

NOVEMBER 2020

The SDGs ... and Beyond

**Africa is falling behind,
but it can catch up by
investing in women
and girls and improving
access to reproductive
health care**



**POPULATION
INSTITUTE**

populationinstitute.org

Africa needs to achieve sustainable development ... and the world needs Africa to succeed.



Twenty years ago, at the dawn of the 21st century, Africa was in a position to become a major driver—if not the primary engine—of world economic growth during the second half of the emerging century. Hopes were high that investments in health, nutrition, family planning, education, and women’s empowerment would contribute to smaller, healthier families; elevate household incomes; and yield what demographers and economists refer to as the demographic dividend:

the boost in economic growth made possible by lower dependency ratios, increased personal savings, and improved education.

Africa has made progress in many areas, but it has not lived up to its potential, and the window of opportunity afforded by a potential demographic dividend may be closing as climate change worsens, conflicts persist, food insecurity rises, and the pandemic persists.

The stakes are high for Africa ... and the world.

Barriers to Development

To realize its human and economic potential, Africa urgently needs a long-term plan for achieving sustainable development, but Africa faces formidable barriers.



Africa and the Demographic Transition

Globally, the demographic transition from high mortality and high fertility to low mortality and low fertility has accelerated over the past half century. Most countries in the world are nearing the end of that transition. Fertility rates in many nations have fallen below the replacement rate needed in the long run to sustain population growth. The major exception is sub-Saharan Africa, where women on average have nearly five children in their lifetime. Even with a continued decline in fertility, the UN currently projects that Africa's population will grow from 1 billion in 2015 to more than 2 billion in 2050 and nearly 4 billion in 2100.

Africa, not just sub-Saharan Africa, needs to improve access to contraception and reproductive health services, but gender also plays a critical role. In many parts of the continent, gender inequality, including child marriage and the low enrollment of girls in secondary school, is a major contributor to high fertility rates. Without progress on these fronts, prospects are not good for overcoming the many obstacles to sustainable development.

In the past few decades, Africa has made progress in overcoming obstacles to human and economic development, but significant challenges remain. New ones, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, must also be dealt with if the continent is to achieve its full potential. Despite the threat posed by the pandemic, progress is still possible. With a renewed commitment to sustainable development, and support from the international community, gains can still be made. However, the barriers to development are formidable and must be addressed:

Projected Population Growth: Of the additional 2.0 billion people who may be added to the global population between 2019 and 2050, more than half could be added in sub-Saharan Africa. The UN [projects](#) (medium variant) that the population of sub-Saharan Africa will increase from 1.1 billion in 2019 to 2.2 billion by 2050 and 3.8 billion by the end of the century.¹ Population growth of this magnitude would retard economic growth prospects by precluding the realization of a demographic dividend. It would also contribute to deforestation and other forms of environmental degradation. Population growth will also reduce the per capita availability of pasture, farmland, water, and other resources, exacerbating food insecurity and hindering economic development.

Gender Inequality: Gender inequality is a major impediment to economic growth in Africa. In UNDP's 2019 [Gender Inequality Index](#) (GII), sub-Saharan Africa had the highest GII score of any region in the world.² According to UNESCO's [eAtlas of Gender Inequality in Education](#), one in five children—23 percent of girls and

18 percent of boys—are out of school, the highest rate of any region in the world.³ Thirteen of the 15 countries where more than 30 percent of primary school-age children are out of school are in sub-Saharan Africa. A McKinsey Global Institute [report](#) released late last year found that progress in alleviating gender inequality has stalled in Africa, and that at the current rate of progress, it would take Africa more than 140 years to reach gender parity.⁴

Youthful Age Structure: Africa is, by far, the youngest continent. In sub-Saharan Africa, 62 percent of the population was below age 25 in 2019. The UN expects this percentage will fall only slightly to 59 percent in 2030 and decline to only 52 percent in 2050. Youthful age structures pose unique challenges. In areas where resources are scarce, large families contribute to poverty and food insecurity. In countries with a disproportionately high number of young adults in the population (a phenomenon often referred to as a “youth bulge”) high levels of youth unemployment can contribute to violence and political unrest.

Rising Temperatures: The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) warns that in sub-Saharan Africa, which has been experiencing more frequent and more intense climate extremes in recent decades, the ramifications of global warming could be profound.⁵ If the global mean temperature reaches 2° C of global warming, it will cause significant changes in the occurrence and intensity of temperature extremes in all sub-Saharan regions. The Sahel region, in particular, could see temperature hikes 1.5 times higher than the rest of the world.

Water Scarcity: The IPCC warns that, “Climate change and variability are likely to impose additional pressures on water availability, water accessibility and water demand in Africa.⁶ Even without climate change, several countries in Africa, particularly in northern Africa, will exceed the limits of their economically usable land-based water resources before 2025. About 25 percent of Africa’s population (about 200 million people) currently experience high water stress. The population at risk of increased water stress in Africa is projected to be between 75–250 million and 350–600 million people by the 2020s and 2050s, respectively.”

Chronic Food Insecurity: In 2018, the prevalence of severe food insecurity in Africa was higher than 20 percent. More than half of the population was at risk of moderate to severe food insecurity, and close to 40 percent of children under 5 years of age were undernourished. Unless climatic changes moderate and the level of conflict abates, food insecurity in affected regions will likely increase in the decades ahead.

Diseases: Measles and other communicable diseases preventable by immunization are still common in Africa, as are tuberculosis and neglected tropical diseases. In 2017, 90 percent of an estimated 219 million cases of malaria and 435,000 deaths from the disease occurred in sub-Saharan Africa, and 61 percent of the victims were children under the age of 5 years. The region most affected by the worldwide epidemic of HIV/AIDS is sub-Saharan Africa, with an estimated 26 million people living with HIV. The spread of COVID-19 may increase the mortality rates of older adults, and pandemic-related disruptions may inhibit the prevention and treatment of other diseases, particularly those affecting children.

Inadequate Schooling: The World Bank report emphasizes that access to schools is not learning and that “in many countries, the learning that one would expect to happen in schools—whether expectations are based on formal curriculums, the needs of employers, or just common sense—is often not occurring.”⁷ In 2015 in sub-Saharan Africa, 88 percent of children (202 million) of primary and lower secondary school age were not proficient in reading, and 84 percent (193 million) were not proficient in mathematics.

Lack of teachers: Many parts of Africa suffer from an acute lack of teachers and many teachers lack the necessary training and education. In 14 sub-Saharan African countries, the average grade 6 teacher performs no better on reading tests than do the highest-performing students from that grade. Researchers project that between 2015 and 2050, the number of children of primary and secondary school age, 5–19 years, will increase by close to 90 percent from 359 to 668 million and that the number of secondary school teachers will have to increase from 1 million in 2011 to 3.5 million by 2030 to achieve universal lower secondary school education.

Conflict and Poverty: The World Bank warns that “fragility and conflict pose a critical threat to the global goal of ending extreme poverty.”⁸ Globally, the number of people living in proximity to conflict has nearly doubled since 2007. In the Middle East and North Africa, 1 in 5 people now live in such conditions, and sub-Saharan Africa now accounts for the largest share of the extreme poor living in fragile and conflict-associated environments.

