brings out implications of research for policy purposes”(1995, No.3, p.2).

“ The article draws out several implications for policy and program purposes” (1995, No.4, p.2).

“The study examines the quality of care at such centres from the clients' perspective and concludes with a set of recommendations that would improve utilization of the centres.” (2000, No.3).

The abstracts should be written in clear language and should not include technical jargon such as: “In comparing women with a negative attitude to those with a positive one, the adjusted odds ratio of having unmet need for spacing (OR=3.8, 90 per cent CI=2.0-7.3) and unmet need for limiting (OR=2.2, 90 per cent CI=1.2-4.0) was found to be highest among those with low levels education.” (2010, No.2 p.1).

The new 2010 format has two abstracts for each paper: a short summary at the start of the paper and a more policy oriented abstract at the start of the journal. This seems a good idea. It is a follow up to the recommendation made by the Advisory Board of the Journal. The abstracts at the start of the journal should provide a handy summary of the content with indications of the objectives, methods, findings and the importance of the study for policy and programmes. It should be well written without using technical jargon to target policy and programme related personnel. If in-house resources are not available, this task may be outsourced to professionals who have both academic background and policy and programme related experience. It would also be useful to have these abstracts printed attractively as a leaflet to be distributed among policy and programme personnel, and which might be included as an annual feature of APPJ. These could also be sent to the target audiences by electronic means. The UNFPA field office may be a useful source to provide a list of key personnel who formulate policies and manage programmes at the country level. The list should be reviewed periodically.

There are no abstracts given for “Viewpoint” articles written by experts in the field. Thus important policy related viewpoints seems to have been lost in such articles. For example, a point of view which could be relevant to countries that are completing their demographic transition is follows:

“The lesson to be learnt from this regional experience is that countries are wise to intervene to stop the decline of fertility before the rate falls below 1.5 births per woman. The Governments of Australia and France have done so relatively deliberately and the Nordic governments have done so less deliberately. Asian countries now presently in this category where future fertility may fall below 1.5 include China, Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia, Vietnam and the Islamic Republic of Iran.” (McDonald, 2007 No.2, p.9).

The above statement is neither highlighted in the article or placed as a highlight at the start of the paper. Thus it is necessary to reiterate that the writing of separate abstracts and the selection of important points in articles be placed at the start of the paper should be done by an expert (the author and/or the editor). This is very much so for a journal which has a focus on practitioners and policy planners.

Only ten articles (a little over 2 percent of all articles) on “ViewPoints” written by experts have been included over the 25 year period. More Viewpoint articles need to included in the future as they can be a valuable source of information to policy makers and programme managers. Several journals now use these as effective introductions.

Table 12: Ratings on the Abstracts of Articles

| Period | Mean | Standard Deviation |
|------------------|-------------|---------------------------|
| 1986-1990 | 3.34 | 0.75 |
| 1991-1995 | 3.53 | 0.50 |
| 1996-2000 | 3.60 | 0.55 |
| 2001-2005 | 3.70 | 0.64 |
| 2006-2010 | 3.67 | 0.77 |
| 1986-2010 | 3.57 | 0.66 |

(iii) Introduction

This crucial segment of the articles was appraised in terms of the statement of the problem, objectives of the study, a literature review indicating the current state of knowledge and the gaps in knowledge which the study hopes to fill. Overall, the introductory section should provide an answer to the question ‘why was the article written’. Taking into account the above points, the Introductory section of articles were rated on a 1-5 scale ranging from poor to very good.

It appears from the mean scores, the introductory section in many articles have been well written taking into account the points mentioned above. It is also significant to note that the mean ratings and the standard deviations have improved over time (Table 13).

Table 13: Ratings on the Introduction of Articles

| Period | Mean | Standard Deviation |
|------------------|-------------|---------------------------|
| 1986-1990 | 4.18 | 0.99 |
| 1991-1995 | 4.52 | 0.71 |
| 1996-2000 | 4.58 | 0.56 |
| 2001-2005 | 4.86 | 0.34 |
| 2006-2010 | 4.92 | 0.28 |
| 1986-2010 | 4.62 | 0.68 |

(iv) Methodology

The methodology refers to a clear and concise account of the methods used. The study design and data collection methods (where relevant) need to be clearly outlined. It also involves the assessment of the adequacy of tools used to bring out results. When data were not used, this section was appraised on the arguments used to draw conclusions. Taking into account the above points, the Methodology section of articles were rated on a 1-5 scale ranging from poor to very good.

It is seen from Table 14 that during the initial period, the mean scores with regard to methodology and analysis have been relatively low and the variance much higher. However, over time, the mean scores and the variance have improved. In the subsequent periods, the authors have clearly indicated the study design and data collection methods whenever such methods were employed. It may be due to editors of the journal giving

clear instructions on the format of presentation. However, most articles do not indicate the strengths and limitations of the study.

In the analysis of data, many authors have employed multivariate techniques using standard statistical packages. The most commonly used technique has been the multivariate log linear analysis, probably due to the categorical nature of the data. However, demographic methods and techniques have been employed only in a few articles.

Table 14: Ratings on the Methodology in Articles

| Period | Methodology | |
|------------------|-------------|--------------------|
| | Mean | Standard Deviation |
| 1986-1990 | 3.71 | 1.07 |
| 1991-1995 | 4.08 | 0.80 |
| 1996-2000 | 4.18 | 0.79 |
| 2001-2005 | 4.41 | 0.70 |
| 2006-2010 | 4.51 | 0.57 |
| 1986-2010 | 4.18 | 0.85 |

(v) Results

The Results section was appraised as to how the data or information presented have been scientifically analyzed and how adequately they have been interpreted. They were also assessed according to the clarity of graphs and tables, where presented, and the possibility of understanding them without referring to the text. Taking into account the above points, the Results derived from the analysis of articles were rated on a 1-5 scale ranging from poor to very good.

Table 15: Ratings on the Results in Articles

| Period | Results | |
|-----------|---------|--------------------|
| | Mean | Standard Deviation |
| 1986-1990 | 3.47 | 0.61 |

| | | |
|------------------|-------------|-------------|
| 1991-1995 | 3.61 | 0.49 |
| 1996-2000 | 3.55 | 0.50 |
| 2001-2005 | 3.84 | 0.51 |
| 2006-2010 | 3.98 | 0.47 |
| 1986-2010 | 3.69 | 0.55 |

It is apparent from Table 15 that the mean scores have improved over time except for a slight dip during 1996-2000. There has also been an improvement in the variance. However, it is important to reiterate that the interpretation of results from multivariate analyses should be made simple and easily understood by practitioners to facilitate evidence based decision making. While there is a need to use multivariate methods to control for confounding variables to establish clear relationships between the dependent and independent variables, the interpretation should be easily understood since APPJ is not a technical journal. Interpretation of findings in the following manner should be avoided:

“Emotional support between the elderly and their children improved cognitive functioning (0.066) over time. The random effects model 1 indicated that there were still significant differences in the individual intercept (2.59107) and slope (0.00357) after adding the types of intergenerational support” (2008, No.3 p.84).

