



Progress, gaps, and challenges in harnessing demographic dividends to eradicate poverty – focus on sub-Saharan Africa.

Inter-agency Expert Group Meeting on the Implementation of the Third United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (2018-2027)

10-12 May 2023, Addis Ababa

Sandile Simelane

DD defined

- **~opportunity for accelerated economic growth and development** that a country can derive from a demographic transition that leads to changes in the age-structure of the population characterized by a larger working age population relative to the dependent population (children and the elderly), and low dependency ratios.
- Low dependency ratios by themselves do not translate to a demographic dividend.
- DD is earned!

Objective

- ~highlight progress made by countries in SSA as well as gaps and challenges they face when positioning themselves to harness demographic dividends to eradicate poverty.
- SSA is a region that can benefit the most from a demographic dividend provided necessary policy actions are taken now.

Brief Background

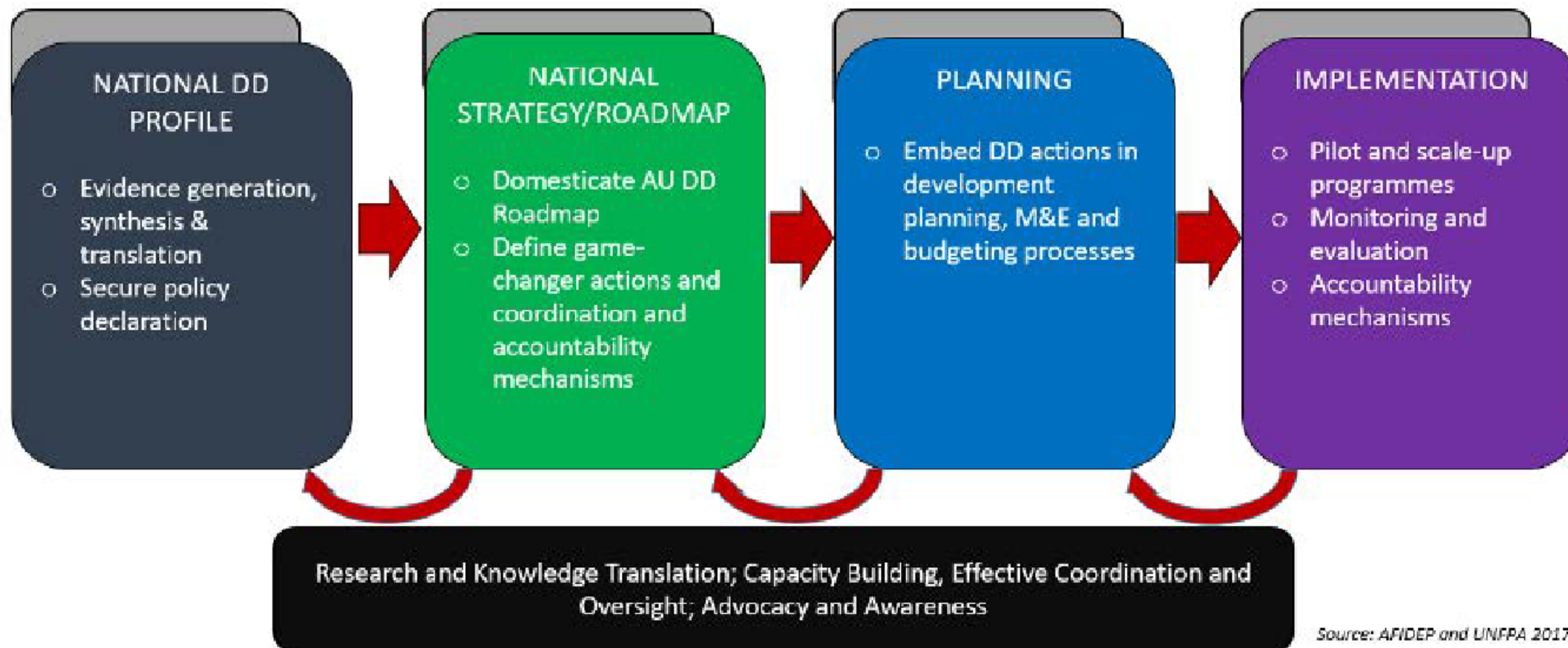
- Most countries in SSA are in the early stages of their demographic transition, characterized by:
 - high fertility rates,
 - young populations (with high youth dependency rates)
 - high poverty rates
 - smaller investments in children,
 - lower labor productivity, high unemployment or underemployment, a
 - Higher risk of political instability.
- Africa is projected to enter the window of opportunity for harnessing a DD between 2040 and 2050,
 - Therefore, proposition for DD is a promising development agenda for the region