Terrorism: Terrorists are gaining a foothold in Western Africa and the Sahel. The UN reports that, as of June 2020, 921,000 people have been forced to flee in Burkina Faso, representing a 92 percent rise over 2019. In Mali, nearly 240,000 people have been internally displaced, while in Niger, 489,000 people have been forced to flee, including Nigerian and Malian refugees. In Nigeria this year, an estimated 7.7 million people will need emergency assistance.⁹

Forced Displacement: Last December the African Union reported that Africa now has over 25 million forcibly displaced persons, of which some 7.4 million are refugees and 17.8 million Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs).¹⁰ This summer the Africa Center for Strategic Studies (ACSS) warned that there has been a nearly five-fold increase in forcibly displaced persons since 2005.¹¹ Conflict in eight countries—South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Somalia, Sudan, Ethiopia, Nigeria, Cameroon, and the Central African Republic—account for the great bulk of the increase, but the big surge in terrorist activity now occurring in the Sahel is rapidly adding to the total. About two-thirds of Africa's displaced remain in their own country, and over 95 percent have stayed on the continent.¹²

Business Environment: Africa needs foreign investment. The African Development Bank estimates that the continent's infrastructure needs amount to \$130–170 billion a year, with a financing gap in the range \$68–\$108 billion.¹³ But many countries in Africa, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, are plagued by high levels of corruption. The Corruption Perception Index (CPI) 2019, published by Transparency International (TI), ranks sub-Saharan Africa as the world's most corrupt region and there are few signs of improvement in recent years. TI reports that sub-Saharan Africa's performance “paints a bleak picture of inaction against corruption.”¹⁴ Since 2012, several countries in Africa have significantly declined on the CPI. The World Bank's “Doing Business 2020” report indicates that many economies in sub-Saharan Africa continue to lag in terms of instituting reforms. Only two sub-Saharan African economies rank in the top 50 on the ease of doing business. Most economies in the bottom 20 are from sub-Saharan Africa.¹⁵

Water and Sanitation: Many parts of Africa lack public access to water and sanitation. Of the over 700 million people globally who lack access to safe water, more than one-third are living in sub-Saharan Africa. Nearly 40 percent of African countries currently provide basic drinking services to less than two-thirds of the population. Only six countries provide good and reliable access to basic water services: Algeria, Tunisia, Seychelles, Libya, Egypt, and Mauritius.



Resource Dependence: Though oil reserves in North Africa have been substantially depleted, sub-Saharan Africa still has abundant reserves of fossil fuels, metals, and minerals. Resource dependence has grown since the commodity boom of the 1990s and 2000s. Many countries are too reliant upon exports of these resources. More critically, an insufficient amount of export earnings is reinvested in building human and economic capital. As a consequence, economic inequality in many countries remains severe, and long-term growth prospects have failed to improve.

Industry: Efforts to expand Africa's industrial base in Africa have largely failed. The continent's share of global manufacturing has declined in recent decades. The UN's Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) reports that the contribution of Africa's manufacturing contribution to Africa's gross domestic product actually fell from 12 percent in 1980 to 11 percent in 2013, and that it has remained relatively stagnant in recent years.

Urbanization: Between now and midcentury, Africa will urbanize faster than any other continent, as unsustainable population growth in rural areas forces young people to seek employment in urban centers. Two-thirds of Africa's projected population growth will be absorbed by urban centers, adding another 950 million people to towns and cities already struggling to provide basic services, and contributing significantly to the expansion or urban slums.¹⁶

The Millennium Development Goals

At the dawn of the new millennium, hopes were high that the UN-sponsored Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) would put Africa on the fast track to human and economic development. Notable progress was made, especially with respect to primary school enrollment, but progress was uneven and Africa underperformed on several of the MDGs.



In September of 2000, at its [Millennium Summit](#), the UN formulated the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), a 15-year plan to alleviate poverty and hunger and improve health and welfare in developing countries.¹⁷ A UN [assessment of progress on the MDGs in 2015](#) found that notable gains had been made, especially in many parts of Asia, but that Africa, despite the gains that were made, fell short, as none of the MDGs had been fully reached on the continent.¹⁸ Progress on those goals most fundamental to quality of life, including good health and the elimination of poverty and hunger, was limited.

Sub-Saharan Africa has made impressive progress in many of the MDGs. However, the region faces daunting challenges, with rapid growth of population, high levels of poverty and conflicts.

– UN [Progress Report on Africa and the MDGs, 2015](#)¹⁹

MDG GOAL 1: ERADICATE EXTREME POVERTY AND HUNGER.

The number of people living in extreme poverty, defined as \$1.25 a day, declined from 1.7 billion in 1999 to 836 million in 2015. However, in sub-Saharan Africa, where poverty is most severe and estimated at 41 percent in 2015, more than 60 percent of countries had no adequate data to monitor poverty trends. In sub-Saharan Africa, the rate of undernourishment was estimated to be almost 23 percent in 2015, and although the hunger rate had fallen, the number of undernourished people increased by 44 million since 1990, reflecting, in part, the region's rapid population growth rate.

MDG GOAL 2: ACHIEVE UNIVERSAL PRIMARY EDUCATION.

Africa made substantial progress in expanding primary school attendance. In sub-Saharan Africa, the net primary enrollment rate for girls has risen substantially—from 48 percent to 77 percent between 1991 and 2015. Questions have been raised, however, about the quality of education that girls are receiving, and the failure of many girls to continue on to a secondary school.

MDG GOAL 3: PROMOTE GENDER EQUALITY AND EMPOWER WOMEN.

Africa made significant progress in increasing political representation. The proportion of seats held by women in single or lower houses of national parliament increased from 13 percent in 2000 to 23 percent in 2015. But in other areas, progress was far more limited. Despite the gains made in increasing the enrollment of girls in primary school, more than half of the countries with gender disparity in primary education in 2012 (56 percent) were in sub-Saharan Africa. Women's access to paid employment in the non-agricultural sector increased, but slowly. The most impressive progress occurred in sub-Saharan Africa: an increase of 10 percentage points over the period 1990–2015, from 24 percent to 34 percent.

MDG GOAL 4: REDUCE CHILD MORTALITY.

In 2015, sub-Saharan Africa had the world's highest child mortality rate, but also the most significant decline in child mortality since 1990, from 179 deaths per 1,000 live births to 86 in 2015. Even so, about half of the world's under-5 deaths—3 million—occurred in sub-Saharan Africa in 2015. The UN has warned that the absolute number of under-5 deaths would increase in the decades ahead, unless the progress in reducing the under-5 mortality rate is enough to outpace population growth.

MDG GOAL 5: IMPROVE MATERNAL HEALTH.

In sub-Saharan Africa, the maternal mortality ratio declined by 49 percent between 1990 and 2013 but remained more than 15 times higher than in the more developed regions. Worldwide, the proportion of women aged 15 to 49, married or in a union, who were using any method of contraception increased from 55 percent in 1990 to 64 percent in 2015. In sub-Saharan Africa, this proportion remained very low, although it increased from 13 to 28 percent between 1990 and 2015. The proportion of African women who have an unmet need for family planning was 24 percent in 2015, almost equal to the 28 percent whose needs for contraception were met.

MDG GOAL 6: COMBAT HIV/AIDS, MALARIA, AND OTHER DISEASES.

