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## Issues paper

# Demographic dynamics for sustainable development in West Africa: challenges and policy measures

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## Introduction

1. The Subregional Office for West Africa (SRO-WA) of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) selects a theme for its annual session of the Intergovernmental Committee of Senior Officials and Experts in conjunction with Member States. The theme for the 22<sup>nd</sup> session of the ICE is: “Demographic dynamics for sustainable development in West Africa: challenges and policy measures”. This paper is intended for a panel discussion on the topic by experts and senior officials from member States.
2. The Economic Commission for Africa has, since January 2019, introduced new strategic orientations based on a revised organizational structure, which incorporates the specialization of the Subregional Office for West Africa (SRO-WA)<sup>1</sup> in Demographic Dynamics for Development (DDD).
3. The theme of DDDs was chosen based on the African context in general, and the West African context in particular.
4. After achieving an economic growth rate averaging 4 per cent between 1990 and 2016, Africa’s growth has seen a slight slowdown in recent years, recording 3.2 per cent in 2018; this was matched by social progress, with the poverty ratio dropping from 54.3 per cent in 1990 to 36 per cent in 2016.
5. These developments are largely reflected in the economic and social dynamics of West Africa. The subregion sustained an economic growth rate of 5 per cent on average between 2009 and 2015, followed by a slowdown in economic activity, with a real growth rate of 2.4 per cent in 2017 and 3.2 per cent in 2018. In 2013, the region recorded an unemployment rate of 5.3 per cent. It also made progress in access to education and in reducing infant and maternal mortality.
6. Despite these gains, West Africa still faces major challenges. The average poverty rate is estimated at 55 per cent as of 2017 and 11 out of 15 countries have vulnerable employment rates above 70 per cent (ECA, 2019a). Maternal mortality also remains high with over 500 cases of deaths per 100,000 live births in most countries, and actually exceeds the 1,000 cases of deaths per 100,000 live births in two countries.<sup>2</sup> At the continental level, extreme poverty remains stagnant at around 390 million or nearly one in three Africans, against the backdrop of high levels of inequality (ECA, 2019d).
7. The economic and social profile of Africa and West Africa therefore depicts an inclusive growth which is elusive. Apart from the intrinsic quality of economic growth, which is of little benefit to the majority, the specific demographic dynamics of the continent are an underlying factor of low inclusive growth.
8. In 2015, Africa’s population was estimated at 1.2 billion people. This represents a threefold increase in 35 years compared with 66 per cent growth for the world population, estimated at 7.3 billion in 2015. Similarly, the ECOWAS population experienced strong growth, rising from 70 million in 1950 to more than 367.6 million in 2017 (ECA et al, 2018). The subregion has a very young population with 44 per cent of the inhabitants under 15 years of age. The fertility rate in the region averaged 6.3 children per woman in 1955. This rate, which stood at 5.5 children per woman in the period under review (2015), is expected to drop to 3.3 children per woman by 2050 (UNDESA, 2017).

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<sup>1</sup> The ECA has five subregional offices covering West Africa, Central Africa, North Africa, Eastern Africa and Southern Africa respectively.

<sup>2</sup> Sierra Leone (1360 cases of deaths/100 000 live births; - 2015-) and Liberia (1072 cases of deaths /100 000 live births; 2013)

9. The two major characteristics of Africa's population are the significant proportion of its youth and high fertility rates. On the other hand, the populations of South East Asia and other advanced economies are aging rapidly. Thus, in 2017, the number of workers per retired person, measured as the ratio of the 20-64 age group to the 65+ group, translated into 12.9 workers to one retiree in Africa, compared with 7.4 in Asia, 3.8 in North America, 3.3 in Europe and 2.1 in Japan.
10. These two issues of youthful population in Africa versus aging population in advanced economies call for adaptation of development policies, as they show a strong linkage between demographic dynamics and sustainable development. It is critical for Africa to provide health, education and employment services in order to leverage opportunities afforded by the demographic dividend. Likewise, it is imperative for developed countries, and possibly African countries in the future, to rethink and adapt public employment, health and welfare policies to an increasingly older population.
11. Africa and West Africa in particular are also on the front line of two other specific population-related dynamics, namely migration and urbanization. Migration has become an issue, owing to emergency and security-related displacement as well as movements of people transiting through West Africa en route to North Africa and Europe. With regard to urbanization, it is crucial that the current momentum be turned into an opportunity for productivity gains, economic transformation and improved well-being, rather than a challenge.
12. It is clear that focusing only on macroeconomic stability is not enough to meet the continent's challenges. There appears to be a need for West African countries to improve their competitiveness and achieve strong and sustainable growth through substantial investments in the development of their human capital and the welfare of their populations.
13. This inescapable requirement is made even more critical by a global environment of sustained efforts by countries to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. DDD-related issues are largely captured in the SDGs. At national levels, African countries are also implementing national development plans aimed at achieving socio-economic structural transformation in the medium to long term.
14. It is against this general background that this paper analyses the links between demographic dynamics and development and reviews DDDs within the context of ECOWAS. It also discusses proposed measures to meet the DDD challenge and put West African countries in better stead to harness the demographic dividend. Lastly, the paper raises issues to be discussed by experts and senior officials from member States.

