

## **Population of Thailand after the Reproductive Revolution**

*Boonlert Leoprapai*

Population of Thailand is one among the few population groups in the modern time which has experienced the rapid decline in fertility level within two decades. Thailand's population completed the reproductive revolution process so quickly that its age structure has not had time to adjust and still holds the potential for growth for several decades to come. This may be seen from the change in size of the Thai population. During the period of reproductive revolution from 1970 to 1990, the population increased by 20 million from 35.745 to 55.702 million or an increase of 55.8 percent. In the future, although the replacement level of fertility could be maintained, the size of the Thai population in the year 2025 may be as big as 80.911 million, an increase of 25.209 million within the period of 35 years after 1990.

As for the effect of reproductive revolution on the age structure of the population, the pattern is that the proportion of children (under 15 years of age) declines while the number and proportion of population in working-age group (15-59 years of age) and the elderly (60 years and over) tend to increase. The extent of decrease in the proportion of children has been great and resulting in a decrease in the economic burden on economically productive population. The reproductive revolution also results in a number of positive economic and social implications such as a higher per capital income, the larger size of the work force, a gradual reduction in the number of new entrants into the labour market and the decrease in the number of school age population. One of the negative effects of the reproductive revolution is the increase in both number of proportion of the elderly. In the year 2010, percentage of the elderly will be only 9.4. By the year 2025, however, the number of the elderly may be as much as 12.559 million and the percentage of total population may be as high as 15.5.