In sub-Saharan Africa, between 2000 and 2013, new HIV infections fell by approximately 49 percent, from an estimated 1.37 million cases to 0.7 million. Sub-Saharan Africa, however, remained the region most severely affected by the HIV epidemic, with 1.5 million new infections in 2013. Between 2004 and 2014, more than 900 million insecticide-treated nets were delivered to countries in sub-Saharan Africa, significantly increasing household use of mosquito nets. Malaria mortality in children under five years of age in sub-Saharan Africa fell by an estimated 69 percent between 2000 and 2015. Still, deaths from malaria were still largely concentrated in Africa.

MDG GOAL 7: ENSURE ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY.

South America and Africa experienced the largest net losses of forest area between 2000 and 2010. Northern Africa and Central Asia withdrew more than 100 percent of renewable fresh water resources. Sub-Saharan Africa continues to have the highest prevalence of slum conditions of all regions, estimated at 55 percent in 2014. The proportion of the population using an improved sanitation facility in sub-Saharan



The education of the girl child in Liberia is critical and an urgent matter. It is actually about human rights and human dignity. It is about peace and the development of the country. That's why achieving universal primary education for all girls and boys is one of the Millennium Development Goals set forth by the member states of the United Nations.

– Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, President of the Republic of Liberia. Remarks made in 2006 to mark the launching of the Liberia's Girls' Education National Policy²⁰

Africa increased from 24 percent to just 30 percent between 1990 and 2015. Also in sub-Saharan Africa, the proportion of the population with access to an improved drinking water source increased by 20 percentage points between 1990 and 2015, but many people, especially women or young girls, still needed to join long queues or walk long distances to gain access to an improved water source.

The Sustainable Development Goals

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), formally adopted by the UN General Assembly in September of 2015, offered Africa a fresh new start on developing the continent's human and economic potential.



In September of 2015, with the work on the MDGs coming to an end, the UN formulated and adopted the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), a new set of goals, targets, and objectives to be achieved by 2030 or sooner. The SDGs are broader and more ambitious than the MDGs. While they seek to improve lives, reduce inequality, and boost economic fortunes in the developing world, they also seek to make global growth more sustainable by mitigating harm to the environment, restoring vital ecosystems, and slowing the depletion of natural resources.

The SDGs constitute a global mandate. Virtually every country has committed to establishing relevant metrics and achieving, within their own borders, the targets set for each of the 17 goals. The stakes, however, are

particularly high for Africa. If Africa meets many, if not most, of the targets set forth in the SDGs, the continent will be much closer to realizing its human and economic potential.

Sustainable Development Goals



End poverty in all its forms everywhere.



Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.



End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture.



Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.



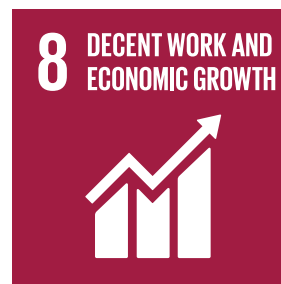
Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages.



Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy for all.



Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.



Promote sustained, inclusive, and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment, and decent work for all.



Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization, and foster innovation.



Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas, and marine resources for sustainable development.



Reduce inequality within and among countries.



Protect, restore, and promote sustainable use of ecosystems.



Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable.



Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development.



Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns.



Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development.



Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.

Progress on the SDGs at the 5-Year Mark

Five years into the established 15-year time frame for the SDGs, Africa is making progress in some areas, but it appears increasingly likely that many countries will fall short, failing to realize SDG 1 and other critical goals.



Because of incomplete data and delays in data collection and reporting, much is not known about Africa's progress in achieving the SDGs, but the available information suggests that Africa—even before the COVID-19 setbacks—was lagging behind in several important areas, including perhaps the most critical: poverty reduction. In 2018, the World Bank's annual report titled *Poverty and Shared Prosperity 2020* projected that by 2030, on the basis of historical growth rates, the number of extremely poor living in sub-Saharan Africa could be as large as 87 percent of all extremely poor in the world.²¹

In 2019, the World Bank issued an in-depth report, *Accelerating Poverty Reduction in Africa*, which carefully assessed Africa's progress in reducing severe poverty. Here are some of the key findings:²²

Outlook from Recent Poverty Trends

How has Africa performed in the more recent past—that is, since the SDG 1 target was adopted? First, it is worth noting that it has become increasingly possible to track Africa's performance on meeting SDG 1 given the increasing availability of nationally representative surveys with which to monitor well-being and poverty. However, estimates of poverty for recent years always include some GDP growth-based poverty estimates for some countries that are in between survey years. Given the assumptions that go into GDP growth-based poverty estimates, these poverty estimates can only be an indication (Ferreira, Azevedo, and Lakner 2017).²³

Unfortunately, the drop in economic performance of African economies after 2013 has not been good for poverty reduction. The latest 2015 poverty numbers reflect this decline in economic performance, with the drop in Africa's poverty rate slowing to 0.72 percentage points per year. This contrasts with the 1 percentage point decline projected in the base-case scenario described earlier. Hence, based on the latest available poverty numbers, Africa's fight against poverty was already off track in 2015, even relative to the base-case scenario.

Since then, the situation has not improved, with annual per capita GDP growth for Africa as a whole even slightly negative each year (-0.3 percent in 2018). The most recent aggregate GDP growth forecasts suggest some recovery, to 2.8 percent in 2019 and 3.3 percent in 2020 (World Bank 2019).²⁴

But this barely makes up for the decline in Africa's GDP during 2016–18. It also remains well below the 1998–2013 per capita average of 2.8 percent per year assumed in the base-case scenario. Over the past five years, progress in poverty reduction in Africa has in all likelihood been lagging well behind the base-case scenario.

The report, which was issued prior to the pandemic, offered this sobering assessment of Africa's ability to meet SDG 1 targets by 2030:²⁵

Scenarios for Poverty Reduction in Africa

So, what are the prospects for Africa's poverty reduction in the future? In setting SDG 1, it was calculated that the world could eradicate poverty by 2030 if everyone's personal income in all low- and middle-income countries continued to expand by around 4.9 percent per year throughout 2008–30 (Ravallion 2013).²⁶ Under such a scenario, the poverty rate in Africa would decline to 19.2 percent. Further simulation studies, using different assumptions, all situated Africa's poverty rate in 2030 well above the eradication target of 3 percent (Cattaneo 2017).²⁷ So, when adopting SDG 1, it was already clear that eradicating Africa's poverty would not be feasible by 2030 and that the world's poverty would increasingly concentrate in Africa.

According to the World Bank's World Poverty Clock, in 2020, 512 million Africans, 38 percent of the total population, lives on \$1.90 a day or less—the World Bank's definition of extreme poverty. That number is nearly double the estimated 278 million Africans living in severe poverty in 1990.

The Other SDGs

It's not just SDG 1; Africa is making unsatisfactory progress in achieving many of the other SDGs. In July of 2020, the UN issued an annual [progress report](#) on the SDGs titled *The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2020* that revealed several areas of concern. The UN's report did not give updates on Africa for all of the SDGs, but here are the key findings from that report:²⁸

SDG 2: ZERO HUNGER

- In sub-Saharan Africa, the percentage suffering from “severe” food insecurity rose from 18.2 percent in 2014 to 21.3 percent in 2019, while the percentage suffering from “moderate” food insecurity rose from 32.1 percent to 35.4 percent. Sub-Saharan Africa has the highest rate of food insecurity of any region in the world.

SDG 3: ENSURE HEALTHY LIVES

- Sub-Saharan Africa remains the region with the highest under-5 mortality rate: in 2018, 1 in 13 children died before reaching age 5. That is 16 times higher than the average in high-income countries. By 2018, 121 countries had already met the SDG target on under-5 mortality, and 21 countries are expected to do so by 2030. However, progress will need to accelerate in 53 countries, two-thirds of which are in sub-Saharan Africa.

