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Abstract

**Population and Sustainability in Asia:
Adjusting to a Post-Transition Era**

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Large parts of Asia have completed or are nearing the end of the transition to a modern demographic regime of low death and birth rates and high median age. That does not mean that major demographic change is nearly at an end: quite the opposite. There are decades of population growth still ahead, vast relocations from countryside to cities yet to come, and continuing and rapid further shifts in age distribution toward the elderly. The supposedly calm waters of a post-transition regime, with a stationary or gently declining population, might eventually be reached, but only much later in this century. These anticipated changes, occurring alongside the region's remarkable economic transformation, add greatly to the already challenging tasks of social and environmental policymaking. The policy experience of the demographic forerunners of Europe and Japan should be examined but, given the unprecedented scale and pace of demographic change in continental Asia, may have only limited lessons to offer.