



**POPULATION, POVERTY REDUCTION AND THE NEW
PARTNERSHIP FOR AFRICA'S
DEVELOPMENT (NEPAD)**

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POPULATION, POVERTY REDUCTION AND NEPAD

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Millennium Declaration, September 2000, outlines peace, security and development concerns, including in the areas of environment, human rights and governance, and recognizes Africa for its special needs. The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) is guided by the same development concerns as the Millennium Declaration; further it stresses the determination of Africans to extricate themselves and the continent from the malaise of underdevelopment and exclusion in a globalized world. NEPAD is envisaged as a long-term vision of an African-owned and African-led development programme.

As NEPAD's goals and their achievements are closely and directly linked to population factors. Therefore, improving human well-being should be at the core of development programmes. The International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) and ICPD+5 place population, reproductive health and gender as significant components of broad and integrative development processes.

UNFPA is the lead United Nations Agency for the implementation of the Programme of Action of ICPD, as well as a key contributor to the achievement of the development goals of the Millennium Declaration. Indeed, UNFPA is fully committed to be an active partner, in collaboration with ECA, in both the national poverty reduction strategies and NEPAD.

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) cannot be achieved without programme interventions that accommodate and at the same time influence the dynamics and characteristics of populations. Indeed, recent macro-level research does suggest that for the past three decades a fifth of economic growth is attributable to gains in mortality and about another fifth to reduction in fertility. While changes in the population age structure and distribution can be important for economic growth and poverty reduction, the situation facing many African countries, where age structure modification is due to the impact of HIV/AIDS in the working groups, would inhibit economic growth. This situation will require special strategies, policies and programmes to deal with the unusual demographic conditions.

In Africa, most of the MDGs may not be achieved by the year 2015. Some of the important reasons for not being able to achieve the goals are related

to the structure, the rate of growth, and population dynamics (fertility, mortality, migration), including the impact of HIV/AIDS.

Population related interventions help individuals to climb out of poverty through improving their understanding of the effects of their situation of early, frequent and late childbearing; their ability and right to control their own fertility; and their access to reproductive health knowledge and services. As poverty tends to be concentrated among women, especially households headed by elderly females, it is believed that population interventions that promote gender equity and women empowerment are justified by the fact that by improving women's education and job prospects empowers them to assume greater control over their lives and move out of poverty.

Activities in population data collection would assist monitoring and evaluating NEPAD implementation as they contribute to the development of information systems, which enable decision-makers at all levels to take informed decisions by taking into account the difficulties faced by the poor and responding more effectively to the needs of the poor.

UNFPA is part of the existing network of collaborative arrangements with other United Nations organizations and donors that could further be strengthened and directed in a focused and results-oriented manner towards NEPAD requirements. Within the inter-agency planned inputs to the NEPAD, coordinated by the ECA, UNFPA has been designated as the leading Agency of the task force on Population and Employment. Recommendations from several consultations at the regional level have identified priority areas that address directly or indirectly concerns related to population and employment, which would contribute to the achievement of human development within the poverty reduction focus of NEPAD. The identified priority areas are the following:

- Poverty reduction and sustainable development,
- HIV/AIDS,
- Population dynamics and distribution,
- Data information and communications,
- Reproductive health,
- Human resource development and employment, and
- Implementation of national population policies

In line with these priorities, recommendations given in the way forward are aimed at guiding the strengthening of institutional mechanisms and creation of national, sub-regional and regional partnerships to implement the NEPAD.

Related activities should contribute to the aspirations of the African people as embodied in the NEPAD, that is to reduce poverty and improve the quality of life of each individual woman, man and child.