

# **FACT SHEET ON INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT**

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## **1.1 Background**

- In 1994, states and nations around the globe met in Cairo, Egypt to participate in the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD).
  - The Conference set out its Programme of Action to be achieved in 2014.
  - A total of 179 countries endorsed ICPD Programme of Action and expanded the understanding of reproductive health from family planning and maternal health to include gender equality and equity, the empowerment of women and human rights associated with sexuality and reproduction such as rights to information, education, dignity, and respect for bodily integrity.
  - International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) marked its silver jubilee in 2019.
  - The inception of the ICPD programme of Action has brought about many international agreements that reaffirms the objectives of the ICPD Programme of Action. For instance, the Maputo Plan of Action 2007 – 2015 provides a framework to achieve universal access to comprehensive sexual and reproductive health rights and services.
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- **The ICPD programme of Action include;**
    - Reproductive Rights and Reproductive Health (family planning, HIV/AIDS) (SDG 5);
    - Health Morbidity and Mortality (primary health care, women's health care and safe motherhood) (SDG 3);
    - Education across the life course;
    - Gender equality and Women Empowerment (SDG 5);
    - Equality and social inclusion (SDG 10);
    - International Cooperation (SDG 17); and
    - Social Protection (SDG 1)

## **2.0 PROGRESS AND CHALLENGES OF ICPD PROGRAMME OF ACTION**

### **2.1 Reproductive Rights and Reproductive Health (family planning, HIV/AIDS) (Sustainable Development Goal 5)**

Even though progress has been made in achieving the set forth objectives in the area of family planning, gender equality, life expectancy among others, there are still concerns between the rural and urban areas, the rich and poor, in accessing some of these objectives.

#### **2.2 Family Planning**

- Family planning through the use of contraceptives is regarded as one of the best ways to control population growth.
- The Government through the National Population Council (NPC) has created awareness about population increase through the use of contraceptives.
- The awareness creation has impacted positively on the usage of contraceptives over the years. For instance, in 1993, 20% of females in Ghana used contraceptives. However, the percentage (%) of females who use contraceptives increased to 30.8 in 2017.<sup>1</sup>
- About 98% of all married women and men had knowledge about the use of contraceptive. All married women and men one way or the other have heard and know of at least one modern method of contraception.<sup>2</sup>
- Notwithstanding the above achievements there is a gap between knowledge and usage of contraceptives. Only 27% of married women between the ages of 15-49 use any of the conceptive whiles 22% of the population use any of modern contraceptive.<sup>3</sup>

#### **2.3 Declining Fertility Rate**

- Since 1988, fertility rate has decreased from 6.4 children per woman to an average of 3.9 in 2017. Thus on average, every woman would have a maxim of 4 children.
- However, rural women have a higher fertility rate of 4.7 children, compared with 3.3 children of their urban counterparts.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Maternal Health Survey 2017

<sup>2</sup> Ghana Demographic Health Survey 2014

<sup>3</sup> Maternal Health Survey 2017

<sup>4</sup> <http://www2.statsghana.gov.gh/docfiles/PR95.pdf>, 21/03/2019.

- Women without formal education are likely to have twice as many children than women with secondary education (5.5 versus 2.7). Women who are wealthier are likely to have lesser children than poor women. Women living in the poorest households have an average of 5.7 children, compared to 2.8 children among women living in the wealthiest households.
- It is estimated that if Ghanaians continue to have families with an average of four children, our country will grow to 60 million by 2050. On the other hand, if Ghanaians start having smaller families and our population grows at a slower rate, we will reach a more manageable 40 million by 2050. That's a difference of 20 million people.

### **3.0 Health Morbidity and Mortality (primary health care, women's health care and safe motherhood) (Sustainable Development Goal 3);**

- Ghana has made progress with Maternal Health Issues. Through the NHIS Programme, pregnant women have access to not less than 4 antenatal visits.
- Pregnant women under the scheme are also to deliver free of charge in accredited National Health Insurance Health facilities. The NHIS Programme has impacted positively on maternal health. Thus, women who delivered in health care facilities increased from 54% in 2007 to 79% in 2017.
- However, there is disparity between the rural and urban women in accessing health care facilities. While a 90% of urban women had access to deliver in health care facilities, only 68% of women in the rural area had access to a facility. Skilled delivery coverage increased marginally from 28.3% in June 2017 to 29.5% in June 2018.

### **3.1 Financial and Physical Access to Healthcare Services.**

- To remove financial and physical accessibility barrier, the government introduced the National Health Insurance Scheme in 2003. As at 2018, about 10.5 million members were active members of the scheme.
- The NHIS covers general out-patient and in-patient care, normal and assisted maternal care, oral health, eye care, diagnostic tests, generic medicines and emergency care.

- In spite of its success, financial sustainability of the scheme remains a challenge. The total accumulated debt the National Health Authority owed to service providers was estimated to be GHS 1.2 billion. Out of the 1.2 billion debt, a total of GH¢1 billion, the equivalent of \$250 million has been paid as at 2018.

## **4.0 Gender Equality and Women Empowerment (Sustainable Development Goal 5);**

### **4.1 Gender Parity**

Women rights have been promoted since the inception of ICPD. Some of the negative socio-cultural practices such as Female Genital Mutilation, Trokosi system, and early childhood marriages among girls have been outlawed.

In the area of politics however, women who constitute more than 50% of the population of Ghana, are left behind. In the Eighth Parliament of the Fourth republic, women have only 40 seats out of the 275 seats in Parliament representing 14.5%.

## **5.0 The Role of Parliament in Achieving the Unfinished Business of ICPD Programme of Action through the SDGs**

### **5.1 Legislations**

Article 37, clause 4 of the 1992 constitution of Ghana states that “the state shall maintain a Population Policy consistent with the aspirations and development needs and objectives of the people of Ghana.” Since then the National Population Council (NPC) has led the issue of population in the country and has collaborated with Population Caucus on various issues including family planning, women’s health care among others.

- The Caucus also facilitated the enactment of the law on domestic violence; the drafting of the national policy on the aged; the adoption of the national youth policy; and the ratification of the African Youth Charter.

### **5.2 Advocacy Role**

- Parliament has been very instrumental in managing the population of this country. The Caucus has been key advocates in the mobilization of resources through budgetary allocation to address Sexual and Reproductive Health issues including family planning in Ghana.

- The Caucus has also supported the NPC in the re-positioning of family planning for the nation's rapid socio-economic development. This has become important because of the considerable impact family planning has on population growth, socio-economic development and the well-being of both mothers and children.

### **5.3 Representational Role**

- Through Statements on the Floor of the House, the Caucus has created awareness about the need to have smaller families and also served as ambassadors in their constituencies through the organization of constituency activities on adolescent reproductive health and HIV/AIDS. Despite its legislative function, the Affirmative Action bill is yet to be passed in Parliament.

### **United Nations Population Fund**

The United Nations Population Fund-UNFPA is an international development agency that works on population and development, sexual and reproductive health, and gender. In the area of ageing populations, UNFPA supports public policy and promotes policy dialogue to respond to the challenges posed by the social, health, and economic consequences of ageing populations – and to meet the needs of older persons, with particular emphasis on the poor, especially women<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/OlderPersons/Submissions/UNFPA.pdf>