- Sub-Saharan Africa is expected to see a 15 percent rise in annual births between 2019 and 2030. Assuming current coverage stays the same, an estimated 17 million births in sub-Saharan Africa will not be attended by a skilled provider in 2030.
- A steady decline has been observed worldwide in the adolescent birth rate. It fell from 48 births annually per 1,000 women aged 15 to 19 years in 2010 to 45 in 2015 and 41 in 2020, but in sub-Saharan Africa, the adolescent birth rate remains at 101 births annually per 1,000 women.

SDG 4: QUALITY EDUCATION

- Before the coronavirus crisis, the proportion of children and youth out of primary and secondary school had declined from 26 percent in 2000 to 19 percent in 2010 and 17 percent in 2018. Despite some progress, 258 million children and youth were still out of school in 2018, of which three quarters lived in sub-Saharan Africa and Southern Asia.
- Globally, around 5.5 million more girls than boys of primary school age were out of school in 2018. The disadvantage girls face is more prominent in sub-Saharan Africa, where there were 128 girls for every 100 boys out of primary school that year.

Reducing Maternal and Child Mortality

It's not just fertility. Access to reproductive health care, including family planning and safe abortion services, is a key to preventing the death and illness caused by unsafe abortion or poor care in childbirth. The 44 million annual births in Africa are more dangerous than elsewhere in the world, in part because more than [40 percent of births](#) in sub-Saharan Africa are not attended by skilled health personnel.²⁹

According to the Guttmacher Institute's *Adding it Up: Investing in Contraception and Maternal and Newborn Health, 2017—Estimation Methodology* report, the lifetime risk of dying in childbirth in Africa is about 1 in 36, compared to about 1 in 7,300 in developed countries. Although Africa represents only 19 percent of women of reproductive age, the 211,000 deaths in childbirth, miscarriage, and abortion that the continent experiences each year are two-thirds of all such deaths worldwide. The 1.1 million annual newborn deaths in Africa are 42 percent of all newborn deaths worldwide.³⁰

SDG 5: GENDER EQUALITY

- Marriage before the age of 18 is a human rights violation, mostly affecting girls, and can lead to a lifetime of disadvantage and deprivation. ... Today, the risk of child marriage is highest in sub-Saharan Africa, where more than one in three women (34.5 percent) between the ages of 20 and 24 were married before the age of 18.
- FGM/C is another blatant violation of human rights. At least 200 million girls and women have been subjected to FGM/C in 31 countries where the practice is concentrated; half of these countries are in Western Africa.
- In 2019, women accounted for 41 percent of managerial positions in South-Eastern Asia and 40 percent in Northern America, but only 8 percent in Northern Africa.

SDG 6: CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION

- Handwashing is one of the cheapest, easiest and most effective ways to prevent the spread of [diseases and] the coronavirus. But in 2017, only 60 percent of people had a basic handwashing facility with soap and water at home. ... The regional disparities are stark: in sub-Saharan Africa, 75 percent of the population (767 million people) lacked basic handwashing facilities.

SDG 7: AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY

- The proportion of the global population with access to electricity increased from 83 percent in 2010 to 90 percent in 2018. Still, 789 million people—85 percent in rural areas—lacked electricity in 2018. ... The deficit is increasingly concentrated in sub-Saharan Africa, affecting about 548 million people, or 53 percent of the population.

SDG 8: DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

- The global average output per worker—a measure of labor productivity—has steadily increased since 2000, with growth interrupted only briefly during the economic downturn of 2009. The growth rate in

labor productivity reached 1.6 percent in 2018 and 1.4 percent in 2019. In sub-Saharan Africa, however, output per worker fell 0.4 percent in 2018 and 0.28 percent in 2019.

- In 2019, the global unemployment rate stood at 5 percent. Joblessness that year was particularly pervasive in Northern Africa and Western Asia, where 11 percent of the labor force were unemployed, and the female unemployment rate was 9 percentage points higher than that of males.

SDG 10: REDUCED INEQUALITIES

- Progress in shared prosperity has been strongest in Eastern and South-Eastern Asia. ... Growth in sub-Saharan African countries has been more limited, although comparison is challenging due to limited data (available for 15 countries only).
- In 2017, the labor income of the world's workers represented an estimated 51 percent of global GDP. The labor income of workers in Northern Africa and Western Asia, however, accounted for a little over a third of the region's output.

SDG 11: SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES

- The proportion of the urban population living in slums rose to 24 percent in 2018, or over 1 billion people, due to increases in Northern Africa and Western Asia and sub-Saharan Africa. In Northern Africa and Western Asia the percentage declined by 1.0 percent from 2000 to 2014, but rose 3.6 percent from 2014 to 2018. In sub-Saharan Africa, there was a 9.0 percent decline from 2000 to 2014, but an increase of 0.2 percent from 2014-2018.

SDG 16: PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS

- The global rate of intentional homicides has declined slowly—from 6.8 per 100,000 population in 2000 to 5.9 in 2015 and 5.8 in 2018. More than one-third (36 percent) of homicide victims live in sub-Saharan Africa, where the number of homicides is projected to increase nearly 5 percent between 2019 and 2030.

COVID-19: A Setback For the SDGs

While Africa, so far, has escaped the worst of the pandemic, COVID-19 constitutes a major setback for its hopes of achieving many of the SDGs.



When the pandemic spread to Africa in early 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) warned that the novel coronavirus could infect up to 44 million people and kill up to 190,000 in the first 12 months of the epidemic, depending on the success of containment measures.³¹ An earlier United Nations report projected that between 100 million and 300 million could ultimately be infected on the continent, with a death toll in the millions. In addition, economic contraction could push 27 million people into extreme poverty, reversing hard-won development gains.³²

Fortunately, African governments, with assistance from WHO and other international partners, have responded aggressively to the threat, and the number of confirmed cases and deaths did not rise nearly as fast as was initially feared. Africa's prior experience in dealing with epidemics, including Ebola, proved valuable. Stay-at-home restrictions have shown promise in curbing the spread, and Africa's youthful age structure has helped to reduce the death toll. As of September 1, the number of confirmed cases in Africa exceeded 1.2 million cases, just 5 percent of the global total. Nearly 30,000 deaths had been reported in Africa as of September 1, but that was a tiny fraction of the global death toll of 844,601.³³

Despite the early success, Africa must continue its vigilance. Overcrowded urban slums and weak health systems make containment and treatment particularly difficult in many parts of the continent, and until a vaccine is widely available in Africa, COVID-19 could "simmer" and spark a resurgence of the pandemic.

ECONOMIC IMPACT

Despite the initial success in containing COVID-19, the pandemic has come at a heavy economic cost. In June, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) projected that Africa's GDP would shrink by 3.2 percent in 2020, wiping out the 3.1 percent gain recorded in 2019.³⁴ South Africa's economy, in particular, has suffered major damage. In the second quarter, its economy shrunk by 50 percent on an annualized basis, and the IMF projects that its GDP will fall by 8.0 percent in 2020.³⁵ The African Development Bank projects that cumulative losses in gross domestic product (GDP) across the continent could range between \$173.1 billion and \$236.7 billion in 2020 and 2021, and that the debt burden of African countries could jump from 60 percent to 70 percent of gross domestic product, heightening

an emerging debt crisis. The Bank estimates that \$150 billion in additional financing may be required to cushion the impact of the pandemic.