“By geographic regions, children who are living in the central (odds ratio = 0.615; p,0.01), western (odds ratio = 0.644; p,0.10), mid western (odds ratio =0.691; p,0.10), far western (odds ratio = 0.546; p,0.01) regions were significantly less likely to be fully immunized as compared to those living in eastern region of the country net of other geographic characteristics” (2007, No.1, p.55).

It is to be noted that the avoidance of such sentences (and other technically or grammatically challenging concepts etc) should be a standard element of editorial responsibility.

(vi) Conclusions and Recommendations

The conclusions should follow logically from the results and relate to the importance of the findings. The conclusions should not over claim but should be based on the results, and the recommendations for action should follow from the results/conclusions. The articles were appraised on the recommendations made to influence the thinking of programme managers and policy planners. Taking into account the above points, the

concluding section and recommendations made in articles were rated on a 1-5 scale ranging from poor to very good.

It can be seen from Table 16 that the overall mean scores given to recommendations for programme managers is the lowest rating. However, it is to be noted that the ratings have continuously improved over time. The ratings for recommendations to policy planners have significantly improved during the past decade as in the case for programme managers. Nevertheless, in recent issues there have been areas of concern. For instance, in issue (2010 No.1, p.47) the section on ‘Discussion’ runs into more than 7 pages without highlighting the main conclusions and recommendations. In the article of issue (2010 No.2, p.27) many points discussed in the section ‘Discussion and Conclusions’ are not evidence based and not drawn from the results of the analysis presented in the paper.

Table 16: Ratings on Conclusion and Recommendations in Articles

| Period | Relevant to program managers | | Relevant to policy planners | |
|------------------|------------------------------|--------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------|
| | Mean | Standard Deviation | Mean | Standard Deviation |
| 1986-1990 | 3.19 | 0.76 | 3.12 | 0.74 |
| 1991-1995 | 3.20 | 0.62 | 3.39 | 0.63 |
| 1996-2000 | 3.35 | 0.48 | 3.38 | 0.55 |
| 2001-2005 | 3.64 | 0.48 | 3.68 | 0.50 |
| 2006-2010 | 3.69 | 0.47 | 3.70 | 0.56 |
| 1986-2010 | 3.42 | 0.61 | 3.46 | 0.64 |

From the above content appraisal it is evident that overall assessment of the journal is positive. However, its ability to bring out recommendations for policy and programmatic action from the findings of the articles have remained weak (see Annexure 1 for a summary ratings by number of articles in each period). The 78 articles in ‘Demographers Notebook’ were not included in the content evaluation as the nature of the contents have varied from descriptive accounts of population issues to highly technical articles employing statistical methods. It is the view of the Team that this needs to be replaced by some form of ‘Population Practitioners Notes’ where policy and programme related personnel be encouraged to write on ‘best practices’ and experiences in implementing policies and programmes at the country level. It could also cover synopses of important

conferences, reviews of other related publications produced by other UN agencies and reviews, or references to other relevant commercially published books.

6. Assessment of the Journal by Selected Academics and Practitioners

Interviews were conducted among selected practitioners and researchers in three selected countries, namely Thailand, Malaysia and Sri Lanka to ascertain in what ways the APPJ has been useful to them in their professional work (see the list of persons contacted in Annexure 2). More informal discussions were also undertaken in Australia. In all three Asian countries, most academics rated the journal highly as a medium providing them with new knowledge on population issues in the region and as a useful tool for reference and teaching. However, it was the view of some academics that APPJ should have the ISI Impact Factor to encourage well known academia in the field of population to contribute articles to the journal. They also noted that the new format of the journal which was introduced in 2010 is more appropriate for a professional journal of its kind. It was the general view of academics that subject areas for future issues should include the following: migration and urbanization, morbidity and health financing, population and environment, disability and social security, ageing and universal social security for all, political demography and business demography.

Many of the practitioners who were interviewed felt that the journal articles are too technical and the findings of the studies did not adequately indicate their relevance to policies and programmes. The practitioners strongly felt that the abstracts of articles should be sent to them through e-alerts. Many did not know that the journal was available on line at no cost. It was the view of some that articles should cover current issues confronting different sub-regions of the Asia and the Pacific. The suggested subject areas are: Ageing and pensions, gender violence, family wellbeing, non-communicable diseases, food security and population, social work, best practices in reproductive health programmes, youth and adolescents, sub-fertility, family planning. It is apparent therefore, that APPJ is not adequately meeting needs of practitioners. This was also apparent from user surveys conducted in the past.

It may be said that if APPJ articles are to contribute to practical programmes that will influence the welfare of the people of Asia and the Pacific, it is necessary to give priority to the publication of articles that are action-oriented. Research findings that relate to

specific policy and management issues are more likely to produce decisions that will lead to action than overly broad research findings. Research articles in APPJ are more likely to be used if the relevant decision-makers know of and understand them at the time decisions are being made. It is equally important to make decision-makers aware of the importance of evidence based decision making, and also better equip them to understand and act on research results. On the other hand, too much cannot be expected from a sole journal. However, it is now apparent from Section 7 below, that APPJ now has strong competition in areas of population change in the Asian-Pacific region, and if APPJ is to distinguish itself and retain a key niche, a more overt focus on policy and programme planning may be useful. This is a decision that APPJ needs to be make very soon.

One of the reasons that APPJ has not established a foothold amongst practitioners in Malaysia, Sri Lanka and Thailand, is that it is entirely in English and English is not the first language of these countries (or of almost all countries in the Asia –Pacific region). It is therefore, crucial that articles should be in straightforward English and that the Abstracts are equally clear and informative, with a clear ‘policy-focus’ abstract at the start of each issue. Very few of the articles are accompanied by easily understood diagrams and maps are apparently non-existent. Much more use might be made of graphic techniques (especially in an age of GIS) which would improve the ‘look’ of APPJ and ease comprehension. All of this therefore, indicates the need for simple, clear, accessible formats made available through electronic means to a wider audience covering practitioners, researchers and policy makers.

7. The Standing of APPJ in Relation to Comparable Journals in the Population Field

In recent years, the nature of evaluation of peer reviewed journals has shown a considerable change. Almost all international journals are now ranked and they are judged by researchers and by funding organizations in large part according to these rankings. In addition, researchers are also ranked with regard to the number of articles they have published and the ranking of journals in which they publish. This poses a new challenge to APPJ. In this new environment, it is necessary for the journal to be both academically viable and at the same time publish policy relevant research. The APPJ’s strength lies in its accessibility to many readers in the Asia-Pacific region.