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## 1. Demographic dynamics and development: a clear linkage

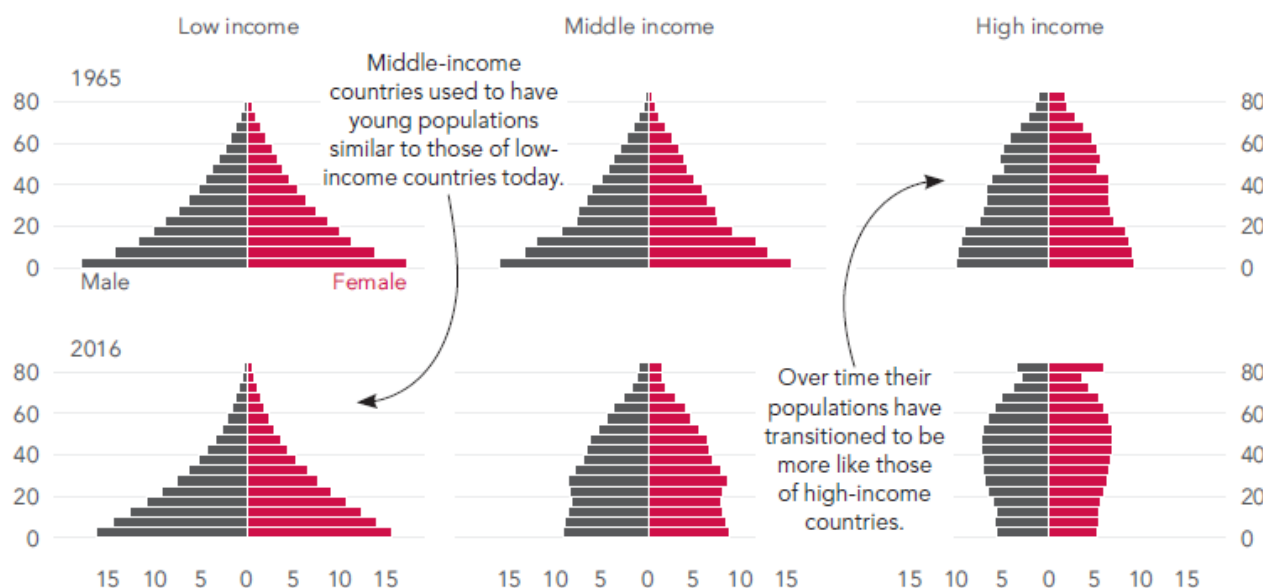
15. Development cannot be sustained unless both growth policies and social policies are conducted in proper balance<sup>3</sup>. The South East Asian development experience (Asian miracle), exemplified by a per capita income that more than tripled between 1950 and 1998, has often been attributed to factors such as trade openness, high levels of savings, human capital development through education, and sound macroeconomic policy management.
16. However, analyses have highlighted demographic dynamics as the key factor (Bloom & Finlay, 2008). Authors of the analyses noted that the shift in the age structure had a significant impact on economic growth in Asia between 1960 and 1990. The total fertility rate declined from about 5.5 in 1965 to 2.2 in 1985. In 1990, the average total fertility rate for the East Asia region was less than 2. The rapid decline in the total fertility rate automatically resulted in a proportionate increase in the working-age population, so that between 1965 and 1985, the ratio of the working-age population to the non-working population in East Asia increased from 1.3 to 2.1. This rise in the working-age population due to lower fertility led to a higher per capita income, since the output per worker remained unchanged while the number of young dependants decreased. The higher share of the working-age population created this accounting effect and also led to behavioural change. Women's participation in the labour market increased with declining fertility. Savings also rose with increased life expectancy, resulting in higher investment.
17. West Africa's environment is representative of a population age structure with a proportionally large number of young people, fewer people of working age and very few older people.
18. The cases of South East Asia and West Africa are illustrated in more detail in the figure below.

