

**Presentation of Progress Report 2018: The Demographic Dividend
in West and Central Africa**
UNFPA Regional Office for West and Central Africa
January 21, 2019, UNFPA HQ, New York

« Successful integration of the demographic dividend into the framework of the African common position on the Post-2015 development agenda. »

The Regional Director, Mabingue Ngom, spoke this Monday, January 21, 2019, in New York City with the Ambassadors of Permanent Missions to the United Nations and their representatives during a briefing on progress and prospects for West and Central Africa. Sixteen representatives from the 23 countries in the region, including eight ambassadors and their deputies (Togo, République Centrafricaine, Guinée Équatoriale, Niger, Gabon, la Gambie, Sénégal, Bénin, Mauritanie, Cameroun, Liberia, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, attended this highly anticipated session on the successes and achievements in 2018, and the challenges and projections for 2019.

In a prelude to the Director's presentation, the ambassador of Niger made these welcoming remarks: **"I reiterate our gratitude for the work done by your team. Your agency is an agency of the United Nations that works in perfect harmony with our national goals, and above that, is aligned with national priorities to help governments achieve the objectives of their development plans."** He invited other agencies in the United Nations system to draw on the work of the Fund to support national programs.



414 million people
live in the region

60% <24 years old



The Director's presentation set the tone for the remainder of the session: "Peace and security are endangered in our region. Weakened by migration issues and pervasive instrumentalization of the young population, we must be able to respond to social demand. Innovative solutions are essential for the demographic transition."



Mabingué Ngom, UNFPA WCARO Regional Director

The presentation cited actions in 2018 to contribute to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the African Union Agenda 2063, and the AU Roadmap for the Demographic Dividend.

UNFPA's Strategic Plan 2018-2030 targets three transformative results; speaking of efforts to eradicate obstetric fistula that "touches two million cases of women, including one million in Nigeria," he concluded: "Fistula is a problem in our region." These victims are too often excluded, stigmatized, and abandoned.

Invoking the work done in the region towards the eradication of fistula and the prevention of child marriage, early pregnancy, and violence based on gender, the Director highlighted the strong commitment of key actors such as first ladies, as partners, and allies.

He also mentioned the awareness campaign that began in Niger under the auspices of First Lady Dr. Lalla Malika Issoufou, a goodwill ambassador who is deeply committed to the fight against fistula in Africa.



The presentation "gave us a clear understanding of all activities carried out, and the strategies used to supplement [them]."
H.E. Ambassador Abdallah Wafy of Niger



I am very impressed by the innovation of UNFPA methods and strategies."
M. El Khalil El Hacen, Chargé d'Affaires of Mauritania

He also welcomed the commitment by the first ladies of Equatorial Guinea, Mali, and Mauritania, and political leaders. He added: **“Africans are showing leadership. Africa must be accompanied in these choices, and things that we open to accelerate progress,”** recalling the importance of the domestic mobilization of resources to support programs and country action plans.

▶▶▶ Sustained and sustainable dialogues and partnerships to reach the most vulnerable populations

“Intensifying partnerships with religious and faith leaders, first ladies, parliamentarians, youth networks, media, traditional communicators and artists, and also the private sector, to amplify our message for the demographic dividend and spacing births.”

“We have created the conditions for changes to occur, for standards and values to evolve,” said Mr Ngom, before sharing his aspiration to make West and Central Africa a model of excellence and continue with the progress made in 2018.”



The operationalization of DD at the community level: field visit of the Fasse initiative (Dakar) in Senegal with Mabingué Ngom, and Alexander De Croo, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Cooperation Belgium; An initiative recently implemented in Guinea and Chad



"The Emir of Kano gave a powerful presentation focusing on demographic dividend explaining why DD is the only path to guarantee that Nigeria will get out of poverty." at the recent Conference of Religious and Traditional African Leaders on Girls' Education (UNFPA/Nigeria)



The Sahel Women's Empowerment and Demographic Dividend (SWEDD) Project. President Malian Mr. Ibrahima Boubacar Keïta discussed the positive progress of the project, on the sidelines of its Regional Steering Committee, March 2018

- To remain methodical and develop effective products to accompany the goals reached, he cites some publications such as the programmatic guide for UNTC and Theory of Change.
- To operationalize DD at the community level, with Fasse and its expansion in Guinea and Chad.
- He notes the South-South cooperation with China and the demand from other regions (Asia, Latin America, Arab States) to inspire action.
- The ability of SWEDD's flagship project to effect transformations for targeted populations is extremely encouraging. Ministers are deciding to extend the SWEDD across the continent.
- Countries are partnering with the national and international private sectors to mobilize resources to achieve social and economic development
- First ladies are engaging in social and behavioral change.
- A new partner, Denmark, is joining a another successful initiative, the Muskoka.
- The spotlight is an opportunity to work with UN agencies in the context of United Nations reform, with a deep analysis of our own ability to strengthen our capacity to assist countries.
- To professionalize change management through generalization of specialized managers appointed in the region.
- A delivery Unit to better assist countries, thereby increasing resources.
- \$7 million worth of Noble Energy resources have been mobilized in Equatorial Guinea.
- We need to accelerate resource mobilization and ongoing actions to achieve our 2030 and 2063 agenda goals.

The exchanges
also focused on
the following
points

"An ongoing dialogue with the diplomatic corps to inform and support advocacy efforts"



"It is very important that the various parts of Africa share their experience[s,] which are often similar." "You have to work at odds with national statistical institutes."

H.E. Ambassador M. Anatolio Mba of Guinée Equatoriale



"The difficulties are virtually identical in the region." "We want a balanced commitment throughout the jurisdiction, and an exchange of experience."

H.E. Ambassador M. Michel Biang of Gabon

"I would like to thank the representative for the communications work that allows us to know at any time what the activities of UNFPA are in the region."

H.E. Ambassador M. Koffi Kpayedo of Togo



"The government has already noticed the Advanced Features are in different areas, such as family planning, for example." "Benin thanks the representative for his personal commitment on the mobilization of the 90 million dollars."

Ms Zelma Fassin, Deputy Ambassador of Bénin



"UNFPA is a very strategic ally of Nigeria, which has given great results at the national level." "The time has come for us, West Africa, to take our destiny in hand when it comes to building the capacity and participation of young people."

M. Alexander Temitope, Minister of Nigeria

For traditional leaders who are now fully engaged in these issues, a bottom-up approach will prove to be the best way forward."

"The problem of population and housing must be resolved. This area is harder to process because the data is often incomplete."

M. Saidu Nallo, Counselor of Sierra Leone