However, the journal has a number of competitors in the field of population. Those most relevant to APPJ include:

- Asian Population Studies
- Asia Pacific Migration Journal
- Population and Development Review
- Demography
- Population Studies
- Population (English edition)

As the objectives of APPJ closely match that of the Population and Development Review (PDR), an exercise was undertaken to see how many APPJ articles have been cited in PDR. It is evident from Table 18, that 30 citations of APPJ have been included in all journal articles published in PDR during 1987 to 2010. One PDR article had five citations on APPJ (2008, No.2, p.253). During that period 120 articles on Asia were published in PDR. Half that number of citations of APPJ articles were during 2006 to 2010. It is understandable that the citation rate was low in the earlier periods, but over the entire 24 year period that is a very low overall rate, even though the Institute for Scientific Information (ISI) data show that 22 percent of scientific articles do not receive a single citation within five years of publication and for social science journals the percentage is 48 percent (Hamilton, 1991). It suggests that articles in APPJ were quite probably cited rather less in PDR than those in many other journals. More importantly, the implication is that APPJ articles are either not being read and/or that they are contributing relatively little to arguments on population trends in Asia in one of the world's leading population journals. Given the more theoretical and technical nature of various articles in PDR that may be not such a substantial problem, but it is still of some concern.

Table 18: APPJ Citations Population and Development Review, 1987-2010

| Period | Number of Articles on Asia and Pacific Countries | Number of APPJ Citations |
|---------------|---|---------------------------------|
| 1987-1990 | 22 | 4 |
| 1991-1995 | 26 | 3 |
| 1996-2000 | 22 | 4 |
| 2001-2005 | 28 | 4 |

| | | |
|------------------|------------|-----------|
| 2006-2010 | 22 | 15 |
| 1987-2010 | 120 | 30 |

A very high percentage of articles (88%) in the APPJ have been written by academics (Table 19). However, the proportion of non-academics contributing articles to the APPJ has increased during 2001-2010 period. As a high proportion of academics seem to write in APPJ and presumably a high proportion of academics access the journal (as was evident from the respondent ratings), it would be useful for APPJ to obtain an Impact Factor through the Social Sciences Citation Index process. This would (eventually) encourage internationally recognized demographers and social scientists to publish research of relevance to Asian and Pacific countries in APPJ. In 2010, the Journal was ranked 26 out of 32 in Demography in Scopus, a large abstract and citation database of peer reviewed literature. It was placed in Q4 category, but very close to the rank of Q3. There has been a drop in Scopus rankings of the journal from 13 and Q2 in 2005. (see SCOPUS 2010. www.scimagojr.com/journalrank.php?category=3317).

This is an area for concern, even though such ranking systems are far from neutral, and the team had some reservations about the Scopus classification. It may however, not necessarily be a problem if articles play a useful role in policy formulation and programmatic action. The Team has however, already indicated that this has not been the case. It is nevertheless a matter for the Editorial Advisory Board to take note of in the future.

Table 19: Articles Written by Academics and Non-Academics, 1986-2010

| Period | Academics | % | Non-Academics | % | Total No. (%) |
|------------------|------------------|-------------|----------------------|-------------|----------------------|
| 1986-1990 | 63 | 92.6 | 5 | 7.4 | 68 (100.0) |
| 1991-1995 | 63 | 98.4 | 1 | 1.6 | 64 (100.0) |
| 1996-2000 | 64 | 98.5 | 1 | 1.5 | 65 (100.0) |
| 2001-2005 | 66 | 81.5 | 15 | 18.5 | 81 (100.0) |
| 2006-2010 | 41 | 67.2 | 20 | 32.8 | 61 (100.0) |
| 1987-2010 | 297 | 87.6 | 42 | 12.4 | 339 (100.0) |

Note: Academics relate to those in academic positions in universities and research institutions. Non-academics are those in policy and programme related organizations in government, civil society and UN agencies.

8. Work Flows and Processes with regard to Management of the Journal

The APPJ has been in print continuously for the past 25 years. On an average about 60-80 articles are submitted to APPJ annually. Those identified as ‘higher quality’ by the in-house staff are processed for external peer-review. About a quarter of those submitted are eventually published. This is a rate comparable to that of a good journal. About 1,800 copies of each issue are printed and distributed among the target audiences who comprise mostly programme planners and administrators, policy/decision makers, researchers and academia and civil society representatives in 72 countries around the world. A complete collection of APPJ articles was made available in 2006 on CD-ROM and mailed with the journal (see Annexure 5). An updated version of the same (1986-2009) has been issued in early 2010. Now, all articles are available on the website.

The APPJ gives priority to the publication of articles written by authors from the Asian and Pacific countries or those who are familiar with the region to provide a forum to present their research findings on population and development which other international journals might not entertain. This strategy stimulates professional scholarship and improves technical reporting in developing countries of the region.

Following a high turnover in the Population Section staff over the past few years, the pool of internal reviewers has decreased. This has hampered both internal reviews and the identification of external reviewers. This situation needs to be rectified urgently. It is also necessary to expand and strengthen the anonymous peer-review pool of reviewers. The membership list of the Asian Population Association with more than a thousand members from different population disciplines and interests from more than 50 countries is an ideal source.

From 2010 APPJ has reduced its number of issues from three to two per year. Prior to 2004 it was a quarterly journal. This change is mainly due to staff and resource constraints. The UNFPA had been supporting APPJ related staff costs since the launch of the publication in 1986. Following the completion of the UNFPA funded project cycle 2004-2007, the functions of APPJ Editor have been carried out by a Social Affairs Officer who is on a contractual appointment. This is an undesirable situation and needs to be remedied as early as possible by the appointment of a permanent Editor. Since 2007 related activities such as finalization of correspondence between the authors, dissemination of printed copies, management of mailing list, uploading on the web etc. have been assigned to different staff across the Social Development Division (SDD)

leading to delays in publishing the journal on time. For example, the December issue of 2010 of APPJ was released only in July 2011. The 2011 issues have not yet been published. The activities carried out by personnel in different sections, therefore, the need to be coordinated by the Director of the Social Development Division to ensure the effective management of the journal. The lay-out and preparation of galley-proof of all articles published in the journal are now outsourced. In view of the human resources shortage, this activity may be continued. However, the Chief of the Population Section of SDD should ensure that logistical bottlenecks do not arise and that work flows and processes move on smoothly.

Likewise APPJ might wish to consider introducing key words along with the standard abstract. This has become normal practice and is useful for indexing. Indeed, academic journals now have something of a standard format which is rather different from that of APPJ.

Once the work flows and processes of journal management are updated, it would be necessary to return to three issues per year. In recent years, most academic journals have increased the number of issues per year, primarily as academic pressures to ‘publish or perish’ have increased. Indeed, there appears to be a correlation between the number of issues per year, and the impact factors of the journal. By context those journals where the number of issues has not grown, or has even declined, are seen of lesser relevance.

The mailing list of the journal should be reviewed. For example, the list of Sri Lankan recipients of the journal showed that most of the people have either retired or been transferred. It is necessary to have only the designation, the name of the institution and the mailing address in the mailing list. That will ensure that the current person holding the post will receive the journal. However, as designations and names of institutions change over time in many Asian countries, it is necessary to review the mailing list periodically. A selected few professionals who continue to remain active in the population field may receive personal copies to their private addresses. As only a limited number of copies are printed, it is necessary to have a larger list of names and e-mails of relevant people who could be sent e-alerts when a new issue is uploaded. The e-alerts should also contain the abstracts of the articles in the new issue.