GENDER EQUALITY AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

COVID-19 restrictions and related disruptions have also inflicted significant collateral damage on health outcomes in Africa, with girls and women suffering some of the worst effects. In the spring of 2020, UNFPA issued a special report highlighting the potential impacts upon gender equality and reproductive health globally, with much of the impact being felt in Africa. The report warned of:³⁶

- **A Rise in Child Marriage:** An expected 13 million child marriages could take place that otherwise would not have occurred between 2020 and 2030.
- **A Surge in Gender-Based Violence (GBV):** The pandemic could cause a one-third reduction in progress toward ending GBV by 2030 with an estimated 31 million additional GBV cases occurring if the lockdown continues for 6 months.
- **A Spike in FGM/C:** An anticipated one-third reduction in the progress toward ending the practice of FGM/C by 2030 can be expected, resulting in an additional 2 million FGM/C cases that would have otherwise been averted.
- **Loss of Access to Contraceptives:** 47 million women might be unable to access modern contraceptives if the lockdown continues for 6 months.
- **Increase in Unwanted Pregnancy:** 7 million unwanted pregnancies could occur as a consequence of major service disruptions due to COVID-19.



The Guttmacher Institute warned in its [research](#) titled *Estimates of the Potential Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Sexual and Reproductive Health In Low- and Middle-Income Countries* of further impacts girls and women in Africa could face:³⁷

- **An Uptick in Maternal and Infant Mortality:** With a 10 percent decline in pregnancy-related and newborn health care, an additional 28,000 maternal deaths and 168,000 newborn deaths could occur.
- **A Jump in Unsafe Abortions:** As lockdowns force abortion clinics to close or countries classify abortion as nonessential, a reduction in safe abortions could occur. If 10 percent of safe abortions become unsafe, 3 million additional unsafe abortions can be expected, resulting in an additional 1,000 maternal deaths.
- **An Increase in Major Complications during Birth:** An estimated 1.7 million women who give birth and 2.5 million newborns could experience major complications and not receive the needed care as a result of a 10 percent decline in pregnancy-related and newborn health care.

DISEASE

COVID-19 and pandemic-related disruptions are also having an impact on Africa's ongoing struggle against communicable and infectious diseases. The pandemic is diverting sorely needed funding and resources from existing health needs, including immunizations against childhood diseases and the detection and treatment of tuberculosis. A resurgence of measles and other diseases appears inevitable, as major immunization campaigns have been disrupted or suspended. Henrietta Fore, UNICEF Executive Director, recently [warned](#) that, "Without urgent investments to restart disrupted health systems and services, millions of children under five, especially newborns, could die."³⁸

HIV/AIDS

[According](#) to the director of UNAIDS, "We could see the progress made in fighting AIDS reversed by 10 years."³⁹ If HIV services are severely disrupted for six months, AIDS-related deaths could double in sub-Saharan Africa in a year, leading to an [additional 500,000 deaths](#).⁴⁰ Mother-to-child transmission could more than double in some countries. Gender-based violence, which increases with the stress of lockdown, is likely to lead to a new surge in HIV infections, particularly in young women.

EDUCATION

COVID-19 restrictions, along with an upsurge in terrorist attacks and other acts of violence, have also set back progress on education. The widespread closure of classrooms in Africa, which commenced in March of 2020, could have a lasting detrimental effect on education if schools are not reopened by the fall of 2020. This summer, WHO conducted a [survey](#) of 39 countries in sub-Saharan Africa and found that schools are closed in 14 countries, partially open in 19, and fully open in only six countries.⁴¹ The World Bank [estimates](#) the long-term social and economic impact of shutdowns in sub-Saharan Africa could reduce the lifetime earnings of a child by \$4,500.⁴²

Realizing the Demographic Dividend

If Africa is to achieve sustainable development, it will have to get the benefit of a demographic dividend. That means investing more in women and girls and improving access to family planning and reproductive health care.





Africa has a long list of development needs, but none more important to sustainable development than the need to educate girls, empower women, and improve access to contraception. There are several reasons for this, but the biggest is the demographic dividend.

What is the demographic dividend?

The demographic dividend is an economic boost that can result from changes to a country's age structure as it shifts from high death and birth rates to low death and birth rates. When a country's total fertility rate (the average number of children per woman) drops, average family size declines. In economic terms, this decreases the number of child dependents relative to the working-age population, freeing up personal savings needed to generate economic growth. In human terms it means that parents, communities, and governments are able to devote proportionately more resources to educating and nurturing children, girls as well as boys. It also means that families are able to invest more in their farms and small businesses.

A sharp decline in a developing country's fertility rate can bolster its economic growth rate, but only if the necessary improvements in health and education are made and sufficient employment opportunities are created. If those occur, the country as a whole will realize its demographic dividend, benefitting from

- A better educated, more productive workforce;
- Rising household incomes;
- Expanded investments in farms and business enterprises; and
- Diminished poverty.

The Demographic Dividend: A Common Misconception

The demographic dividend is commonly misconstrued. Some believe that a large youth population, by itself, can produce a demographic dividend. Youth can be a great force for economic growth, but only if jobs are available and youth have the education and skills needed to fill those jobs. The first step toward the demographic dividend is not a large youth population. Rather, it is the demographic transition to smaller families, and even that is not sufficient if children do not receive the nutrition, education, and training they need to become highly productive workers and entrepreneurs.

Why is the demographic dividend so important to Africa?

Many countries have boosted their economies by realizing a demographic dividend. It's not just the Asian tigers (South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Singapore). Smaller families and investments in education, along with improved health and nutrition, have jumpstarted economic growth in many parts of Asia and, to a lesser extent, Latin America. Research indicates that with the exception of a few oil-rich nations, no country has lifted itself out of poverty without first reducing its fertility rate.

While some countries in Africa are completing the demographic transition to lower death and birth rates, most countries still have a long way to go. Projected population growth in many African countries, particularly those suffering from climate change or prolonged conflict, is unsustainable. Many farms are no longer able to support large families, and many cities are not able to provide steady employment or basic services to young people migrating from rural areas. If a substantial demographic dividend is not realized, severe poverty in the poorest countries may persist for decades to come; the number of hungry and un nourished children will continue to rise; millions of people could be displaced; and, once again, women and girls will bear the brunt of the resulting hardship.

Large families in rural areas—in Africa and elsewhere—made economic sense when resources were more abundant, but when productive farmland is in short-supply and recurring droughts lower crop yields and destroy pastures, large families become uneconomical. Young people in many rural parts of Africa are forced to seek employment in urban areas that often have a small industrial base and an acute shortage of formal-sector jobs. Migrants from rural communities end up working in the “informal” jobs sector. Without a decent wage or benefits, workers are forced to live in crowded substandard housing, where access to fresh water and sanitation are severely limited.



Africa's Demographic Dividend

If fertility rates decline fast enough, Africa could realize a substantial demographic dividend. By some estimates economic growth in sub-Saharan Africa could be boosted by more than \$500 billion a year. That's equal to about one-third of the region's current GDP for the next 30 years.⁴³

Unless more resources are devoted to educating girls, empowering women, and improving access to contraception, Africa's hopes of achieving sustainable development will ultimately fade, as will its hopes of building an industrial base and a large middle class. Poverty and hunger will not be eliminated—they will persist, and so will conflict and political instability. Yes, Africa may have more pressing concerns—including terrorism and COVID-19—but short-term victories over these adversaries and others will not lead to long-term success if the fundamentals are neglected.