Brief Background...cntd

- The principles for harnessing a DD are in line with existing development agendas, including the ICPD-PoA, the 2030 agenda for sustainable development, and Africa's agenda 2063.
- African Union member states first committed to the DD agenda in 2013 during their regional review conference on the ICPD +20
- This was followed by a resolution to develop DD profiles and the African Union Roadmap on Harnessing the demographic Dividend through Investments in Youth in 2017.

Progress

Figure 1: Operationalizing the Demographic Dividend at National Level



Progress (Eastern & Southern Africa)

Generation of context specific guidance	Development of DD roadmaps	Integration of DD in NDPs	Development of multi-sectoral implementation mechanisms
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 17 of the 23 ESAR countries had conducted DD studies in 2021.• 12 govt led and 5 led by academia• DemDiv and NTA methodology mainly used for the studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 9 ESAR countries (Angola, DRC, Eswatini, Kenya, Madagascar, Mozambique, South Africa, Uganda, and Zambia) had developed DD roadmaps in 2021.• Of these, Kenya and Uganda were further ahead in that they had also developed subnational roadmaps/strategies.• Three countries (Burundi, Rwanda and Uganda) had developed sectoral roadmaps.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 19 ESAR countries had developed long term development plans, 12 of these countries explicitly referenced the DD framework in these plans.• Only 4 countries (Malawi, Namibia, Tanzania, and Uganda) had mainstreamed budgeting and resource allocation at the national level.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ministries of Finance and Development Planning that lead the demographic dividend agenda in most ESAR countries.• Other key actors include the Ministries of Health, Ministry of Education, Youth, and academia.• Different mechanisms for coordinating population, development, and DD activities, include Pop Councils/Secretariats, Steering committees, Pop Units/Depts within Ministries or within Statistics Bureaus.

Progress (Western and Central Africa)

Generation of context specific guidance	Development of DD roadmaps	Integration of DD in NDPs	Development of multi-sectoral implementation mechanisms
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 22 of the 23 countries in the WCAR conducted NTA analysis, produced DD profiles and roadmaps between 2015 and 2019.• The only country that could not conduct the analysis (due to lack of requisite data) is Equatorial Guinea.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 22 countries have developed DD roadmaps.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 13 countries in the region have integrated DD framework into their development plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 7 countries (Benin, Burkina Faso, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, Niger, and Senegal) have established demographic dividend observatories.• DD programming in the region includes the Sahel Women Empowerment and Demographic Dividend (SWEDD) Project.

Critical gaps in DD programming in SSA

Lack of data and limited statistical capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Timely, high-quality, and disaggregated pop. & devt data is crucial for effective and evidence-based policy development, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation.• Such data require a fully functional national statistics system comprising regular population and housing censuses, household surveys as well as complete and continuous administrative registers.• However, most statistics systems are underdeveloped in SSA because countries have low statistical capacity (i.e., ability to collect, analyze, and disseminate high-quality data about their populations and economies)
Limited M&E capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lack of M&E capacity is one of the main gaps hindering SSA countries from effectively operationalizing monitoring and accountability frameworks in demographic dividend programming.• As indicated above, only 4 countries have such a framework for their demographic dividend agenda in the whole of Eastern and Southern Africa
Political ownership & coordination	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Weakness in the coordination and support to national/political ownership (between different actors/structures) of DD, its inclusion in the national political agenda and its maintenance as a national priority for the government.
Funding for DD programming	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Inadequate funding and financing for long term and high impact programmes on harnessing DD.• Limited financial resources and appropriate investment for DD, census, SRHR, FP, education, empowerment and participation of women and youth and youth program (including maternal and neonatal health, child marriage, early pregnancy).