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<sup>3</sup> Translated quote from "The East Asian Growth Regime and Political Development". Kenichi Ohno (GRIPS). Sep. 2007

**Figure 1 : Distribution of the population in the 5-year age groups by sex (%)**

**Low-income countries have younger populations than high-income countries do. As countries become richer, fertility rates fall and life expectancy rises.**



Source: World Bank, 2018- Atlas of Sustainable Development Goals

19. These underscore the close links between demographic dynamics and development. Furthermore, government development policies focused mainly on improving the living conditions of populations. It is also evident that while population growth has a positive impact through increased demand and production, it entails demand pressures on basic social services, which Governments in the subregion are unable to deal with effectively.
20. Demographic developments also deepen poverty among low-income households, increasing the chances for higher levels of migration, fertility and early marriages.
21. In this respect, the pursuit of development objectives must take account of population issues in order to take advantage of demographic developments to ensure productivity gains and better living conditions for populations.
22. Accordingly, it is essential to pursue the objective of harnessing the demographic dividend of a potential economic growth linked to the changing age structure of a population, especially where the proportion of working population (15-64) is high and the proportion of non-working population (14 and under, 65+) is low or no longer of working age (14 and under, 65+) (UNFPA, 2019). This changing age structure of the population would be the result of improved reproductive health and rapidly declining fertility.
23. Also, given that most of the SDGs<sup>4</sup> include demographic and economic dimensions, the incorporation of demographic dynamics into development policies supports the achievement of the SDGs and national development goals.

<sup>4</sup> SDGs (1: No poverty; 3: Good health and well-being; 4: Quality education; 5: Gender equality; 6: Clean water and sanitation; 7: Clean and affordable energy; 8: Decent work and economic growth; 9: Industries, innovation and infrastructure; 11: Cities and communities; 16: Peace, justice and effective institutions)

## 2. Demographic Dynamics for Development: State of play in West Africa

24. The ECOWAS area covers 17 per cent of the land area and 30 per cent of the population of Africa. It is the continent's most heavily and densely populated region. It has a huge economic potential as it is home, among others, to the major oil and cocoa producing countries on the continent. In 2017, the region's GDP accounted for 24.3 per cent of Africa's total GDP at current prices. (ECA, et al., 2018).

### Economic growth, poverty and employment

25. The ECOWAS subregion sustained an average growth rate of 5 per cent between 2009 and 2015, followed by a slowdown in economic activity, with a real growth rate of 3.2 per cent in 2018, as against 2.4 per cent in 2017. This trend was largely due to a drop in prices of petroleum products over the 2015-2017 period (ECA, 2018).

26. Unemployment rate in the subregion is estimated at 5.3 per cent as of 2018 (ECA, 2019c). However, many of the jobs created are not decent. Most employed persons are self-employed (61.7 per cent in 2018) and operate predominantly in the informal sector. Vulnerable employment rates in the area have hit record highs, with 80.4 per cent, 73.3 per cent and 66.1 per cent in Nigeria, Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana respectively (ECA, 2019c).

### Demographic dynamics

27. Over the last 60 years, the population of ECOWAS has increased considerably, from 70 million in 1950 to 139 million in 1980 and 304 million in 2010. The West African population has thus more than doubled in the last 30 years, growing at an annual rate of 2.7 per cent. In 2017, the estimated population of ECOWAS was more than 367.6 million (ECA et al, 2018). This represents 29 per cent of Africa's population. Cabo Verde is the smallest country in the region with nearly 546,000 inhabitants. At the other extreme is Nigeria with nearly 190.9 million people in 2017; it is the most populous country in Africa and is home to more than half (51.9 per cent) of the ECOWAS population.

28. The subregion has a very young population with 44 per cent under the age of 15 years. With the exception of Cabo Verde (31.8 per cent) and Ghana (38.6 per cent), the under-15 account for 40 to 49 per cent. The fertility rate in the region averaged 6.3 children per woman in 1955. This rate, which stood at 5.5 children per woman in the period under review (2015), is expected to decline to 3.3 children per woman by 2050 (UNDESA, 2017).

29. Aside from Cabo Verde which experienced a 62.2 per cent decline in its fertility rate per woman between 1975 and 2015, most ECOWAS countries recorded relatively low levels of reduction in the last forty years. While Asia recorded a 46.3 per cent decline, almost halving the number of children per woman, many countries including The Gambia, Guinea Bissau, Guinea, Mali, Nigeria and Niger achieved less than 25 per cent reduction. Niger is rather an exceptional case as it experienced a near stagnation (from 7.75 children per woman in 1975-1980 to 7.4 children in 2010-2015).

30. The change in fertility rates is linked to continued high levels of infant mortality in most countries despite the considerable progress made in recent years, with a subregional level of 95.5<sup>5</sup> cases of deaths

<sup>5</sup> The SDGs target for under-5 mortality is 25 per 1,000 live births

per thousand live births, as against 48 cases per thousand live births globally. This leads to a relatively slow demographic transition characterized by a shift from high to low levels of fertility and mortality.