Accelerate the Fertility Transition

Rapid population growth in Africa—averaging 2.7 percent per year—remains a defining feature that holds poverty reduction back for many countries and households on the continent. It elevates the fiscal needs for social services, which only pay off much later. High fertility has also been an important direct contributor to Africa's explosive urban growth, making it hard for urban centers to keep up the infrastructure base to remain productive and create employment. And high fertility limits women's income earning opportunities.

Accelerating fertility reduction is therefore an important entry point for accelerating Africa's poverty reduction. A 1 percent fall in the dependency rate is associated with a 0.75 percentage point fall in headcount poverty (Cruz and Ahmed 2016).⁴⁴ Investments in family planning programs can play an important cost-effective complementary role, in addition to female education, programs offering life skills for women and girls, addressing social norms around gender through social and behavior change communication, and reducing child marriage.

– World Bank, *Accelerating Poverty Reduction in Africa* (2018)⁴⁵

Nothing is more fundamental than ensuring that every child—not just boys—are healthy, well-educated, and allowed to live up to their human potential. Yes, Africa needs more economic infrastructure—more harbors, more roads, more electrical plants—but physical capital is no substitute for human capital. History has shown that a skilled, educated labor force attracts investors. Schools must come before factories and new enterprises. There are no shortcuts. The bedrock of a competitive economy is its human capital.

Africa has an abundance of oil, metal, and mineral resources, but all too often the revenues derived from their extraction have not been reinvested in Africa's most valuable asset: its potential human capital. Long before this century is over, Africa will have largely exhausted its oil and mineral wealth. If, by that time, Africa has failed to realize a demographic dividend, many countries on the continent will not have a viable economy or a strategy for achieving it. Poverty, hunger, and instability will persist, and the world—not just Africa—will be poorer for it.

The demographic window is still open. Africa can still realize a demographic dividend, and it could be transformative in both human and ecological terms. By the end of this century, Africa could be the world's growth engine. The demographic dividend, however, must be earned. The U.S. and other donor countries can assist—and it is in their interest to do so—but African governments must do their part. Without better governance—*without a greater commitment from African leaders to boosting education, advancing gender equality, and improving access to contraception*—the demographic dividend will not be realized.



The [demographic dividend] is not a given but must be earned through adequate and timely population dynamics as well as socioeconomic and good governance policies. [Sub-Saharan African] countries will also need to foster human capital formation, through enhanced efforts in the areas of education, health, and women's status as well as the promotion of equal opportunities for men and women. Special attention will also be needed for the youth, in particular with respect to job creation, which will require a favorable political and economic environment. The tall order calls for a true vision, a strong determination, and proactive interventions on the part of African leaders and their development partners.

– Hans Groth and John F. May, Introduction to *Africa's Population: In Search of a Demographic Dividend*⁴⁶

Beyond the Demographic Dividend

Improving access to contraception and investing in women and girls helps to realize a demographic dividend, but by lowering fertility and promoting gender equality they also boost food security, make development more sustainable, and increase the resilience of families and their communities.



GENDER EQUALITY

Africa receives—and needs—several forms of foreign assistance, but none are as critical as those that empower women and girls. Quite simply, if Africa is to overcome the many obstacles to achieving its full human and economic potential, there is no substitute for realizing the aspirations of women and girls. Unless they are empowered, and the barriers to their success removed, there is no credible path to sustainable development. Gender equality must be the cornerstone of Africa's future.

The realization of gender equality in Africa will require a multipronged strategy. It's not just the enrollment of girls in primary and secondary schools, as critical as that is. Africa has an acute shortage of teachers. Unless more qualified instructors are recruited and trained, advances in education will be limited. Child marriage will also have to be addressed. Nearly 40 percent of girls in Africa are married before they turn 18 years of age.

Girl brides are not just robbed of their rights and their childhoods; they are often taken out of school early, significantly reducing their lifetime earning capacity. Furthermore, child marriage contributes to high rates of teen pregnancy and the perpetuation of large family norms. Women must be permitted and encouraged to obtain the education and training needed to boost their economic prospects as workers and entrepreneurs. Laws and practices that prevent women from owning property, including discriminatory lending practices, must be abolished. Most importantly, behavior change strategies are needed to end the gender norms and behaviors that perpetuate the low status of woman and contribute to gender-based violence. Radio serial dramas, community-based interventions, and other behavior change communication strategies can create positive gender norms that allow and encourage women and girls to realize their full potential.

“I fear that we will divert from the path that we were on toward achieving the sustainable development goals, and in particular, achieving gender equality. All members of the United Nations agreed to and signed this agenda in 2015. It was my hope that in partnership with the developed world, Africa would achieve gender equality by 2030. Why is common sense not so common, that if we ignore women, half of our human resource, our world's development will be stunted.”

– Joyce Banda, former President of Malawi, [Landon Lecture](#), 2018⁴⁷



The World Bank on the Importance of Gender Equality

Gender equality as an intrinsic objective is enshrined in international conventions and is expressed in United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goal 5 (SDG 5): “Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.” It is an objective in its own right. Here the focus is on how gender inequalities affect growth and poverty reduction. Conceptually, reducing gender gaps in access to schooling will raise the average level of human capital in the economy and increase the prospects for long-run growth—part and parcel of the broader argument that human capital is important for growth. However, reducing gender gaps in education can also lead to externalities that further enhance economic performance. Promoting female education will reduce fertility, leading to the “demographic dividend” discussed earlier. Similarly, raising a mother’s educational attainment is likely to reduce the mortality and morbidity of her children and to encourage their schooling. And there may be more profound indirect effects of reducing the gender gap in education. It could well raise the status of women in households, hence increasing their bargaining power at home, which could have far-reaching favorable growth effects. Women are likely to encourage higher savings and (although more speculatively) to be less prone to corruption and nepotism.

– World Bank, *Accelerating Poverty Reduction in Africa* (2018)⁴⁸

THE GENDER DIVIDEND

Progress in achieving gender equality and lowering fertility can make a major contribution to the realization of the demographic dividend in Africa, but the “gender dividend” is larger than the demographic dividend. If Africa is to achieve its full potential it must also increase food security, ease environmental pressures, mitigate political instability, provide for the needs of displaced populations, adapt to climatic changes, and increase the resilience of families and communities in face of conflicts, epidemics, and other adversity. Voluntary, rights-based family planning programs and investments in girls and women—by lowering fertility and promoting gender equality—do just that.

