

7TH APCC Abstract

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Thematic Area: Childre, Youth and Transition to Adulthood

Track 602: Demographic Dividend and Youth Development

What does your abstract address: How to harness Demographic Dividend for Sustainable Socio-Economic Development.

Title: How Nigeria can Harness its Demographic Dividend for Sustainable Development

Significance/Background

With population of 182.8 in 2014¹, Nigeria is the most populous country in Africa. At 3.2% growth rate, Nigeria will be the third most populous country globally by 2020². The population size is attributed to high TFR (5.5), low CPR (10%), and young people (31.7%) resulting in high dependency ratio³. Nigeria is currently the largest economy in Africa⁴, but poverty is still high at 69% in 2010⁵ despite being one of the fastest growing economies in the past decade. This requires adequate understanding of the double edge sword nature of the youth bulge and the need for transition from high fertility/mortality to low fertility/mortality and the resultant lower dependency ratio⁶.

Programme Intervention

Intervention is sensitization and galvanizing Nigerian policy makers and stakeholders from diverse backgrounds to develop policies and invest in critical areas that will enable Nigeria to harness its DD. It used credible data to ensure evidence-based sensitization and advocacy for better understanding of the DD concept and to effectively galvanize actions for capitalizing on the DD potential in order to attain sustainable socio-economic development. It also took into account geographic disparities and diversities in Nigeria to ensure relevant and targeted policies and interventions in the different geographic zones. Spontaneously, FP became central to the program intervention.

Methodology

Partnerships were forged with government Ministries, Departments and Agencies, academia, private sector, religious leaders, youth associations and prominent individuals led by the National Planning Commission, supported by the UN in Nigeria with UNFPA's technical leadership. Analysis of national and regional data by experts to show trends of population dynamics, feasibility and potentials for DD in Nigeria was conducted. Experts analyzed DD and Nigeria's socio-economic development and geographic variations. During national and regional seminars on "*How Nigeria Can Capitalize on Demographic Dividend*", compelling data from the analyses and moving DD documentaries were presented. High level personalities made convincing DD advocacy statements. MDA representatives shared experiences on the past, present, and desired future of their sectors with a view of identifying policy options for harnessing DD opportunities in various sectors of the economy. Thailand's success story was shared by Mr. Kosit Panpiemras while panel discussions and moderated interactions were held to deepen understanding of the issues and forge consensus on follow up actions.

¹ Population Figures and Growth Rate based on 2006 Population and Housing Census, FRN Gazette Vol. 94 January 2007 and Vol. 96 February 2009.

² NPopC 2013.

³ 2006 National Population and Housing Census

⁴ NBS 2014, Revised and Final GDP Rebased Results by Output Approach

⁵ National Bureau of Statistics (2012) Nigerian Poverty Profile Report 2010.

⁶ Olanrewaju O.; Adedoyin S; and Akanni O. L; (2014) "Economic Impact in Harnessing the Demographic Dividend in Nigeria", presentation at National Seminar on Demographic Dividend, 31st July and 13 October 2014.

Executive sessions with National and State Executives and Legislators will be held to disseminate the outcomes of these seminars and to emphasize urgency to act now. This will be followed by greater investment in relevant intersectoral, interministerial programs.

Results and Findings:

Centrality of young people in harnessing DD was phenomenal in all seminars and in study findings, showing that low fertility has direct relationship with reduced mortality, children's increased education, lower dependency ratio, economic growth and sustainable development. Data analyses showed that Nigeria's potential dividend turned positive since 2003, will peak in 2031 and 2032 before it starts to decline up to 2050.^{7 8} Timing and magnitude of DD will vary by zones/States; Southern Zones/States will benefit less in the short run with less investment, but Northern States will gain most in the long run with greater investment. The central role of young people including FP spontaneously took center stage in all seminars. Government immediately enhanced FP demand creation.

The Communiqué⁹ and Declaration¹⁰ from the seminars called on policymakers to invest in family planning, education, job creation, good governance.

Programme Implication/Lessons Learnt

As documented by the national and international experts, enhanced investment in FP has huge positive implications, with regards to potential gains of DD for Nigeria, including opportunities to: i) Leverage on the youthful population to increase the working population; ii) Reduce dependency ratio and thereby increase savings and investment because families will spend less on children's education, health and other needs; iii) Ignite innovation and creativity to enhance development in all sectors; iv) Increase average per capita due to productive utilization of increasing number of working population; v) Skills transfer including productive rural-urban and international migration, which directly impact human capital accumulation and sustainable development; vi) Contribute to poverty and inequality reductions and therefore providing the enabling environment sustainable economic growth and development.

For Nigeria to fully reap demographic dividend, policy makers must create the necessary enabling environment, since different policy environments can lead to different growth paths, irrespective of the demographic effect. These policy environments have to take into account most marginalized populations who might still not access FP services if social protection mechanisms are not implemented.

A major lesson from the programme is that an inclusive and carefully planned and delivered sensitization and advocacy programme on DD can kindle enormous public interest, and have a great potential to stimulate action and commitment to DD as a strategy of harnessing the potentials of young people for sustainable development. The DD becomes an excellent entry point to raise people's interest in FP.

⁷ Olanrewaju O; Adedoyin S; and Akanni O. L; (2014) "Economic Impact in Harnessing the Demographic Dividend in Nigeria", presentation at National Seminar on Demographic Dividend, 31st July and 13 October.

⁸ Pate, M. A; (2014) "Prospect for Reaping Demographic Dividend in Nigeria: Case study by the World Economic Forum Global Agenda Council on Population Growth", presentation at National Seminar on Demographic Dividend, 31st July and 13 October.

⁹ Communiqué of the National Seminar on 'How Nigeria can Harness the Demographic Dividend' held at Transcorp Hilton Hotel Abuja, Nigeria, 31st July 2014

¹⁰ Declaration of Northern Nigeria Seminar on Demographic Dividend in Nigeria for the North East and North West held at Asaa Pyramid Hotel, Kaduna on 13 October 2014.