It is also necessary to review the composition of Editorial Advisory Board (EAB) which has been established in 2004. In the past, almost all members comprised heads of institutions dealing with population issues based in Thailand as there were no funds available to invite professionals from other countries. Even at present out of the eleven

members, seven are based in Thailand. Moreover, the Editorial Advisory Board has been heavily skewed with personnel heading institutions who have institutional interests in the field. The Board should have a good mix of academics, practitioners and policy makers. It may be useful to have a parliamentarian who is knowledgeable on population issues on the Board. The Asian Forum of Parliamentarians on Population and Development (AFPPD) based in Bangkok will be able to assist in this regard. The term of the EAB should not be more than three years to facilitate the flow of new ideas into the management of the journal. It is not clear what the distinction is between Advisors and the Advisory Board but APPJ might wish to combine them, and develop specifications for the role of the Board.

9. Relevance of Web-based Format of the Journal and its Online Presence

For many years, the population website has been one of the most visited sites of ESCAP. The website of APPJ (www.unescap.org/appj.asp) has attracted on average over 590,000 page-requests per year from 2000 to 2006. The most downloaded subjects from the website in 2006 are given in Table 20. Fertility and reproductive health have been the most popular. The free access of the journal is unique where annual subscriptions for similar journals are not affordable to many professionals in the Asia-Pacific region. Since 2007 and until recently, web traffic statistics have not been compiled due to resource constraints. However, the Journal's website currently provides access to the complete collection of the journal from Volume 17 to 25 and Special Issues from 1986-2006. With the departure of the APPJ Information Technology Assistant, the know-how to upload new issues in a similar searchable format has not been in place. If a fulltime IT assistant is not needed, action should be taken to employ a part time person to this task. As a long term strategy, it would be useful to employ a consultant to redesign the APPJ website as the present website is not close to the state of the art of contemporary journal production. Once again this suggests a degree of amateurism compared with that other journal sites.

As an open source journal APPJ has an advantage over many other journals by being more easily accessible. The website of Population and Development Review, a global journal with similar objectives to APPJ, is a fairly standard model of what is possible in terms of easy and informative access, information about journal procedures, the ability to send email alerts, and some basic search facilities. Other journals also have an 'early view' system with access to articles 'in press' but not yet published. The value of this depends on how many articles are in press and how long is the waiting time before it is

published. Because APPJ is linked to an UN agency there has been a tendency amongst users of the journal to see it as ‘institutional’ and not reflecting contemporary professional directions and concerns. A standardized webpage will be a step in redressing this perception.

Most of the practitioners interviewed in Thailand, Malaysia and Sri Lanka did not know that APPJ is freely available on line. Therefore, it is necessary to introduce an e-alert system where when a new issue is uploaded on the web, the title and abstracts of all articles in the issue are sent by e-mail to all those in the APPJ mailing list. Recently, such a method has been initiated but it does not contain the contents and abstracts of the articles.

Table 20: Most Downloaded Material from Website in 2006 by Subject

| Subject | No. of Hits | % of Total Hits |
|-------------------------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| Fertility | 13,217 | 16.9 |
| Reproductive Health care | 11,078 | 14.3 |
| Family Planning | 8,557 | 11.0 |
| Mortality | 7,990 | 10.2 |
| Urbanization | 7,261 | 9.3 |
| Contraception | 7,097 | 9.1 |
| Health | 6,357 | 8.1 |
| Women’s Status related issues | 6,026 | 7.7 |
| Infant/Child Mortality | 5,309 | 6.8 |
| Information/Education | 5,124 | 6.6 |
| Total | 78,016 | 100.0 |

10. Recommendations

(a) Priority Areas for Action

- (i) High priority should be given to reconstitute the Editorial Advisory Board of APPJ. The Board should comprise a good mix of academics, practitioners and policy makers to guide and steer the activities of the journal to influence policies and programmes for the benefit of people in Asia and the Pacific.
- (ii) To ensure the quality of articles submitted for publication the internal and external review procedures need to be re-examined and a larger pool of reputed external reviewers should be selected to improve the screening process of articles for publication.
- (iii) In order to meet the needs of both academia and practitioners, it is necessary to have a good mix of articles in a given issue. While it may be desirable to continue with the “open call” policy of receiving papers, it is important to periodically have special issues to cover subject areas of current interest as well as countries and regions that do not get adequately covered. It is also necessary to give priority to the publication of articles that are policy-oriented.
- (iv) Priority should be given to subject matter that have not been adequately covered such as health financing, population and environment, disability, ageing and social security, health and nutrition, political demography and business demography. Above all, APPJ should be responsive to population trends and issues and be pro-active in encouraging and developing special theme issues.
- (v) The ‘Demographers Notebook’ a periodic section in the journal is redundant and needs to be combined with ‘Viewpoints’ in some form of ‘Population Practitioners Notes’ where policy and programme related personnel be encouraged to write on ‘best practices’ and experiences in implementing policies and programmes at the country level.

- (vi) The mailing list of the journal need to be updated and improved to ensure that hard copies of the journal go to the intended institutions and personnel. It is necessary to review the mailing list annually. The assistance of the UNFPA, which works closely with those institutions and personnel engaged in population activities at the country level, may be sought in this regard. It is also necessary to compile an e-mail list to send e-alerts of abstracts of the journal when they are uploaded on the web. APPJ should move as far as possible away from the need to print and mail out large numbers of hard copies of the journal. This would save money and increase timeliness.
- (vii) Journal articles on the web cannot be accessed with ease, hence it is recommended that the website be edited and revitalized as early as possible. The website of a global journal such as APPJ should adopt a standard model of what is possible in terms of easy and informative access, the ability to send email alerts, and some basic search facilities. An ‘early view’ system with access to articles ‘in press’ but not yet published should be introduced in due course.
- (viii) The ‘recommendations’ derived from the findings and conclusions to influence policy and programme related interventions are the weakest sections in the articles of APPJ although there have been improvements during 2001 to 2010. It is therefore, necessary to inform the contributors to the journal, in the ‘Guidelines for contributors’, of APPJ’s policy in this regard.

(b) Possible Areas for Action

- (i) Action should be taken to fill vacancies that are crucial in the production of the journal. It is also necessary to strengthen the coordination of the work flows and processes with regard to the management of the journal.
- (ii) The lengthy delays in publication may discourage potential authors for whom timeliness is important. It may be necessary as a long term measure to develop an on-line procedure for the submission of articles. This has the

advantage that it reduces the demands on Editors, through automated reminder letters etc.

- (iii) It is particularly crucial that articles should be in straightforward English, with straightforward titles and statistics, and that the Abstracts are equally clear and informative, with a clear 'policy-focus'. Abstracts at the beginning of the journal should provide a handy summary of policy relevance, to supplement the more standard Abstract that begins the article. It is recommended that the APPJ develop clear editorial guidelines on this and encourage and make more use of graphic techniques.
- (iv) The ratings of the journal may be improved by obtaining an ISI Impact Factor to encourage established academia in the field of population to contribute first-run articles to the journal. Since most international journals are now ranked and researchers are judged by these rankings, without this there is no incentive for aspiring academics to submit articles to APPJ.
- (v) The policy of APPJ to give priority to writers familiar with and in the Asia-Pacific region on topics of contemporary population significance should be continued and expanded.

