

New book release

Failure is not an Option - How Africa can capture its Demographic Dividend, and why is this so important?

On June 21, 2017, Hans Groth from the World Demographic & Ageing Forum in St. Gallen, Switzerland, and John F. May from the Population Reference Bureau in Washington, D.C., USA, have published their book named “Africa’s Population: In Search of a Demographic Dividend”. The book analyzes how Africa can accelerate its economic growth by benefitting from its changing population structure. It includes contributions from renowned African and international scholars and is expected to become a reference work for international opinion leaders, policymakers, and strategic planners.

St. Gallen, Switzerland & Washington, D.C., USA, June 22nd, 2017.

There is no doubt: Africa will dominate global population dynamics in the 21st century. While public attention is still focused on Asia as a fast-growing and prospering market with currently 4.5 billion inhabitants, today’s one billion sub-Saharan Africans have significantly outpaced Asia in terms of population growth (2.6% vs. 1.1% in 2016, respectively).

The main reason for this ongoing population growth in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) is a sharp decline in infant and child mortality while birth rates have been high for years (the fertility rate per woman was 5.1 in 2013 compared to 6.7 in 1970), while infant mortality declined rapidly from 138 deaths per thousand births in 1970 to 67 in 2013. Today, one billion people or 16% of the world population live in SSA. By 2050, they will double and in 2100, 3.9 billion people or 39% of the world’s population could live in the region. This is the official forecast according to the Medium variant of the 2015 United Nations Population Projections.

A key issue today is the formulation of policies that would help Africa to replicate the conditions that have enabled East Asian countries to prosper and capture a “demographic dividend“ (DD) during the period covering the early 1960s to the 1990s. The DD is defined as an accelerated economic growth triggered by the decline in a country’s birth and death rates and the relative increase in working-age adults. However, to open this demographic window of opportunity, public policies will need to manage a rapid and significant decline in fertility in order to reduce the number of young dependents.

With the objective of enhancing the much-needed discussion on the demographic dividend in Africa, Dr. Hans Groth of the *World Demographic & Ageing Forum* (WDA Forum), a Switzerland-based think-tank has joined forces with John F. May from the *Population Reference Bureau* (PRB) in Washington, D.C., a world leader in demographic data packaging and dissemination. The outcome of this collaboration is a comprehensive book named “Africa’s Population: In Search of a Demographic Dividend”, which is based on up-to-date research on Africa’s population dynamics. Fifty renowned scholars, many of them African – have contributed to this book, which has been published on June 21, 2017.

The book's key conclusions are:

- **Africans urgently need jobs.** There will be no demographic dividend without new jobs. According to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), 18 million new jobs are needed every year till 2050. For just one year, this is equivalent to the population of the Netherlands. From now until 2050, the new jobs required are almost equivalent to the entire European population. The prerequisites to achieve this are education and training, followed by investment based on trustworthy conditions.
- **Africa needs continued health investment and improvement.** The window of opportunity for a demographic dividend only appears when fertility declines significantly and rapidly. This depends on further improvements of women's and children's rights and health outcomes. Making sure that women meet their reproductive health needs is a key priority.
- **Failure is not an option. A bad outcome would challenge both Africa and the global community.** Not succeeding in capturing a demographic dividend in Africa would lead to millions of people living in poverty and in slums. It would result in a restless young population and facilitate human suffering and social disruptions that could spill over well beyond Africa.

"Africa's Population: In Search of a Demographic Dividend" is expected to become an internationally recognized reference work for leaders, scholars, policymakers, and business planners.