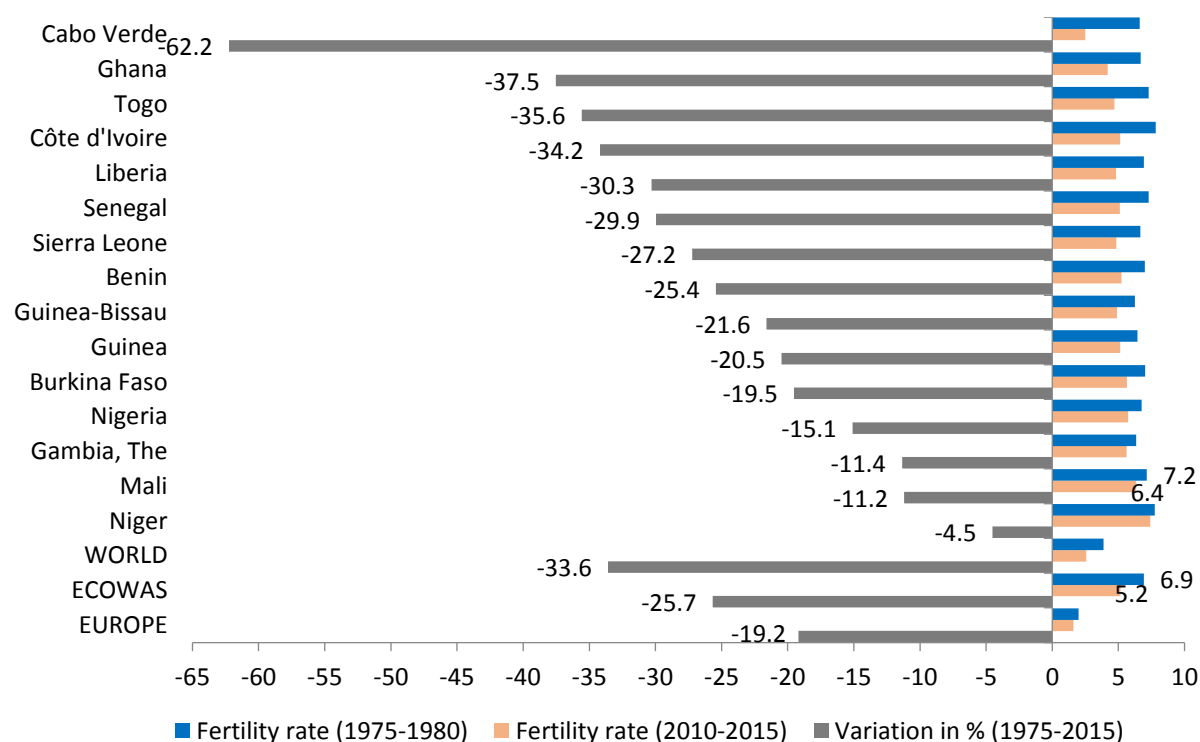
31. Overall, the population boom in the West Africa is driven by improvements in health and high fertility levels, despite a downward trend. Progress in the area of health can be seen in terms of life expectancy at birth, which in 2018 averaged 57 years for both sexes combined, compared with 35 years in 1955. If these trends continue, life expectancy at birth is expected to be around 67 years by 2050.

**Table 1: Demographic trends in ECOWAS countries**

County	1950	1990	2010	2020	2030	2050	2020	2010-2015
	Million people						As a percentage of the ECOWAS population	Growth rate
Benin	2.26	4.98	9.20	12.12	15.63	23.93	3.0%	2.8%
Burkina Faso	4.28	8.81	15.61	20.90	27.38	43.21	5.3%	3.0%
Cabo Verde	0.18	0.34	0.50	0.57	0.64	0.73	0.1%	1.2%
Côte d'Ivoire	2.63	12.27	20.40	26.17	33.34	51.38	6.6%	2.5%
Gambia, The	0.27	0.92	1.69	2.29	3.00	4.56	0.6%	3.1%
Ghana	4.98	14.63	24.51	30.73	37.29	51.27	7.7%	2.4%
Guinea	3.09	6.04	10.79	13.75	17.63	26.85	3.5%	2.3%
Guinea Bissau	0.54	1.01	1.56	2.00	2.49	3.60	0.5%	2.6%
Liberia	0.93	2.10	3.95	5.10	6.50	9.80	1.3%	2.6%
Mali	4.71	8.47	15.08	20.28	27.06	44.02	5.1%	2.9%
Niger	2.56	8.01	16.43	24.07	34.99	68.45	6.1%	3.8%
Nigeria	37.86	95.27	158.58	206.15	264.07	410.64	51.8%	2.7%
Senegal	2.49	7.56	12.92	17.20	22.12	34.03	4.3%	3.0%
Sierra Leone	2.04	4.31	6.46	8.05	9.72	12.97	2.0%	2.3%
Togo	1.40	3.79	6.50	8.38	10.51	15.30	2.1%	2.6%
<b>ECOWAS</b>	<b>70.21</b>	<b>178.50</b>	<b>304.17</b>	<b>397.79</b>	<b>512.37</b>	<b>800.75</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>2.7%</b>

