

ADDRESSING THE TRIPLE THREAT OF TEENAGE PREGNANCIES, GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AND HIV AMONG YOUNG PEOPLE IN AFRICA: A CROSS-SECTORAL APPROACH TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Side Event at the 56th Commission on Population and Development

Tuesday, April 11, 2023 | 1:15 pm – 2:30 pm | Conference Room 7 (CR 7)/VTC

Background: Africa has the youngest population among the continents of the world. The *UN World Population Prospects 2022* estimates that 60% of Africa's population is under 25 years of age. Latin America and the Caribbean, and Asia are the next youngest world regions, with almost 40% of their population under 25 years old.¹ The demographic transition in Africa, characterized by its reducing child dependency as couples choose to have smaller families, has resulted in a large cohort of young people transitioning into working ages. The transition presents a unique opportunity to harness the demographic dividend through investment in inclusive and equitable quality education and training, healthcare, and providing decent work opportunities to enhance the well-being of young people.

However, teenage pregnancy, Gender-Based Violence (GBV), and HIV/AIDS continue to pose significant threats to the realization of demographic dividend in Africa. For instance, one in four young women gives birth before their 18th birthday in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), compared to a global average of 14%. The prevalence of gender-based violence in the continent, including child marriages and Female Genital mutilation (FGM), is also unacceptable. Recent estimates show that 17% of girls in SSA below 15 years old have undergone FGM, while 35% of women in SSA are married before age 18. Additionally, the region accounts for a disproportionately high number of adolescents living with HIV (89% of the global total).²

As a result of the triple threat of teenage pregnancies, GBV, and HIV, young people who represent Africa's resource for development, especially girls, face multiple and intersecting challenges that limit their ability to access education, participate in the economy, and fully realize their potential.

Objective: The objective of the side event is to bring together key stakeholders from government, civil society, academia, development partners, relevant UN agencies and the private sector to deliberate on the triple threat of teenage pregnancies, gender-based violence, and HIV/AIDS among young people in Africa. The event will explore cross-sectoral approaches, strategies and actions to address these challenges, particularly the intersection with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) on education, environment, climate change, livelihoods, gender, and adolescent health issues.

Format: The side event will be a 75-minute hybrid event consisting of a keynote address followed by a panel discussion moderated by a respected expert in the field. The panellists will share their experiences and perspectives on the triple threat and proffer cross-sectoral approaches to addressing it, particularly the intersection with sustainable development goals on education, environment, climate change, livelihoods, gender, and youth issues.

The discussion will be structured around the following themes:

- Understanding the triple threat: teenage pregnancies, gender-based violence, and HIV/AIDS among young people in Africa.
- Cross-sectoral approaches to addressing the triple threat, particularly the intersection with sustainable development goals on education, environment, climate change, livelihoods, gender, and youth issues.
- Best practices and lessons learned from successful programs and initiatives.
- Challenges and opportunities in scaling up cross-sectoral approaches.

¹ United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2022). *World Population Prospects 2022*, Online Edition.

² <https://data.unicef.org>

An interactive question-and-answer session will follow the panel discussion. The event will conclude with a call to action and commitment to prioritizing investments in the education, healthcare, and well-being of young people in Africa, with particular attention to girls. It will also identify critical partnerships to accelerate progress towards achieving the ICPD PoA transformative agenda and sustainable development goals on education, environment/climate change, livelihoods, gender, and youth issues.

Speakers:

Keynote address - Dr Eliya Zulu – Executive Director, African Institute for Development Policy (AFIDEP)

Panellists:

- Ms Margaret Edison, Director, National Population Commission, Nigeria and Chair of the Regional Collaborative Platform of National Population Councils/Commissions
- Dr Mohamed Sheikh - Director General, National Council for Population and Development (NCPD) Kenya
- Rev. Charles Banda – Director, Population and Development Department, Ministry of Finance and Planning, Zambia
- Dr Leticia A. Appiah – Executive Director, National Population Council, Office of the President, Ghana

Moderator:

- Mr Clive Mutunga, Project Director, BUILD Project, African Institute for Development Policy (AFIDEP)

Expected Outcomes:

1. Bring to the fore the negative impact of the triple threat of teenage pregnancies, gender-based violence, and HIV/AIDS among young people in Africa.
2. Identify holistic cross-sectoral approaches to addressing the triple threat, particularly the intersection with the transformative results embedded in the ICPD PoA and sustainable development goals on education, environment, climate change, livelihoods, gender, and youth issues.
3. Increased commitment from stakeholders to prioritize investments in the education, health, and well-being of young people in Africa, particularly girls.
4. Identify partnerships that will support and accelerate progress towards achieving the ICPD PoA Transformative results and place adolescent health of girls at the centre of development in Africa.

Organizers: The side event is convened by the Government of Kenya, the Regional Collaboration Platform (RCP) of National Population Councils/Commissions in Africa, and the BUILD project. Supported by USAID, the BUILD project is led by the African Institute for Development Policy (AFIDEP) and includes FHI 360, Leadership for Environment and Development (LEAD), Path Foundation Philippines Inc. (PFPI), and Pan African Climate Justice Alliance (PACJA).

The organizers are committed to addressing these triple threats confronting young people in Africa and advocating for innovative and inclusive platforms for promoting access to quality education for all.

Date and Venue: The side event will be held on April 11, 2023, in Conference Room 7 (CR 7) at the UNHQ from 1:15 pm to 2:30 pm. Participants can also join remotely. The virtual login details will be shared via email prior to the event.

RSVP Link: <https://forms.gle/JRYMs7vB7QjEKGWA8>. Kindly contact Ms Lynn Mugodo at Lmugodo@kenyaun.org in case of any questions.