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Reference of the Book

Hans Groth & John F. May "Africa's Population: In Search of a Demographic Dividend", Dordrecht: Springer Publishers, 2017 (ISBN 978-3-319-46887-7). See also:
<http://www.springer.com/us/book/9783319468877>

About the Editors



Dr. Hans Groth is the Chairman of the Board of the World Demographic & Ageing Forum (WDA Forum). A medical doctor by training, he has been working with Pfizer Inc. for 24 years, until 2013. In 2003, he was appointed “Pfizer Global Health Fellow” by UNAIDS to conduct case studies in Central Asia and Siberia in order to quantify the potential threat of HIV/AIDS/TB in that region. For the past fifteen years, Hans Groth has been studying the interaction between global demographic change, economic development, wealth, and societal stability. Among numerous publications he is the co-editor of the reference book *Population Dynamics in Muslim Countries – Assembling the Jigsaw* (Springer, 2012).



Dr. John F. May is a Visiting Scholar at the Population Reference Bureau (PRB) in Washington, D.C. and teaches demography at Georgetown University. For 15 years, he was a lead demographer at the World Bank Group. He has worked on many population projects around the world for UNFPA, UNICEF, USAID, and IUSSP. He earned his doctorate in Demography from the University of Paris-V (Sorbonne). His book *World Population Policies: Their Origin, Evolution, and Impact* (Springer, 2012) received the 2012 Global Media Award of the Population Institute for the best book on population. In March 2013, he was elected an Associate Member of the Royal Academy of Belgium.

About the World Demographic & Ageing Forum (WDA Forum)

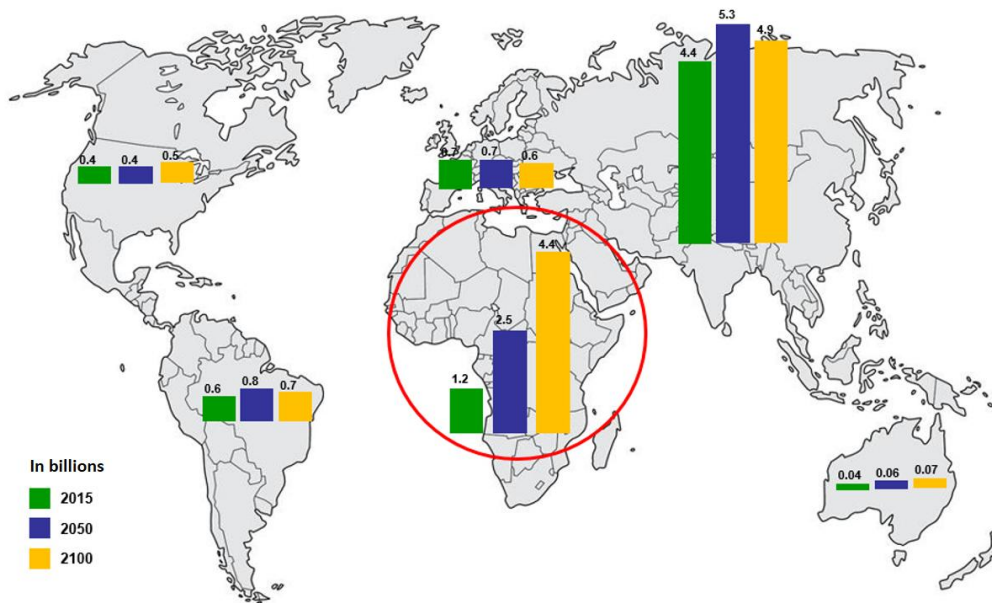
Population trends as well as ageing and generational issues are among the key challenges of the 21st century but also a source of unique opportunities. With a vision of maintaining and enhancing welfare and prosperity in the future, the WDA Forum aims to address and research these demographic issues and their impact on the social, economic, and political environment in the international context. To this end, it has defined five areas of action: work life, retirement plans, financial markets, health, and competitiveness. As a think-tank, the WDA Forum works closely with the Institute of Insurance Economics at the University of St. Gallen as well as other educational and research institutions including the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health in Cambridge, MA, Stanford University in California, and Fudan University in Shanghai. The WDA Forum was established in 2002 and is based in St. Gallen, Switzerland. For additional information, see www.wdaforum.org.