Source: UNDESA (2017), World Population Prospects



**Figure 2: Progress in reducing fertility rates (%)**

Source: UNDESA, 2017, Authors' calculations

32. According to the United Nations, West Africa's population will reach 398 million by 2020, 512 million by 2030 and 801 million by 2050 (UN, 2017). In other words, the ECOWAS population is expected to multiply by as much as 11.4 in the space of a century. Representing only 2.8 per cent of the global population in 1955, ECOWAS would make up 8 per cent of the world population by 2050, which means that one in 12 people would live in West Africa in forty years' time. There is an urgent need, therefore, to ensure a match between the economic conditions and current population dynamics.

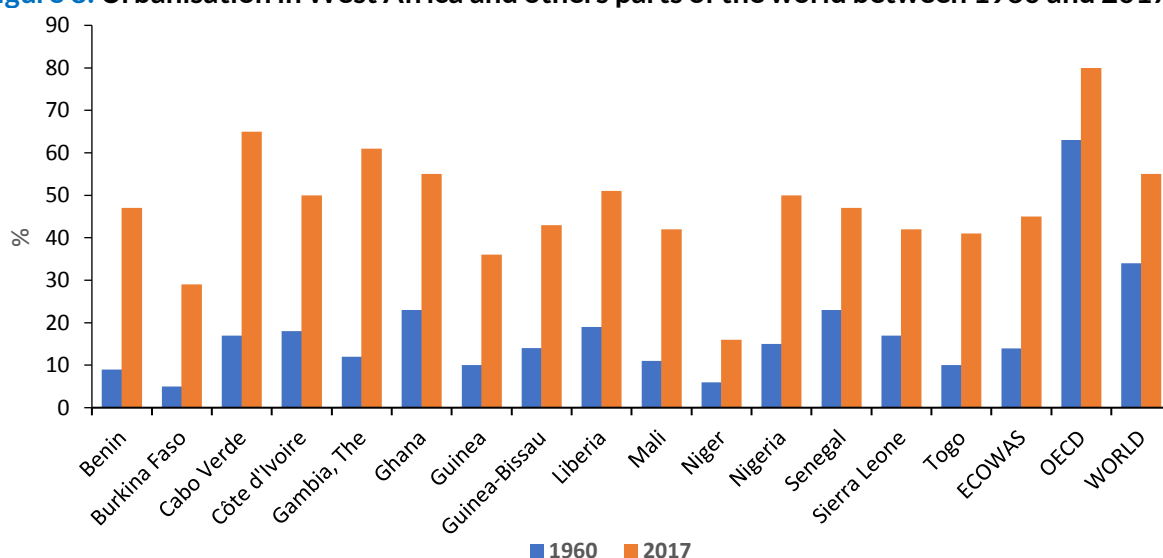
### Migration and urbanization

33. West Africa's population dynamics are reflected in the emerging issues of migration and urbanisation. While Africa receives a limited proportion (9 per cent) of international migrants, estimated in 2015 at 244 million (3.3 per cent of the world population), the issue of migration has gained more prominence with intra-African movements involving 16 million people, and movements outside the continent, also involving 16 million people (IOM). The ECOWAS subregion, including Mauritania, welcomed 6.8 million international migrants<sup>6</sup> compared with an outflow (out-migrants) of 8.9 million people in 2017 (IOM, 2019). It is important to note the human cost of recent tragic events related to illegal immigration, particularly from or through West Africa (nearly 300,000 people transited through Niger en route to North Africa and the Mediterranean in 2016) (ECA, 2019b). 5,143 deaths were recorded in the Mediterranean in 2016, representing 60 per cent of the migrants reported dead or missing by the IOM. Also worthy of note are emergencies and insecurity-related internal movements within West Africa, particularly in the Lake Chad area and in the G5 countries (Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger, Mauritania, and Chad).

