Overview of fertility trends since ICPD and key issues to consider for the future

United Nations, Population Division/DESA

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Objective

- Changes in total fertility and the timing of childbearing
- Changes in marriage and union formation
- Changes in contraceptive prevalence and unmet need for family planning
- Future trends
- Questions asked to EGM participants
In 1994, total fertility of the world was 3 children per woman.
African total fertility declined at slower pace than what expected from historical experience.
Declines in total fertility were not universal.


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In Africa, at high total fertility, mean age at childbearing remains high.


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In low fertility regions, childbearing postponed to older ages or concentrated in younger ages
Adolescent childbearing remains very high in parts of Africa

Source: 2013 Update for the MDG database
In Latin America and the Caribbean, though total fertility is low, adolescent childbearing is high.

Source: 2013 Update for the MDG database
In most Asian countries, adolescent childbearing declined.
Child marriage remains prevalent in parts of Africa

- Niger
- Chad
- Central African Republic
- Bangladesh
- Guinea
- Mozambique
- Mali
- Burkina Faso
- South Sudan
- Malawi

Source: MICS and DHS
Family planning: much progress still to be made

- Reproductive rights in the Programme of Action: “All couples and individuals have the basic right to decide freely and responsibly the number and spacing of their children and to have the information, education and means to do so.”
- Unmet need for family planning
  - The benchmark in ICPD+5 (to reduce unmet need by at least 50 per cent by 2005) – not reached even by 2015
  - Since 2008, contraceptive prevalence and unmet need for family planning are indicators to measure “universal access to reproductive health” in MDG5
Contraceptive prevalence increased fast in Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean

Source: Estimates and Projections of Family Planning Indicators: 2013 Revision
In Africa, increase in contraceptive prevalence continues to be slow

Contraceptive prevalence among married or in-union women (per cent)

- Northern America
- Europe
- Oceania
- Latin America and the Caribbean
- Asia
- Africa

Source: Estimates and Projections of Family Planning Indicators: 2013 Revision

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Increases in contraceptive prevalence were not universal
Provide universal access to a full range of safe and reliable family-planning methods

Source: World Contraceptive Patterns 2013
Diversity within Africa is large in total fertility levels and contraceptive prevalence.

**Source:** Estimates and Projections of Family Planning Indicators: 2013 Revision, World Population Prospects 2012

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African total fertility is projected to continue to decline at a slow pace.
Fertility changes determine the number of births and the base of population pyramids


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Fertility and momentum components are important to future population growth.

Source: Calculations based on World Population Prospects 2012
Questions

• Why African fertility decline different? And will it stay exceptional in future? What are the challenges?
• Why different pathways to low fertility? Will the differences remain?
• What are the changes in transitions to adulthood and their impact on childbearing?
• What are the key policy-relevant ways that women’s empowerment and gender equality influence childbearing?
• What are the population-level impacts of enabling women to exercise their reproductive rights?