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Annexure: 1

Summary Table of Ratings of Articles by Number of Articles and Period

| Contents | Ratings | Period | | | | |
|---------------------------|---------|---------|---------|-----------|---------|---------|
| | | 1986-90 | 1991-95 | 1996-2000 | 2001-05 | 2006-10 |
| Abstract | <3 | 7 | 0 | 1 | 6 | 7 |
| | 3 | 29 | 30 | 25 | 14 | 7 |
| | >3 | 32 | 34 | 39 | 61 | 47 |
| Introduction | <3 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | 3 | 16 | 8 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| | >3 | 48 | 56 | 63 | 81 | 61 |
| Methodology | <3 | 8 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | 3 | 24 | 18 | 15 | 10 | 2 |
| | >3 | 36 | 46 | 50 | 71 | 59 |
| Results | <3 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | 3 | 31 | 25 | 29 | 18 | 7 |
| | >3 | 34 | 39 | 36 | 63 | 54 |
| Relevant to Managers | <3 | 14 | 7 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | 3 | 27 | 37 | 42 | 29 | 19 |
| | >3 | 27 | 20 | 23 | 52 | 42 |
| Relevant to Policy Makers | <3 | 15 | 5 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| | 3 | 30 | 29 | 36 | 27 | 21 |
| | >3 | 23 | 30 | 27 | 53 | 40 |

Note: <3 = Less than average; 3 = Average; >3 = Above average score

Annexure: 2

Persons Contacted:

Thailand

Ms. Sirimon Wilairat, Senior Public Health Technical Officer, Ministry of Public Health.

Professor Patcharawalai Wongboonsin, Editor-in Chief, Journal of Demography and Director, Human Development and Migration Studies, Chulalongkorn University.

Ms. Kulthida Lertphongwathana, Policy and Plan Analyst, Senior Professional Level, National Economic and Social Development Board, Bangkok.

Prof. Sureeporn Punpuing, Director, Institute for Population and Social Research, Mahidol University, Mahidol.

Ms. Guia Morales, Manager Training, Population and Development Association (PDA) Asian Centre for Population and Community Development, Bangkok.

Malaysia

At the National Population and Family Development Board (NPFDB):

Dato' Aminah Abdul Rahman, Director General

Dr. Norliza Ahmad, Director, Human Reproduction Division

Dr. Siti Norlaysiah Ismail, Director, Population Division

Ms. Asma Hussein, Director, Family Development Division

Mr. Adzmel Mahmud, Head of Population Changes and Sectoral Unit, Population Division

Mr. Wan Hashim Wan Jaffar, Statistician, Policy Unit, Corporate Planning Division.

Ms. Anisafina Maidin, Information Officer, Family Development Division.

Ms. Sureena Turairajah, Head of Secretariat and International Collaboration Unit, Corporate Planning Division.

At the Family Health Development Division, Ministry of Health:

Dr. Kamaliah Mohamad, Deputy Director

Dr. Fanziah Zimal Elisan, Senior Principal Director
Dr. Mohmad G. Salleh, Senior Assistant Director
Dr. Noridha Mohmad Saleh, Senior Assistant Director
Dr. Fatanah Ismail, Senior Assistant Director
Dr. Zaleha Abdul Hamid, Senior Assistant Director,
Dr. Rohana Ismail, Senior Assistant Director

At the Health Education and Communication Centre, Ministry of Health

Ms. Azila Azml, Health Education Officer
Mr. Amidon Admit, Health Education Officer
Mr. A. Mohamad, Senior Principal Assistant Director

At the Social Services Section, Economic Planning Unit, Department of the Prime Minister

Ms Aini Binti Sanusi, Deputy Director I.
Ms. Rokiah Binti Haron, Deputy Director II
Ms. Zaharah Binti Hassan, Principal Assistant Director
Mr. Syed Zahiruddin, Principal Assistant Director
Ms. Rusdalilah Abdul Ghani, Assistant Director

At the Department of Social Welfare

Mr. Sharudin Bin Shar Kashim, Deputy Director General, Planning and Development
Ms.Siti Fatimah Binti Ismail, Chief Senior Assistant Director
Ms. Chan soak Fong, Senior Assistant Director

At the Federation of Reproductive Health Associations(FRHAM)

Ms. Yeoh Yeok Kim, Executive Director
Professor Tey Nai Peng, Consultant

At International Council on Management of Population Programs (ICOMP)

Mr. Wasim Zaman, Executive Director

At the United Nations Population Fund

Mr. Kamal Malhotra, UNFPA Representative
Dr. Ang, Consultant.

Sri Lanka:

At the Department of Demography, University of Colombo

Dr. Suwarna Ukwatte, Head of Demography Department
Prof. K.A.P. Siddhisena, Professor of Demography
Prof. Lakshman Dissanayake, Professor of Demography
Dr. Sunethra Perera, Senior Lecturer
Mr. W.P. Amarabandu, Visiting Lecturer

Population Association of Sri Lanka

Dr. A. Balasuriya, President
Mr. Lal Ratnaweera, Vice President

At the Institute for Health Policy, Colombo.

Dr. Reggie Perera, Senior Fellow
Ms. Ruwani Wickramasinghe, Research Officer
Ms. Ruwanthi Elwalagedera, Research Officer
Mr. Charmara Anuranga, Research Officer

At the Family Health Bureau, Ministry of Health

Dr. Deepthi Perera, Director
Dr. Loshan Munasinghe, Consultant Community Physician
Dr. Nirosha Lansakara, Consultant Community Physician
Dr. Ramya De Silva, Medical Officer

At the Health Education Bureau, Ministry of Health

Dr. Uthapala Amarasinghe, Consultant Community Physician
Dr. M.A.A.P. Alagiyawenne, Acting Consultant Community Physician
Dr. Amanthi Bandutilleke, Consultant Community Physician

At the Department of National Planning, Ministry of Finance and Planning

Mrs. Chandani Wijewardena, Director, Health Cluster
Ms. Dilrukshi Samarakoon, Planning Assistant, Urban Cluster

At the United Nations Population Fund

Ms. Lene Christianson, UNFPA, Representative
Mr. Gamini Wanasekara, Asst. Representative

Ms. Lankani Sikurajapathy, Programme Analyst

Annexure: 3



ASIA-PACIFIC POPULATION JOURNAL

READERSHIP SURVEY 2011

We are conducting a survey to ensure that the *Asia-Pacific Population Journal*(APPJ) provides you the information you want and assess if the publication is useful to inform the policy process. We would appreciate it if you could kindly complete the questionnaire, also available online at <http://surveys.unescap.org/s/appj2011>.

Alternatively, you may send us the completed questionnaire by e-mail or fax at the following address: Editor, *Asia-Pacific Population Journal*, Social Development Division, UNESCAP, Fax (66-2) 288 1018, e-mail: escap-sdd@un.org. Please respond as soon as possible but no later than **31 October 2011**. Thank you in advance.

QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Please rate your assessment of the quality of the publication on:

| | <i>Excellent</i> | <i>Good</i> | <i>Average</i> | <i>Poor</i> |
|---|------------------|-------------|----------------|-------------|
| (a) Presentation/format | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| (b) Readability | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| (c) Subject matter relevance to population issues | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

| | | | | |
|--------------------------------|---|---|---|---|
| (d) Coverage of subject-matter | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| (e) Analytical rigour | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| (f) Overall quality | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

2. Please circle your rating of the usefulness of the publication on:

| | <i>Very useful</i> | <i>Useful</i> | <i>Not useful</i> |
|---|--------------------|---------------|-------------------|
| (a) Provision of timely information | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| (b) In-depth coverage of population issues | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| (b) Policy and program -related information and recommendations | 3 | 2 | 1 |

3. How do you typically make use of the articles?

| | Please tick |
|--|-----------------------|
| (a) For advocacy | <input type="radio"/> |
| (b) For policy formulation | <input type="radio"/> |
| (c) For research work | <input type="radio"/> |
| (d) As reference for teaching material | <input type="radio"/> |
| (e) For professional development | <input type="radio"/> |
| (e) Other (kindly specify:) | <input type="radio"/> |

4. Can you cite examples of messages or material you have drawn from APPJ to directly or indirectly influence policy or decision-making? (Please tick)

No

Yes

Kindly elaborate (e.g. any specific article or column).....

5. How would you prefer to receive APPJ (check all that apply)?

Please tick

- (a) By receiving a print copy O
- (b) By an e-mail alert O
- (c) By consulting the website O
- (d) On CD-ROM O

Any comment :

6. What is your affiliation Please tick

- (a) Government O
- (b) University/Research Institute O
- (c) Non-governmental organization O
- (d) United Nations Agency O
- (e) Private foundation O
- (f) Other (kindly specify:)

7. Are you satisfied with the new format of the publication (see June 2010 issue onward):
(Please tick)

O Yes

O No

Any comment:

8 Suggestions for improvement of the publication

.....

.....

.....

Name : **Sex:**

Educational level: **(a) Secondary** **(b) Degree** **(c) Post-graduate degree**

Name of institution:

Mailing address:

.....

.....

Fax:

E-mail:

Thank you for your kind cooperation in completing and returning this questionnaire to us.

Annexure: 4

APPJ Review – 2011

Questionnaire for selected Academics/researchers and Practitioners

(in Malaysia, Thailand and Sri Lanka)

Name:

Designation:

Institution:.....

Country:

1. Please rate the assessment of the quality of the Journal on a five point scale for each item below: 1= Poor, 5= Excellent

- (a) Presentation/format _____
- (b) Readability _____
- (c) Subject matter relevant to population issues _____
- (d) Coverage of subject matter _____
- (e) Analytical rigor _____
- (f) Overall quality _____

2. Please indicate your ratings on a five point scale for each item below: 1= poor, 5= very good

- (a) Provision of timely information _____
- (b) In-depth coverage of population issues _____
- (c) Policy and programme related information and recommendations _____

3. How do you typically make use of the articles?

- (a) for advocacy ____
- (b) for policy formulation ____
- (c) for research work ____
- (d) As reference for teaching material ____
- (e) for professional development ____

(f) Other (specify).....

4. Can you cite examples, messages or material you have drawn from APPJ to directly or indirectly to influence policy.

(a) Yes ___

(b) No ___

If yes, give details

.....

.....

.....

5. Are you satisfied with the new format of the publication?

(a) Yes ___

(b) No ___

Any comments:

.....

.....

6. Do the Abstracts of the articles summarize the main points including policy recommendations clearly and adequately? Rate on five point scale: 1= poorly 5= adequately

7. Do you read the Journal regularly

(a) Yes _____

(b) No _____

8. How useful is the Journal in your professional work? Rate on a five point scale: 1= Not useful 5= Very useful

9. What are the subject areas that you would very much like to be covered in the Journal?

.....

.....

.....

10. Any further suggestions to improve the quality of the Journal.

.....

.....

.....

.....

ANNEXURE 5

The screenshot shows a Windows Internet Explorer browser window displaying the Asia-Pacific Population Journal website. The address bar shows the URL <http://www.unescap.org/esid/psis/population/journal/index.asp>. The browser's menu bar includes File, Edit, View, Favorites, Tools, and Help. The website's navigation bar features links for Article, Subject, Author, Country, Search, and About APPJ. A search box is present with a 'Go' button and radio buttons for 'all words', 'any words', and 'exact phrase'. The left sidebar contains a tree view of journal volumes from 1995 to 2007. The main content area features a large graphic for the '20th Anniversary Special' (1986-2006 Complete collection) with the text 'Knowledge and thinking on population issues in Asia-Pacific for over 20 years, just a click away' and the URL <http://www.unescap.org/appj.asp>. The browser's status bar at the bottom shows a microphone icon and a 100% zoom level.

Asia-Pacific Population Journal - Windows Internet Explorer

<http://www.unescap.org/esid/psis/population/journal/index.asp>

File Edit View Favorites Tools Help

Asia-Pacific Population Journal

Asia-Pacific Population Journal Article Subject Author Country Search About APPJ

Search: Go all words any words exact phrase

2007 (Volume 22)

2006 (Volume 21)

- No. 1 (April)
 - Will HIV/AIDS Levels in Asia Reach the Level o
 - Potential for Reducing Child and Maternal Mort
 - Readiness, Willingness and Ability to Use Cor
 - Singapore's Family Values: Do They Explain L
 - International Labour Recruitment, Channelling
- No. 2 (August)
- No. 3 (December)
- Special Issue (August)

2005 (Volume 20)

2004 (Volume 19)

2003 (Volume 18)

2002 (Volume 17)

2001 (Volume 16)

2000 (Volume 15)

1999 (Volume 14)

1998 (Volume 13)

1997 (Volume 12)

1996 (Volume 11)

1995 (Volume 10)

20th Anniversary Special

1986-2006 Complete collection

Knowledge and thinking on population issues in Asia-Pacific for over 20 years, just a click away

<http://www.unescap.org/appj.asp>

United Nations ESCAP

Microphone 100%

Annexure: 6

Evaluation of the Asia-Pacific Population Journal (APPJ)

Terms of Reference of Mr. A.T.P.L. Abeykoon (Lead Consultant)

1. Background

The *Asia-Pacific Population Journal (APPJ)*, a periodic publication in print since March 1986, has been produced by the Social Development Division of ESCAP as a recurrent part of several ESCAP-UNFPA projects. As stated in the first issue of APPJ, the publication of this quarterly (now only published twice a year) is “aimed at keeping regional Governments abreast of current population program experiences and methodical and conceptual developments” (S.A.M.S Kibria) and at assisting “leading population experts” to be able to “share their findings, theories and opinions on population policies and programs with government officials, planners and other scholars in the region”. APPJ publishes original contributions, submitted by population experts from or familiar with the region; it is a peer-reviewed publication, indexed in virtual libraries and databases online, including in Popline, Bibliography of Asian Studies, JournalServer.org, Google Scholar, Development Gateway, etc.