<sup>6</sup> People residing in a country other than their country of birth

34. The lack of decent employment and income-generating opportunities for a young, rapidly growing and increasingly urban population is cited among the causes of migration in West Africa.
35. While migration presents a humanitarian challenge involving respect for human dignity, it also provides opportunities for migrants and their families, and for the national economy of countries of origin. These opportunities include improvements in education and health. For example, the World Bank (2016) estimates that migrants from the poorest countries saw on average a 15-fold increase in income, a doubling in education enrolment rates and a 16-fold reduction in child mortality after moving to a developed country<sup>12</sup>. Remittances are another direct tangible benefit. In 2015, Nigeria and Egypt ranked among the top 10 recipients of remittances, with US\$15.6 billion and US\$18.9 billion, respectively (IOM, 2018). Other countries such as Senegal and Cabo Verde recorded remittances valued at more than 10 per cent of GDP, well above the official development assistance received.
36. Urbanization is also driven by population dynamics. The urban population share is projected to reach 66 per cent by 2050, compared with 30 per cent in 1950 (ECA, 2017). Africa's urbanization rate, estimated at 40 per cent in 2014, is expected to reach 56 per cent by 2050 (ECA, 2017). As with the population, Africa would be a key driver of this trend.

**Figure 3: Urbanisation in West Africa and others parts of the world between 1960 and 2017**



Source: WDI, 2019

37. The outcome is urbanisation on a large-scale, with ECOWAS countries recording a 2 to 5-fold increase in urbanization rate compared with a 1.6-fold global increase.
38. It is therefore essential, in the pursuit of inclusive development, to factor in the dynamics of urbanization in order to turn them from a challenge into an opportunity for productivity gains, economic transformation and improved well-being (ECA, 2017).

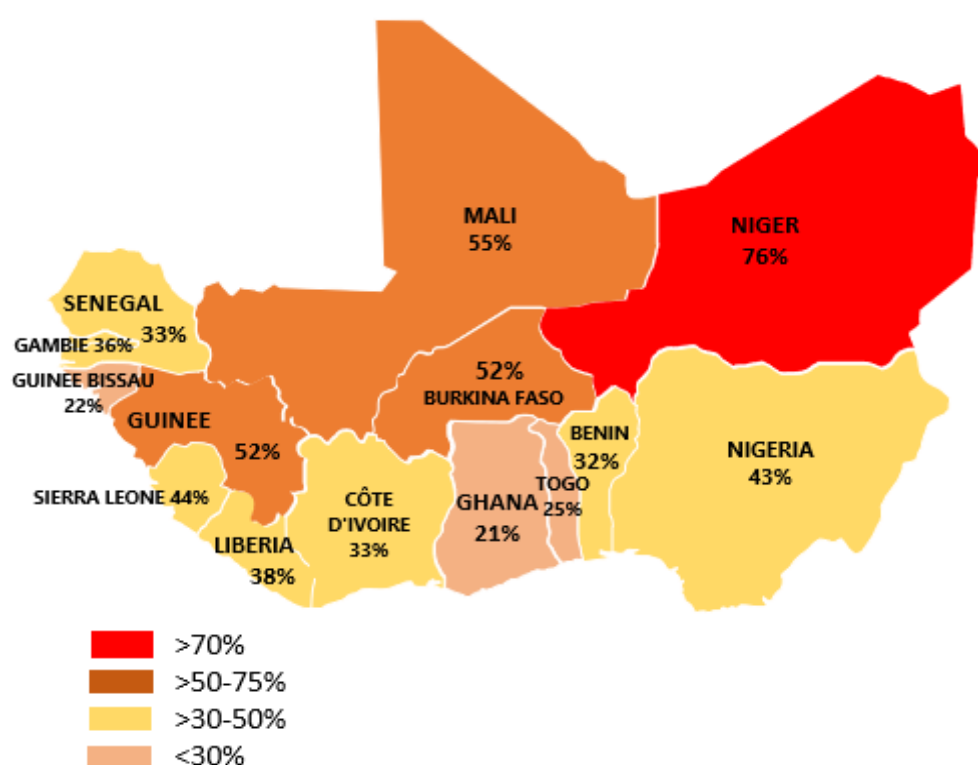
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## Gender dimension