By educating girls, empowering women, and improving access to contraception, fertility rates will fall faster than currently projected, and that will:

- **Reduce pressure on water, land, and other resources.** Sustainable development requires a sustainable resource base. Africa is resource-stressed and ecologically fragile. In 2007, the Economic Commission for Africa published a report on drought and desertification, which estimated that two-thirds of African land was already degraded to

some degree, and land degradation affected about 65 percent of the population. When that report was written, Africa’s population was 939 million. Today it is 1.34 billion, and by 2050, the UN projects that Africa’s population will reach 2.49 billion.⁴⁹

- **Make families and communities more resilient.** In 2018, the World Bank issued a report, *Groundswell: Preparing for Internal Climate Migration*, which estimated that, by mid-century, as many as 86 million people in sub-Saharan Africa could be forced to migrate internally in response to climatic changes, whether it’s rising seas and the resulting salt water intrusion in North Africa, deforestation in Central Africa, drought in the Horn of Africa, or rising temperatures in East Africa.⁵⁰ Smaller, healthier, and well-educated families are better able to respond to the hardships and dislocation brought about by conflict, climatic changes, and natural disasters.
- **Improve living conditions in some of the world’s fastest growing urban areas.** Urbanization can be a boon, as it allows vital services, including education, safe water, and health care, to



be provided far more efficiently. But when cities are growing too fast, as they are today in many parts of Africa, those benefits are not realized. Those who are forced to live in informal urban settlements often lack access to basic services and are forced to work in the informal economy without decent wages, adequate safety, or benefits. Educating girls, empowering women, and improving access to contraception will reduce population pressures, making urbanization in Africa more manageable and helping cities to realize the potential benefits of urbanization.

▪ **Mitigate the risk of political unrest and conflict.**

Research on age demographics have shown that the youthful age structures generated by high fertility rates are associated with a higher risk of political instability. Several studies have shown that countries with a disproportionately high number of young adults relative to the older adult population—a phenomenon known as a “youth bulge”—are significantly more prone to political unrest and civil conflict. In countries or regions where youth underemployment is high, resources are scarce, or economic opportunities are limited, terrorist groups can exploit the resulting discontent. In addition, population pressures in some

areas, like Africa’s Sahel, can increase tensions between herders and farmers, especially during times of drought.

- **Enhance food security.** Persistent conflict, oil degradation, desertification, and climatic changes are imperiling Africa’s food security. Even before the pandemic or the locust swarms that hit East Africa in 2020, undernourishment in Africa was estimated to affect about 1 out of 5 people. Data from 2018, which probably underestimate the current precariousness of nutrition in Africa, indicated that the prevalence of food insecurity in Middle Africa was 26.5 percent and 30.8 percent in East Africa. Africa is already dependent on imports for nearly 30 percent of its cereal grains. Its future, however, looks even more food insecure. A report published last summer by World Resources Institute warned that “Given projected growth in population and food demand, sub-Saharan Africa would need to more than triple its cereal yields by 2050 relative to 2010 to avoid expanding cereal cropland area.”⁵¹ But Africa is increasingly short of cropland and any significant expansion would endanger Africa’s remaining forestland.

CONCLUSION

Africa's Unrealized Potential

No continent, no country, no community will ever realize its full potential by ignoring the needs, aspirations, and potential of half its citizens. That's true everywhere today, but it is especially true in Africa, where gender inequality is one of the greatest impediments to human and economic development.





With few exceptions, most countries on the continent will fail to achieve, by 2030, the more ambitious goals and targets set forth in the SDGs, but economic and human development is more akin to a marathon than a sprint. The year 2030 may be the finish line for the SDGs, but there is no finish line for sustainable development. It is an enduring challenge for Africa and the world.

Despite the obstacles to growth and development, including climate change, Africa can make major gains in the decades ahead. It can be done by empowering women and girls, lowering fertility, and reaping, as a result, the demographic dividend and other benefits, including greater resilience and sustainability.

While Africa may have more urgent needs that must be addressed, it cannot afford to ignore the needs of women and girls, including improved access to contraception. In the long run, Africa's success depends upon the success of women and girls. The two are indivisible.

The gender dividend must be realized, and if it is, severe poverty and hunger can be substantially diminished, if not eliminated altogether. With investments in

human capital, including the education of girls, labor productivity can be boosted, and African can attract the capital needed to build infrastructure and a solid industrial base. If that happens, household incomes will rise and a growing middle class will be created. In the second half of this century, Africa can become an economic growth engine for the world.

There are, however, no shortcuts to human and economic development. Sustainable development in Africa, as elsewhere, starts with the realization of gender equality. No country has realized, or can realize, its full economic potential without it. Girls, not just boys, must receive a quality education. Women must be empowered, economically and politically, and that requires that women be able to exercise their reproductive freedom.

ENDNOTES

- 1 Department of Economic and Social Affairs Population Dynamics. (2019). *World Population Prospects 2019*. United Nations. Retrieved from: <https://population.un.org/wpp/Download/Standard/Population/>.
- 2 United Nations Development Programme. (2019). *Gender Inequality Index (GII) | Human Development Reports*. UNDP. Retrieved from: <http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/gender-inequality-index-gii>.
- 3 UNESCO. (2019). *eAtlas of Gender Inequality in Education*. Retrieved October 08, 2020, from <https://www.tellmaps.com/uis/gender/?lang=en>.
- 4 McKinsey Global Institute. (2019, November). *The power of parity: Advancing women's equality in Africa*. McKinsey & Company. Retrieved from: <https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/gender-equality/the-power-of-parity-advancing-womens-equality-in-africa>.
- 5 Shepard, D. (2019, March 4). *Global warming: severe consequences for Africa*. Africa Renewal. Retrieved from: <https://www.un.org/africarenewal/magazine/december-2018-march-2019/global-warming-severe-consequences-africa>.
- 6 Boko, M. (2007). Africa. In I. Niang, A. Nyong, C. Vogel, A. Githeko, M. Medany, B. Osman-Elasha, R. Tabo, & P. Yanda (Eds.), *Climate Change 2007: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability* (pp. 433–467). Cambridge University Press. Retrieved from: <https://www.ipcc.ch/site/assets/uploads/2018/02/ar4-wg2-chapter9-1.pdf>.
- 7 World Bank. (2018c). *World Development Report 2018: Learning to realize education's promise*. Retrieved from: <https://www.worldbank.org/en/publication/wdr2018>.
- 8 Corral, P., Irwin, A., Krishnan, N., Mahler, D. G., & Vishwanath, T. (2020). *Fragility and Conflict: On the Front Lines of the Fight Against Poverty*. The World Bank.
- 9 UN News. (2020, July 9). Intercommunal violence, terrorist attacks inflame tensions in West Africa. Retrieved October 27, 2020, from <https://news.un.org/en/story/2020/07/1068071>.
- 10 *Satisfactory conditions of safety and dignity for forcibly displaced persons dominate Kampala meetings.* | African Union. (2019, December 3). African Union. Retrieved from: <https://au.int/en/pressreleases/20191203/satisfactory-conditions-safety-and-dignity-forcibly-displaced-persons>.
- 11 Williams, W. (2019, October 17). *Shifting Borders: Africa's Displacement Crisis and Its Security Implications*. Africa Center for Strategic Studies. Retrieved from: <https://africacenter.org/publication/shifting-borders-africas-displacement-crisis-and-its-security-implications/>.
- 12 *ibid.*
- 13 African Development Bank Group. (2018). Africa's Infrastructure: Great Potential But Little Impact On Inclusive Growth. In *African Economic Outlook 2018* (pp. 63–94). Retrieved from: https://www.afdb.org/fileadmin/uploads/afdb/Documents/Publications/2018AEO/African_Economic_Outlook_2018_-_EN_Chapter3.pdf.
- 14 Transparency International. (2020). *Corruption Perception Index*. Retrieved from: <https://www.transparency.org/en/cpi#>.
- 15 World Bank. (2020). *Doing Business 2020*. World Bank Publications. <https://doi.org/10.1596/978-1-4648-1440-2>.
- 16 OECD & SAWA Club. (2020). *West African Studies Africa's Urbanisation Dynamics 2020 Africapolis, Mapping a New Urban Geography*. OECD. <https://doi.org/10.1787/b6bccb81-en>.
- 17 United Nations. (2000, September). Millennium Summit (6-8 September 2000). Retrieved October 27, 2020, from https://www.un.org/en/events/pastevents/millennium_summit.shtml.
- 18 United Nations. (2015). *The Millennium Development Goals Report*. Retrieved from: <https://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/news.shtml>.
- 19 *ibid.*
- 20 Slavin, P. (2006, April 18). *Liberia launches Girls' Education National Policy with support from UNICEF*. UNICEF. Retrieved from: https://www.unicef.org/doublepublish/liberia_33458.html.
- 21 World Bank. (2018). *Poverty and Shared Prosperity 2018*. Retrieved from: <https://www.worldbank.org/en/publication/poverty-and-shared-prosperity>.
- 22 Beegle, K., & Christiaensen, L. (2019). *Accelerating Poverty Reduction in Africa*. World Bank. Retrieved from: <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/32354>.
- 23 Ferreira, Francisco, Joao-Pedro Azevedo, and Christoph Lakner. (2017). "Feeding the Craving for Precision on Global Poverty." Let's Talk Development (blog), December 11. <https://blogs.worldbank.org/developmenttalk/feeding-craving-precision-global-poverty>.
- 24 World Bank. (2019). *Global Economic Prospects, January 2019: Darkening Skies*. Washington, DC: World Bank. World Bank. <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/31066>.
- 25 *ibid.*
- 26 Ravallion, Martin. (2013). "How Long Will It Take to Lift One Billion People Out of Poverty?" *World Bank Research Observer* 28 (2): 139–58.
- 27 Cattaneo, Umberto. 2017. "Poverty Headcount Projections in sub-Saharan Africa." Background note prepared for Accelerating Poverty Reduction in Africa, World Bank, Washington, DC.
- 28 United Nations. (2020). *The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2020*. Retrieved from: <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2020/>.
- 29 *ibid.*
- 30 Darroch JE. (2018) *Adding It Up: Investing in Contraception and Maternal and Newborn Health, 2017—Estimation Methodology*. New York: Guttmacher Institute. <https://www.guttmacher.org/report/adding-it-up-investing-in-contraception-maternal-newborn-health-2017-methodology#>.