About the Population Reference Bureau (PRB)

The Population Reference Bureau (PRB) based in Washington, D.C., informs people around the world about population, health, and the environment, and empowers them to use that information to advance the well-being of current and future generations. PRB works with a variety of partners and stakeholders in the United States and globally to ensure that population-focused data and research is accessible to general and expert audiences, with the goal of informing public debate and policy decisions. For additional information, see www.prb.org.

Supporting Graph 1

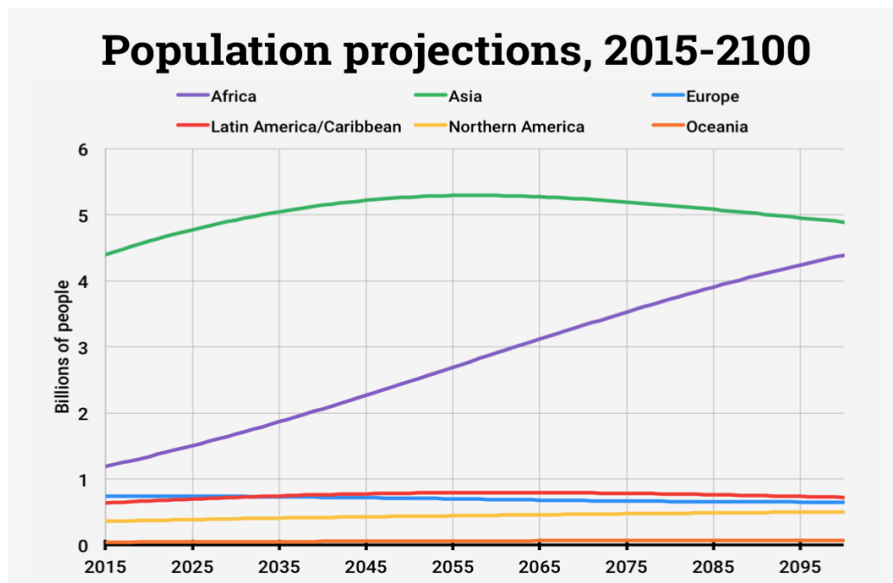
Our Next World – Population Prospects till 2100



Source: UN Population Division „World Population Prospects, the 2015 Revision“

Supporting Graph 2

Our Next World – The Forces of Size

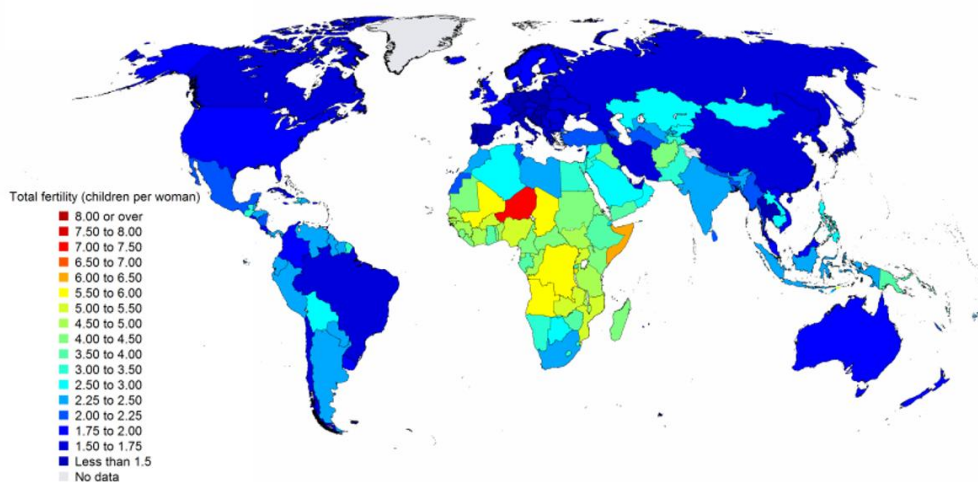


Source: UN Population Division „World Population Prospects, the 2015 Revision“

Supporting Graph 3

Our Next World – The Forces of Fertility

Total fertility, medium projection, 2015-2020



Source: UN Population Division „World Population Prospects, the 2015 Revision“