The UNESCO monograph on 'Education and Population Dynamics', developed in 1999 for the ICPD+5 review process, examined several aspects of the interrelationships between education and the world population situation.

The proposed paper builds on that discussion but at the same time, aims at placing the relationship between education and population within the broader context of economic and social development. Demographic growth must not be seen in isolation and rapid population growth, as described in the paper cited above, is not the sole determinant of poverty and inequality. It is where population growth outpaces economic growth (and thus GDP per capita declines) and where population growth reinforces social and economic disparities that pressure on economic stability and social cohesion occurs.

Taking a global perspective, growth and wealth creation in the last century have been spectacular. While over the three centuries from 1500 to 1820, world GDP roughly tripled, during the 170 years after 1820 it increased over 40-fold. Against this background, world population growth seems modest and world poverty has been reduced more in the past 50 years than in the past 500. However, there has been much less success in distributing wealth than in creating it - not just across but also within countries, creating new imbalances and problems to be faced.

The paper will first introduce the international debate on demography, including a review of the major issues discussed at recent international conferences on population and development.

This will be followed by a descriptive analysis of population and development, considering both cross-national and within country dimensions of the relationship between demographic growth, economic growth and wealth.

The next section will analyse the impact of demographic growth on public policy, with a focus on education. Important variables that will be considered in this analysis include: changes (1950-2050) in literacy rates, enrolment rates, development of schooling infrastructure, public investment in education, as well as shortages in educational provision, over-crowding, and inadequate conditions of learning, against the backdrop of demographic changes.

The key question then, of course, is what intervening variables there are that can help public policy to face the demographic challenges. Whereas the preceding section examined the impact of demography on education, the perspectives will now be reversed with a focus on how education can be an instrument of public policy. The impact of education on demography will be explored by analysing changes in fertility rates, maternal and infant mortality rates, teen-age birth rates, and age of marriage, in relationship to literacy and completion rates, and school attainment levels.

Starting from a global perspective, the paper will highlight developments and policies in the nine high-population developing countries. While some aggregation of data will be needed (a classification of a broader range of countries by income level may be one way), an analysis by region is not foreseen as this would mask important differences in policies within the regions.

The concluding section will present challenges that remain at the eve of the third millennium.