LONGER LIFE AND HEALTHY AGING

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The International Union for the Scientific Study of Population (IUSSP)

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PREFACE

ZENG YI
EILEEN CRIMMINS
YVES CARRIÈRE
JEAN-MARIE ROBINE

The International Union for the Scientific Study of Population (IUSSP) Committee on Longevity and Health was formed in 1999. Its initial objectives were to study human longevity, the dynamics of health transitions, the emergence and proliferation of centenarians, and demographic-epidemiological projections, to develop implications for the forecast of future health status.

The IUSSP Committee on Longevity and Health was chaired by Jean-Marie Robine and members included Vaino Kannisto, Shiro Horiuchi, Yves Carriere, Eileen Crimmins, and Zeng Yi. The Committee held three seminars in 2000, 2001, and 2003. The first seminar was held in Montpellier and included two-day meetings, a public symposium and a training session provided by Committee members at INED in Paris. The objectives of the Montpellier seminar were a critical assessment of our knowledge about human longevity, mortality at older ages, and an understanding of the distribution of individual life durations. The two-day meeting of the second seminar took place at Peking University in Beijing, just prior to an international symposium on “Determinants of Healthy Longevity in China” which enabled Committee members to participate in the symposium along with Chinese participants interested in aging populations. Following this, the committee held a two-day training workshop on calculating active life expectancy at Peking University. The main themes of the Beijing seminar were to define healthy aging and its causes, to understand disability patterns and healthy life expectancy, and to further develop an understanding of healthy longevity. The third seminar was a two-day meeting held at Rockefeller University in New York. The objectives included evolution of understanding of the diverse socio-economic factors that may be linked to greater functional abilities, and that may positively or negatively influence older people’s living conditions and quality of life in general. In addition, in 2004 the committee organized an international conference in Beijing on the Demographic Window and Healthy Aging. This conference brought together demographers and population economists from Western and Asian countries, to exchange current scientific knowledge on population dynamics, the change in population age structure, and its impact on economic and social development.

With substantial contributions from the local hosts of the three seminars, the first and second seminars were supported by IUSSP; the international symposium connected to the second seminar was partly supported by the US National Institute on Aging (NIA) grant 7 P01 AG 08761, the third seminar was supported by the NIA Grant R13 AG021466-01, and the 2004 Beijing conference was supported by Asian MetaCentre.

Two books have resulted from these three seminars: *Human Longevity, Individual Life Duration, and the Growth of the Oldest-Old Population* from the Montpellier seminar and this volume, *Longer Life and Healthy Aging*, based on papers presented in Beijing in 2001 and New York in 2003. In addition, an issue of *Genus* contains some of the papers from the New York seminar; the 2004 Beijing conference led to a special issue of *Asian Population Studies*.

The Committee wishes to thank a number of people and institutions for supporting its activities. The IUSSP has provided the initial impetus for our organization; Isabelle Romieu has handled the administrative and editorial tasks for the Committee. We also wish to thank the Centre de Lutte Contre le Cancer (CRLC) and the School of Medicine of the University of Montpellier, the Center for Healthy Aging and Family Studies at Peking University and the Population Research Laboratory at Rockefeller University for their substantial contributions as local hosts of these seminars. The Committee members thank chair Jean-Marie Robine and Isabel Romieu for arranging the Montpellier seminar. We express our gratitude for their contributions to the Beijing seminars to Peng Peiyun who was President of the China Population Association, Wu Changping who was President of the Gerontology Society of China, and committee member Zeng Yi. We also thank the Population Research Laboratory at Rockefeller University, Shiro Horiuchi (the committee member), Joel Cohen, and Kathe Rogerson for coordination and local organization of the New York seminar.

The Committee began with six members but after the Montpellier seminar we were reduced to five with the death of Vaino Kannisto. Vaino's death was a sorrowful loss for the Committee. Kannisto was one of the first demographers to document the aging of the aged and the increases in the older population at progressively older ages. He passed away at 85 years of age. Several times during our committee meetings, he stressed that active life is much more important than long life. His life was exemplarily active, productive, and fruitful. We have all benefited from his empirical observations and methodological advances and we dedicate the products of our Committee, including this volume, to him.

The scientific background, themes, major contents, and structure of this volume are summarized in the following Introduction, and the 20 individual chapters are organized into four parts, dealing with disability and health life expectancy, individual health aging, family and healthy aging, and formal and informal care for the healthy aging, respectively.