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Increasing Contraceptive Use in West Africa: A Road Map

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• Development is not possible without taking into account demographic variables.

• Historically, there are no examples of developed countries that continue to have fertility rates above 5 children per woman.
Four major advantages of a rapid fertility reduction

1. Population growth can reduce the time required to double the GDP per capita

2. Rapidly falling fertility opens the possibility to benefit from the demographic dividend

3. Reduction of number of births fosters the formation of human capital (e.g., education)

4. It also greatly improves child and maternal health
Fertility is considerably low in G8 and G20 countries

All but one among the ten G20 “developing” countries, had fertility rates between 5 and 7 children in the early 1960s.
Recent Impressive Increases of CPRs
Family planning use in West Africa

• Despite 40 years of programmatic efforts, contraceptive prevalence rates (CPRs) in West Africa remain among the lowest in the world.

• Both expressed and potential unmet needs for family planning remain high and CPRs have stagnated or even decreased in many countries in the past ten years.
The average total fertility rate in West Africa is 5.5
Contraceptive use and percentage of women in need of family planning

% of married women

- Need not met
- Traditional methods
- Modern methods

Source: [UNFPA]
To achieve the necessary demographic transition West African countries will need to take action

**Overall Goals**

- Address all unmet needs for family planning (25 to 30% of couples).

- Increase the contraceptive prevalence rate by at least 1.5 percentage point per year.
To achieve the necessary demographic transition West African countries will need to take action

Short Term actions:

Advocate

• Advocate to convince leadership about the urgent need to accelerate the use of contraception as a response.

• As in Indonesia, well-developed advocacy campaigns will help to legitimize family planning.
To achieve the necessary demographic transition, West African countries will need to take action.

**Short Term actions:**

*Increase awareness*

- Launch awareness campaigns aimed at government officials, the political elite, opinion leaders, and well-known figures.
To achieve the necessary demographic transition West African countries will need to take action

*Short Term actions:*

**Campaign**

- Prepare and launch a national multimedia campaign to highlight current unmet needs for family planning.

- As in Bangladesh, the national campaign could recruit and train young married women for a door-to-door and word of mouth campaign.
To achieve the necessary demographic transition West African countries will need to take action

*Long Term actions:*

**Develop Projections**

- Develop new population projections and data collection tools.

- Projections could assume increases in contraceptive prevalence percentage points per year (e.g., 1.5).

- Projections should factor in assumptions of economic growth and future needs in education and health.
To achieve the necessary demographic transition West African countries will need to take action.

**Long Term actions:**

**Develop population policies**

- Coordinate and create population policies for the region.

- These policies should be coherent with the development strategies of each country.

- Policies should address not only mortality and fertility, but also the trends and impact of international migration.
To achieve the necessary demographic transition West African countries will need to take action

*Long Term actions:*

*Determine roles*

- Examine in detail the roles of the Ministries, NGOs, private sector, etc., in advocacy and family planning services to increase overall effectiveness.
A sense of urgency

“The best time to plant a tree is 20 years ago. The second best time is now.”

African Proverb