39. Gender is an important and cross-cutting dimension of demographic dynamics for development. Gender equality and women's empowerment remain a major issue in West Africa. Poor performance in economic and social development is often blamed on gender disparities, reflected in women's limited access to productive capital, the labour market, education and health, including reproductive health.
40. Gender inequality is still pervasive West Africa, despite the progress recorded in most countries with regard to women's participation in the economic and social sectors. With the exception of Senegal<sup>7</sup> and Togo, the other countries ranked among the bottom 20 on the 2015 UNDP gender inequality index, with Mali and Niger placing 156<sup>th</sup> and 157<sup>th</sup> respectively, out of a total of 159 countries. Gender inequality is assessed based on track record in terms of maternal mortality, fertility rate of women between the ages of 15 and 19, percentage of parliamentary seats reserved for women, access to secondary education, and proportion of women in the labour force (ECA, 2018).
41. Maternal mortality remains high in West Africa despite improvements in the last two decades. The levels are still alarming as they are very far from the global average of 200 cases of deaths per 100,000 live births, and from the sustainable development goal of 70 cases of deaths. The following levels were recorded in West Africa: 1360 cases of deaths in Sierra Leone in 2015, 1072 cases of deaths in Liberia in 2013, 724 in Guinea in 2012, 335.5 in Benin in 2017, 330 in Burkina Faso in 2015, and 243 in Nigeria in 2014 (ECA 2016, 2017, 2018).
42. This is largely due to low access to reproductive health services and a high incidence of poverty. It is also partly driven by high levels of child marriage in the subregion. In Niger, 76 per cent of girls are married before the age of 18. In Burkina Faso, Mali and Nigeria, more than half of all girls are married before the age of 18. Clearly, this not only contributes to a higher maternal mortality rate, but also has a negative impact on women's education and empowerment, significantly reducing the likelihood of girls completing primary and secondary education. Girls are thus deprived of opportunities to acquire skills to be able to access decent jobs, thereby widening the gender gap.
43. Another constraint is low access to contraception to ensure voluntary birth spacing and better health and nutritional monitoring of children. Contraceptive use is less than 20 per cent in 11 of the 15 ECOWAS countries.

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<sup>7</sup> Cabo Verde, Nigeria, Guinea Bissau, Guinea not ranked in 2015

**Map 1: Incidence of early marriage in ECOWAS countries**

Source: UNICEF's State of the World's Children, Girls not Brides (2015); 2016 Sahel and West Africa Secretariat (SWAC/OECD)

44. In terms of political representation, women continue to be largely underrepresented, particularly in parliaments. Only one country, Senegal, has a proportion of women above the continental average of 23.6 per cent. In Senegal, thanks to the law on gender parity in political institutions of 2010, women held 41.8 per cent of parliamentary seats in 2019, placing the country in eleventh position in the global ranking. The performance of other countries varies from an average of 23.6 per cent in Cabo Verde to a low of 5.6 per cent in Nigeria (UIP, 2019).
45. In the area of education, gender gaps in school enrolment have narrowed, with a standout performance for Cabo Verde where more women have access to secondary and tertiary education than men. Net female enrolment in secondary school is 74.8 per cent, compared with 65.6 per cent for males. The Gambia and Ghana have a rating of equal access to secondary school. On the other hand, men continue to predominate in Côte d'Ivoire, Niger and Mali. In Mali, 22.7 per cent of girls had access to secondary education in 2015, compared with 34.2 per cent for men (ECA, 2017a, ECA, 2018a).
46. When it comes to employment, women are generally at a disadvantage, with performances varying from one country to another. While Guinea and Sierra Leone achieved almost parity in 2017, the other countries showed a predominance of men, to a limited degree in Ghana, Nigeria and Guinea Bissau, and to a much greater degree in Mali, Niger and Senegal (ECA, 2019a).
47. Lastly, women continue to be discriminated against as far as land ownership is concerned. Large disparities against women have been observed in Côte d'Ivoire and Niger. (CEA, 2016, CEA, 2017)
48. The factors highlighted in West Africa's population dynamics, in particular the high levels of fertility and maternal and infant mortality, put women on the front line and require their inclusion in the responses to the challenge. More broadly, gender disparities in education, health and access to economic and

employment opportunities are likely to negatively affect the ability of West African countries to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