Challenges for harnessing DDs in SSA

Education and skills development	Health and wellbeing	Employment and entrepreneurship	Rights, governance and youth empowerment
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Inadequacy of infrastructure (secondary schools are currently sufficient to accommodate only 36% of qualifying secondary students, with girls facing more disadvantage than boys);• Largest deficit in number of teachers (16.5 million additional teachers – 5.4 million at primary level and 11.1 million at secondary – are needed to achieve universal education by 2030 (SDG 4).• Poor learning outcomes (89% of children in the region are unable to read a basic text by the age of 10)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Highest child mortality in the world ~ 72 deaths U5/ 1 000 live births (almost double the world average)• Highest adolescent birth rate for SSA is the highest of all regions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Economies of most SSA countries are dominated by the informal sector (for jobs & entrepreneurship)• Informality puts workers at a higher risk of vulnerability, insecurity, and uncertainty.• Reason why most countries in the region are characterized by high levels of working poverty	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Harmful practices such as female genital mutilation and child marriage are prevalent in SSA.• They perpetuate gender inequality and undermine the rights for girls and women

Conclusions

- The progress made by SSA countries in producing DD profiles and integrating the DD priorities into development planning is commendable.
- However, it is not enough to put the countries on course to benefit from accelerated and sustainable economic growth when the demographic transition that is currently underway in the region results in a larger working age population in relation to the dependent population in the next 20-30 years.
- To maximize this demographic dividend and eradicate poverty, SSA countries need to start making meaningful progress in the areas of:
 - education and skills development,
 - health and wellbeing
 - employment and entrepreneurship
 - rights, governance, and empowerment
- **Otherwise, the promise of a DD may turn into a demographic nightmare.**

Recommendations

Data

- Development partners should prioritize the **strengthening of national statistics systems in SSA** to be able to deliver timely, high-quality, and disaggregated population and development data.
- This will **empower governments in the region to discern and anticipate demographic change, identify those left behind, and track progress towards harnessing demographic dividends.**

Education and skills development

- Provide the **necessary investments in infrastructure and teacher training**, to ensure that every child, regardless of circumstance or location, has access to quality education at all levels of education.
- Adopt **globally recognized tools to track learning outcomes** at all levels of schooling, and act upon such data to improve pedagogy and the quality of education, including through the redistribution of teachers to reach those furthest behind.
- **Ensure universal access to quality secondary education** (especially for girls)
- Scale up **Life Skills Based Education (LSBE)** programme and its integration in national curriculum.

Recommendations... cntd

Health and Wellbeing

- Universal health coverage policy (best buy).
- Invest in child survival and health programs
- **Youth friendly health information/communication and services:** increasing availability and accessibility to FP as a part of the UHC benefit package and implement free contraceptive services.
- Reinforcement of the quality of health care including maternal health: build technical capacity with qualified personnel (midwife - gynecologist - peer educators on FP- schools curriculums), community health workers program, deployment of midwives in rural areas
- Commit to voluntary family planning to achieve the demographic transition.

Recommendations... cntd

Employment and entrepreneurship

- Invest in workplace training for youth and expand access to lifelong skills development.
- Transform economies
 - First maximize output from informal sector (agriculture) – may require secure land tenure for many countries)
 - Direct investment and entrepreneurship towards manufacturing
 - Focus financial sector interventions on capital intensive small-scale agriculture and manufacturing development.

Rights, governance, and youth empowerment

- Legal and policy frameworks against harmful practices such as FGM and child marriage to ensure that every young person's potential is fulfilled.