Since its inception, APPJ has been supported by both ESCAP and UNFPA. UNFPA funded the costs of printing one or two issues of the *Journal* each year, while ESCAP has been funding the cost of printing at least two issues each year. In addition, until recently, UNFPA supported several posts (one professional and support staff) in ESCAP for the publication of the *Journal*, as well as in support of other joint activities.

The APPJ was an integral component of continuous UNFPA/ESCAP projects. The projects included a number of activities, which changed over time and included, among others: population information sharing activities, publishing APPJ, the publication of bimonthly newsletter *Population Headliners* (discontinued in 2003 after 30 years of publication), web-based publications, database and website. The Editorial Advisory Board of the *Asia-Pacific Population Journal*, established in mid-2004, meets annually and provides overall guidance to the publication. It is composed of eminent experts in the field of population, including representatives from both ESCAP and UNFPA.

The evaluation aims to assess the value of the *Journal* for its intended audience; policy-makers and decision-makers. Since it is recognized that the *Journal* may be valuable for readers from academic/research institutions and non-governmental organizations, the evaluation would attempt to assess to what extent, in its present form, the *Journal* is having influence as a means to deliver knowledge that affects policy-making and policy formulation. The evaluation will recommend ways to make the delivery/knowledge transfer of evidence-based population related information more effective. Although a number of readership surveys and reviews have been undertaken, the proposed evaluation would be the first attempt by both ESCAP and UNFPA to comprehensively assess the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability of the *Journal*.

2. Purpose

The purpose of the evaluation is to guide the programming decisions related to APPJ and its future direction by ESCAP and UNFPA, and to explore new/enhanced areas for collaboration between ESCAP-UNFPA in the coming years in the field of population. The evaluation comes at a time when both organizations are reviewing and reassessing the nature and the scope of regional partnerships. As such, it is seen as a timely exercise which would provide key inputs for consideration for enhanced partnership.

3. Objectives

The main objectives of the Evaluation are to:

- (i) To develop concrete recommendations to improve the contribution of the *Journal* to meeting the specific needs of its key target audience;
- (ii) To identify ways to make the preparation, publication and dissemination of the *Journal* more sustainable and efficient.

4. Scope and focus

The evaluation will consider the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability of APPJ in promoting exchanges of knowledge on population issues, and communicating experiences and data which are useful in informing population policies and programs at national and regional levels in Asia and the Pacific. Specific questions to be addressed by the evaluation include:

Relevance:

- § How relevant is the *Journal* to the needs of population-program managers and policy-makers in the Asian and the Pacific region?
- § How well does the *Journal* respond to the specific needs of policy makers, managers, and other experts who handle population related programs and policies in the region?

Efficiency:

- § To what extent is the current format/structure of the APPJ cost-effective?
- § Are there alternative interventions that would have produced similar results in terms of achieving the publication's aim?
- § How efficient is the quality assurance mechanism?

Effectiveness:

- § How many key decision-makers relating to population programs and policies receive and use information from the *Journal*?
- § How has the *Journal* enhanced readers' knowledge on population and development?

- § To what extent have they been able to use material from the *Journal* for evidence-based decision and policy-making or capacity development in the field of population and development?
- § What are facilitating/constraining factors in achieving the publication's aim?
- § How well is the *Journal* linked with other population and/or development information- - initiatives of ESCAP or other regional institutions?

Sustainability:

- § Has APPJ contributed to enhancement of national and/or regional knowledge base?
- § Is APPJ contributing to enhancing the knowledge base beyond individual readers?
- § What are the potential sources for continued funding (e.g. donors, governments, etc.)?

5. Methodology

The evaluation will be conducted by a team of two consultants, to be contracted by ESCAP in accordance with its rules and guidelines. The evaluation will be based on desk reviews of project -related documents including the *Journal*, past reviews/evaluations and feedback, available website statistics and interviews with key stakeholders as well as surveys targeting both readers as well as population experts who are not readers. It is envisaged that a web-based survey as well as targeted interviews be conducted in accordance with the tool designed by the evaluators.

The evaluation will follow the principles of the UN Evaluation Group's norms and standards (especially independence, objectiveness, impartiality and inclusiveness) and will be guided by the UN ethics guidelines for evaluators.

5.1 Team Composition

The evaluators should collectively fulfill the following requirements:

- § At least 10 years of experience in conducting evaluations.
- § Good background in social sciences, preferably demography or population studies.
- § Familiarity with the ICPD agenda.
- § Familiarity with the research community and population policies in Asia and the Pacific
- § Familiarity with the UN.
- § International work experience.
- § Strong written and oral communication skills.
- § Good management skills and ability to work with experts from countries in the Asian and Pacific region.

It is expected that the evaluators have neither conflict of interest nor any connection to the current or past project planning or implementation.

5.2 Work Schedule and deliverables

The evaluation is expected to take 6-8 weeks. The first week will be a briefing of the evaluation consultants by ESCAP and UNFPA APRO, review of background documents, and designing of the tools to conduct the evaluation. The evaluation report will be drafted by the 5th week, with a presentation of the draft evaluation report presented to ESCAP and UNFPA APRO at the end of the evaluation period. A debriefing with key findings will take place 5-6 weeks after the evaluation start date. Both ESCAP and UNFPA APRO will have two weeks to respond to the draft to request any changes.

More precisely, the related actions and deliverables for the primary consultant will be as follows:

- Review and help finalize the APPJ readership survey questionnaire, and take results of new survey into account when available, to finalize the evaluation report
- Review APPJ project related documents, past reviews/evaluations and feedback
- Interview key Government officials/policy makers/program managers in the field of population in selected countries to assess the suitability of APPJ in terms of contents and structure and ability to influence the policy process
- Review the contents of APPJ, with regard to its relevance for the formulation of population policies or programs in Asia-Pacific or for the purpose of advocacy on population issues
- Review the contents of APPJ, with regard to its relevance and usefulness for demographers/practitioners
- Act as Lead Coordinator/Author for the drafting of the evaluation report, based on inputs provided by the second consultant and with a view to provide practical, forward-looking recommendations for the strategic positioning of the publication and for enhancing the uptake and impact of its research findings.

5.3 Management arrangements

The evaluation process will be managed jointly by UNFPA/APRO and ESCAP, with focal points being the APRO Regional Program Coordinator and the Chief, Social Policy and Population Section, Social Development Division. A Reference Group composed of selected staff from UNFPA and ESCAP will be established to support the evaluation. ESCAP and APRO will be responsible for providing background and process documents. Logistical arrangements will be provided by ESCAP and UNFPA APRO.