### 3. Policy measures to take advantage of DDDs in West Africa

49. Apart from the intrinsic quality of growth, which is beneficial to the majority, the specific demographic dynamics of the subregion are an underlying factor of low inclusive growth within ECOWAS. This raises the issue of demographic dividend and the need for its realization to ensure the sustainable development of West Africa.
50. In order to achieve the demographic dividend, countries must make the demographic transition from high to low fertility and mortality rates (UNFPA, 2019). The decline in mortality rates is closely linked to child survival, which must be increased through improved health, nutrition and sanitation. This generally means lower fertility rates that allow families, now with a smaller number of children, to have disposable resources to invest in their long-term well-being.
51. Over time, children born at the beginning of this transition will enter the labour market. When the labour force grows faster than the population it supports, there are resources available to invest in economic development. This presents a window of opportunity for rapid economic growth, provided that the right investments are made in health, education, governance and the economy.
52. The commitment to achieving the demographic dividend through appropriate investments and policy measures more broadly, is bolstered by a global environment of sustained efforts by countries to achieve the sustainable development goals for 2030, which are globally incorporated into national development plans in West Africa.
53. The significance of population dynamics and development in the SDGs is twofold. On the one hand, the United Nations 2030 Agenda incorporates population and development dimensions to a large extent. On the other hand, the availability of demographic and economic variables is essential for monitoring the SDGs.
54. Demographic dividend provides the opportunity to establish a strong causal link between demographic dynamics (notably women and youth empowerment and respect for sexual and reproductive health rights) and sustainable economic development. It helps to strengthen advocacy and draw the attention of governments to the need for investment in reproductive health.
55. Achieving demographic dividend is a real challenge for West Africa as it requires major structural, economic and social changes. The experience of Asian and Latin American countries teaches that accelerated demographic transition leads to changing age structures and lower dependency ratios. However, the demographic profile of West Africa shows a relatively slow fertility transition in most countries compared with countries in South East Asia. This situation is likely to dilute the expected benefit of the demographic dividend over time, jeopardizing the rapid achievement of sustainable development. Faster income growth for the population, increased domestic savings and improved training and employability for 15-30-year-olds will be difficult to achieve if countries continue to face higher health and education costs as a result of a slow fertility transition.
56. In this respect, the following policy measures could help speed up the demographic transition as a priority and derive maximum benefit from the opportunities associated with demographic dynamics in order to ensure sustainable development. The measures could be economic, demographic and social.

#### ✓ Economic policies

- Make growth more inclusive and resilient through economic diversification policies and higher value-added production;
- Increase fiscal space and efficiency to boost investments in human capital;
- Strengthen governance to ensure public policy credibility; deepen respect for citizens' rights and social equity.

#### ✓ Demographic and social policies

- Promote and ensure access to health (including universal free access to sexual and reproductive health care) and education;
- Strengthen women's empowerment through improved access to employment, economic assets and opportunities, and political representation;
- Implement appropriate policies to combat specific practices and beliefs relating, among others, to early/forced marriage, gender inequality, especially in access to education. These policies should be based on social and community dialogue and interactions to ensure their success;
- Promote migration policies that respect human rights and bring economic benefits;
- Promote appropriate investments (roads, water, health, energy and sanitation, housing, etc.) in urban and rural areas to meet the challenge of growing urbanization.

57. At the same time, emphasis should be placed on strengthening statistical systems and analysis and research in the area of demographic dynamics and development. Regular production and dissemination of sex and age-disaggregated statistics that are decentralized based on demographic and economic variables may afford a better assessment of the state of demographic dynamics and development. This will also support planning and monitoring-evaluation efforts towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

58. To this end, the United Nations collects and disseminates official national demographic statistics annually, taking into account the following variables: distribution and make-up of the population based on several characteristics, including urban population, fertility, mortality, nuptiality, annual migration flows, migrant stock, household characteristics, housing characteristics, economic characteristics and levels of education. Vital statistics are also produced as administrative sources of first-hand information on the population.

59. With regard to analysis, the key question is how to measure the demographic dividend. Two approaches are worth mentioning in this regard<sup>8</sup>:

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<sup>8</sup> NTA (Latif DRAMANI (CREFAT, Université de Thiès, Sénégal, Latif Dramani & Model Demdiv (Scott MORELAND (Palladium Group, USA)-Textes réunis par Daniel Delaunay et Jean-Pierre Guengant/ Monographies Sud-Nord Collection de documents scientifiques pour la valorisation des recherches sur les transformations sociétales aux Suds, Mars 2019, Université Paris Sorbonne

- The National Transfer Accounts (NTA) approach, based on the theory of generational economy, used to determine the life cycle deficit, the economic support ratio and the first demographic dividend. This approach was developed for West and Central Africa;
- The DemDiv model, which consists of a demographic sub-model and an economic sub-model. The model reflects the nature of the demographic dividend as an opportunity created by population change, and the dividend itself as an economic benefit. The model is based on a statistical approach to demographic and economic data projection involving multiple linear regressions estimated from a transnational database of more than 100 countries.

## Issues for discussion

- What accounts for the modest decline in women's fertility and the slow demographic transition in West Africa?
- Within the West African context, what lessons can be drawn from the experience of countries, particularly in Asia, with regard to economic development linked with demographic transition?
- How can economic transformation policies help to harness the demographic dividend?
- Is there a risk/cost to West Africa's failure to achieve demographic transition in a shorter timeframe? If yes, provide some pointers for assessment.
- Are demographic dynamics adequately reflected in national and subregional development agendas?
- What measures and policies, targets and key players are required for West Africa to achieve the demographic dividend in a shorter timeframe?
- Is West Africa equipped to regularly measure and disseminate indicators on demographic dynamics? If not, what policies should be implemented to address this challenge?

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