- 31 Powell, B. A. (2020, May 7). *WHO: 44 Million Africans at Risk for COVID-19*. Voice of America. Retrieved from: <https://www.voanews.com/covid-19-pandemic/who-44-million-africans-risk-covid-19>.
- 32 UNECA. (2020, April 17). *ECA Report: COVID-19 in Africa: Protecting Lives and Economies*. Africa Renewal. Retrieved from: <https://www.un.org/africarenewal/news/coronavirus/eca-report-covid-19-africa-protecting-lives-and-economies>.
- 33 *Outbreak Brief 33: COVID-19 Pandemic – 1 September 2020*. (2020, September 1). Africa CDC. Retrieved from: <https://africacdc.org/download/outbreak-brief-33-covid-19-pandemic-1-september-2020/>.
- 34 International Monetary Fund. (2020, June). *World Economic Outlook Update*. Retrieved from: <https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/WEO/Issues/2020/06/24/WEOUpdateJune2020>.
- 35 Nagarajan, S. (2020, September 8). *South Africa's GDP plunges over 50% as COVID-19's "punch in the gut" triggers the steepest decline since 1960*. Markets Insider. Retrieved from: <https://markets.businessinsider.com/news/stocks/south-africa-gdp-plunges-in-steepest-decline-1960-2020-9-1029570054>.
- 36 UNFPA, Avenir Health, Johns Hopkins University, & Victoria University. (2020, April). *Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Family Planning and Ending Gender-based Violence, Female Genital Mutilation and Child Marriage*. UNFPA.
- 37 Riley, T., Sully, E., Ahmed, Z., & Biddlecom, A. (2020, June 09). *Estimates of the Potential Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Sexual and Reproductive Health in Low- and Middle-Income Countries*. Retrieved October 27, 2020, from <https://www.guttmacher.org/journals/ipshr/2020/04/estimates-potential-impact-covid-19-pandemic-sexual-and-reproductive-health>.
- 38 AfricaNews. (2020, September 9). *Coronavirus - Africa: COVID-19 could reverse decades of progress toward eliminating preventable child deaths, agencies warn*. Retrieved from: <https://www.africanews.com/2020/09/09/coronavirus-africa-covid-19-could-reverse-decades-of-progress-toward-eliminating-preventable-child-deaths-agencies-warn/>.
- 39 Musau, Z. (2020, May 28). *UNAIDS Chief Winnie Byanyima: COVID-19 could roll back gains made in fighting HIV in Africa* | Africa Renewal. Retrieved October 27, 2020, from <https://www.un.org/africarenewal/web-features/coronavirus/covid-19-could-roll-back-gains-made-fighting-hiv-and-aids>.
- 40 UNAIDS. (2020, July 31). *Press Statement: UNAIDS calls for global United States leadership on COVID-19*. Retrieved from: https://www.unaids.org/en/resources/presscentre/pressreleaseandstatementarchive/2020/july/20200731_US_leadership_covid.
- 41 UNICEF & WHO. (2020, August 20). *WHO, UNICEF urge safe school reopening in Africa*. ReliefWeb. Retrieved from: <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/who-unicef-urge-safe-school-reopening-africa>.
- 42 *COVID-19: African countries urged to promote a safe return to school*. (2020, August 25). UN News. Retrieved from: <https://news.un.org/en/story/2020/08/1070702>.
- 43 Osoimehin, B. (2015, June 1). *How can Africa cash in on its demographic dividend?* World Economic Forum. Retrieved from: <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2015/06/how-can-africa-cash-in-on-its-demographic-dividend/>.
- 44 Cruz, M. & Ahmed, S. A. (2016). *On the Impact of Demographic Change on Growth, Savings, and Poverty*. Policy Research Working Paper; No. 7805. World Bank, Washington, DC. © World Bank. <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/25050>.
- 45 Beegle, K., & Christiaensen, L. (2019). *Accelerating Poverty Reduction in Africa*. World Bank. Retrieved from: <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/32354>.
- 46 Growth, H. & and May, J.F. (2017) *Introduction to Africa's Population: In Search of a Demographic Dividend*. Springer Press.
- 47 Banda, J. (2018, January 29). *Landon Lecture Series on Public Issues (Video Transcript)*. Kansas State University. Retrieved from: <https://www.k-state.edu/landon/speakers/joyce-banda/transcript.html>.
- 48 Beegle, K., & Christiaensen, L. (2019). *Accelerating Poverty Reduction in Africa*. World Bank. Retrieved from: <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/32354>.
- 49 United Nations - 44Department of Economic and Social Affairs Population Dynamics. (2019). *World Population Prospects 2019*. United Nations. Retrieved from: <https://population.un.org/wpp/Download/Standard/Population/>.
- 50 World Bank. (2018). *Groundswell: Preparing for Internal Climate Migration*. Retrieved from: <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/29461>.
- 51 World Resources Institute. (2019, June). *Creating a Sustainable Food Future*. Retrieved from: <https://www.wri.org/publication/creating-sustainable-food-future>.



**POPULATION
INSTITUTE**

populationinstitute.org