Annexure: 7

Evaluation of the Asia-Pacific Population Journal (APPJ)

Terms of Reference of Mr. John Connell (Consultant)

1. Background

The *Asia-Pacific Population Journal (APPJ)*, a periodic publication in print since March 1986, has been produced by the Social Development Division of ESCAP as a recurrent part of several ESCAP-UNFPA projects. As stated in the first issue of APPJ, the publication of this quarterly (now only published twice a year) is “aimed at keeping regional Governments abreast of current population program experiences and methodical and conceptual developments” (S.A.M.S Kibria) and at assisting “leading population experts” to be able to “share their findings, theories and opinions on population policies and programs with government officials, planners and other scholars in the region”. APPJ publishes original contributions, submitted by population experts from or familiar with the region; it is a peer-reviewed publication, indexed in virtual libraries and databases online, including in Popline, Bibliography of Asian Studies, JournalServer.org, Google Scholar, Development Gateway, etc.

Since its inception, APPJ has been supported by both ESCAP and UNFPA. UNFPA funded the costs of printing one or two issues of the *Journal* each year, while ESCAP has been funding the cost of printing at least two issues each year. In addition, until recently, UNFPA supported several posts (one professional and support staff) in ESCAP for the publication of the *Journal*, as well as in support of other joint activities.

The APPJ was an integral component of continuous UNFPA/ESCAP projects. The projects included a number of activities, which changed over time and included, among others: population information sharing activities, publishing APPJ, the publication of bimonthly newsletter *Population Headliners* (discontinued in 2003 after 30 years of publication), web-based publications, database and website. The Editorial Advisory Board of the *Asia-Pacific Population Journal*, established in mid-2004, meets annually and provides overall guidance to the publication. It is composed of eminent experts in the field of population, including representatives from both ESCAP and UNFPA.

The evaluation aims to assess the value of the *Journal* for its intended audience; policy-makers and decision-makers. Since it is recognized that the *Journal* may be valuable for readers from academic/research institutions and non-governmental organizations, the evaluation would attempt to assess to what extent, in its present form, the *Journal* is having influence as a means to deliver knowledge that affects policy-making and policy formulation. The evaluation will recommend ways to make the delivery/knowledge transfer of evidence-based population related information more effective. Although a number of readership surveys and reviews have been undertaken, the proposed evaluation would be the first attempt by both ESCAP and UNFPA to comprehensively assess the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability of the *Journal*.

2. Purpose

The purpose of the evaluation is to guide the programming decisions related to APPJ and its future direction by ESCAP and UNFPA, and to explore new/enhanced areas for collaboration between ESCAP-UNFPA in the coming years in the field of population. The evaluation comes at a time when both organizations are reviewing and reassessing the nature and the scope of regional partnerships. As such, it is seen as a timely exercise which would provide key inputs for consideration for enhanced partnership.

3. Objectives

The main objectives of the Evaluation are to:

- (iii) To develop concrete recommendations to improve the contribution of the *Journal* to meeting the specific needs of its key target audience;
- (iv) To identify ways to make the preparation, publication and dissemination of the *Journal* more sustainable and efficient.

4. Scope and focus

The evaluation will consider the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability of APPJ in promoting exchanges of knowledge on population issues, and communicating experiences and data which are useful in informing population policies and programs at national and regional levels in Asia and the Pacific. Specific questions to be addressed by the evaluation include:

Relevance:

- § How relevant is the *Journal* to the needs of population-program managers and policy-makers in the Asian and the Pacific region?
- § How well does the *Journal* respond to the specific needs of policy makers, managers, and other experts who handle population related programs and policies in the region?

Efficiency:

- § To what extent is the current format/structure of the APPJ cost-effective?
- § Are there alternative interventions that would have produced similar results in terms of achieving the publication's aim?
- § How efficient is the quality assurance mechanism?

Effectiveness:

- § How many key decision-makers relating to population programs and policies receive and use information from the *Journal*?
- § How has the *Journal* enhanced readers' knowledge on population and development?
- § To what extent have they been able to use material from the *Journal* for evidence-based decision and policy-making or capacity development in the field of population and development?
- § What are facilitating/constraining factors in achieving the publication's aim?
- § How well is the *Journal* linked with other population and/or development information- - initiatives of ESCAP or other regional institutions?

Sustainability:

- § Has APPJ contributed to enhancement of national and/or regional knowledge base?
- § Is APPJ contributing to enhancing the knowledge base beyond individual readers?
- § What are the potential sources for continued funding (e.g. donors, governments, etc.)?

5. Methodology

The evaluation will be conducted by a team of two consultants, to be contracted by ESCAP in accordance with its rules and guidelines. The evaluation will be based on desk reviews of project-related documents including the *Journal*, past reviews/evaluations and feedback, available website statistics and interviews with key stakeholders as well as surveys targeting both readers as well as population experts who are not readers. It is envisaged that a web-based survey as well as targeted interviews be conducted in accordance with the tool designed by the evaluators.

The evaluation will follow the principles of the UN Evaluation Group's norms and standards (especially independence, objectiveness, impartiality and inclusiveness) and will be guided by the UN ethics guidelines for evaluators.

5.1 Team Composition

The evaluators should collectively fulfill the following requirements:

- § At least 10 years of experience in conducting evaluations.
- § Good background in social sciences, preferably demography or population studies.
- § Familiarity with the ICPD agenda.
- § Familiarity with the research community and population policies in Asia and the Pacific
- § Familiarity with the UN.
- § International work experience.
- § Strong written and oral communication skills.
- § Good management skills and ability to work with experts from countries in the Asian and Pacific region.

It is expected that the evaluators have neither conflict of interest nor any connection to the current or past project planning or implementation.

5.2 Work Schedule and deliverables

The evaluation is expected to take 6-8 weeks. The first week will be a briefing of the evaluation consultants by ESCAP and UNFPA APRO, review of background documents, and designing of the tools to conduct the evaluation. The evaluation report will be drafted by the 5th week, with a presentation of the draft evaluation report presented to ESCAP and UNFPA APRO at the end of the evaluation period. A debriefing with key findings will take place 5-6 weeks after the evaluation start date. Both ESCAP and UNFPA APRO will have two weeks to respond to the draft to request any changes.

More precisely, the related actions and deliverables for the primary consultant will be as follows:

- Review the contents of APPJ, with regard its relevance and appeal to a broader audience of population practitioners, academics and others
- Review the *Asia-Pacific Population Journal* in relation to comparable journals in the field of population, suggesting ways to enhance its standing in the Asian and Pacific region and at the global level
- Evaluate the web-based format of the *Journal*, its online presence and suggest ways to revamp its website and fully exploit the potential of electronic media
- Review work flows and processes with regard management of *Journal* (review, peer-review, correspondence) and suggest ways to enhance efficiency including through the use of more advanced technological platforms
- Provide inputs for the drafting of the report in close coordination with the Lead Consultant, including potential themes/topics that APPJ may cover/address in the future

5.3 Management arrangements

The evaluation process will be managed jointly by UNFPA/APRO and ESCAP, with focal points being the APRO Regional Program Coordinator and the Chief, Social Policy and Population Section, Social Development Division. A Reference Group composed of selected staff from UNFPA and ESCAP will be established to support the evaluation. ESCAP and APRO will be responsible for providing background and process documents. Logistical arrangements will be provided by ESCAP and UNFPA APRO.

