Changing age structures and sustainable development in youthful societies

Eliya Msiyaphazi Zulu, PhD

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The World has witnessed phenomenal transition from high to low birth and death rates, shaping today and future population dynamics.

Because of its slower demographic transition Africa has a younger population that is growing faster than populations of Asia and Latin America.

Percentage distribution of the populations of Africa, Asia and Latin America by age group, 1970 to 2050

The share of people in each age group affects development needs and prospects.

Source: Eloundou, 2015
As the South Korea example shows, there is a limited time period to take advantage of a youth bulge before it turns into an old-population bulge.

Most populations in sub-Saharan Africa are dominated by children and youth, creating both challenges and opportunities for development.
Populations in Southern and Northern Africa are older than the rest of sub-Saharan Africa due to steady fertility declines.

Asia: Some countries in Asia have had slow demographic transitions than the rest of the region, exhibiting no clear youth bulges yet.
Latin America: The clear youth bulge seen in Brazil is not as distinct in Bolivia and Argentina.
Economic needs of children are enormous: about 80% of total labor income.

Labor surplus is less than 20%. Shortfall is met by relying on:
- Natural resources
- Remittances
- Other asset income.

Little remains for saving and investment.
Consumption and Labor Income by Age, S Korea 2000

Child deficit is very small in S Korea: about 35% of labor income.

Working age surplus is about 30% of total labor income.

S Korea is investing asset income.

Source: National Transfer Accounts estimates (www.ntaccounts.org) - Mason 2012
There is a strong negative association between fertility and the level of human capital spending.

Source: Mason et al. 2016
The window of opportunity for harnessing the demographic dividend opened in Botswana, Swaziland, and Namibia around 1990.

Support Ratios

Source: NTA Modelling Estimates by AFIDEP, UCT, UNFPA
The first demographic dividend has already peaked in Botswana, and it will peak in the next 10-20 years in Namibia, and Swaziland in the next decade.

Source: NTA Modelling Estimates
So, what can be done to optimize linkages between youthful populations and sustainable development?
Prioritize family planning and address all barriers of access and use of contraception to eliminate unplanned pregnancies and reduce fertility.

% of Married women using modern FP and those with unmet need for FP in Africa

- **Middle Africa**: Currently Using Modern FP: 11, Unmet Need for Modern FP: 38
- **West Africa**: Currently Using Modern FP: 9, Unmet Need for Modern FP: 32
- **East Africa**: Currently Using Modern FP: 28, Unmet Need for Modern FP: 31
- **Southern Africa**: Currently Using Modern FP: 46, Unmet Need for Modern FP: 25
- **North Africa**: Currently Using Modern FP: 56, Unmet Need for Modern FP: 17

Source: DHS Comparative Reports, 2014
Reform education systems to prioritise transferable skills, innovation, science and technology, and entrepreneurship
Embrace universal secondary education and increase access to tertiary education to unleash the power of youth in driving socioeconomic transformation.

Source: World Bank, WDI, 2017
Adopt policies of zero tolerance to teenage marriages and childbearing in regions where this remains a challenge like in West, Middle, and East Africa.

% of women aged 20-24 who got married by age 15 and 18

- Middle Africa: 42% Married by Age 18, 12% Married by Age 15
- East Africa: 41% Married by Age 18, 11% Married by Age 15
- West Africa: 42% Married by Age 18, 17% Married by Age 15
- North Africa: 17% Married by Age 18, 1% Married by Age 15
- Southern Africa: 6% Married by Age 18
Step-up on-going interventions to reduce child mortality to enhance fertility decline and improve life expectancy at birth.

Source: UN Population Prospect: 2015 Revision
Enhance capacity to generate quality jobs and livelihoods for the current work force and upcoming working-age bulge to optimize inclusive sustainable development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Unemployment Rate</th>
<th>% in Informal Sector</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mozambique</td>
<td>22.5%</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tanzania</td>
<td>11.7%</td>
<td>87.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uganda</td>
<td>6.8%</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zambia</td>
<td>7.9%</td>
<td>70%</td>
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</tbody>
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Source: National demographic dividend study reports
Efforts to enhance economic productivity of youthful populations should focus on empowering women to get into employment and other stable livelihoods outside the home.

Source: CREFAT 2016
Youthful countries should strategically mainstream demographic dividend principles in national and sub-national development plans and budgeting processes to move from rhetoric to Action.
“Leaving No One Behind” for youthful populations means prioritizing investments in people – the demographic dividend.
Thank You

Eliya.Zulu@afidep.org
www.afidep.org