

## Family Planning in the Sahel:

An essential investment for the achievement of the demographic dividend,  
and the realization of peace, security, and stability



ORGANIZED BY:



The goal of the London Summit was to revitalize the global commitment to rights-based family planning and to commit to more urgent and intensified measures to accelerate progress in the goals of family planning 2020 and those set out in the Agenda for Sustainable Development of 2030.

**# PF2020**



UNFPA at the Family  
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Through the SWEDD initiative, UNFPA and its partners offer a concerted and cross-sectoral response to the problems encountered in the Sahel region, the Lake Chad Basin and beyond.

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In the framework of the Family Planning Summit in London on 11 July, UNFPA, the United Nations Population Fund, in collaboration with the World Bank, the United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID), the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and FP2020, organized a special session on "Family Planning in the Sahel Region: an essential investment in achieving the demographic dividend and establishing peace, security and stability".

Invited speakers, including UN Deputy Secretary-General Amina J. Mohammed, reaffirmed their support for the SWEDD regional initiative launched in November 2015, which is already showing positive results paving the way for growing interest in a similar program in other countries such as Cameroon and Benin, Guinea and Senegal, as well as Nigeria.



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UNFPA believes that investments in adolescents and young people are essential for the future of West and Central Africa. We are working with governments across the Sahel, the Mano River and the Lake Chad Basin to encourage the development of initiatives to reduce youth radicalization and migration and help them make the most of their lives and their families.



# The Sahel and Lake Chad Regions are faced with very similar challenges:

## Multiple humanitarian and crisis situations

- Climatic and environmental challenges resulting in the depletion of natural resources;
- Insecurity and instability caused by violent extremism and terrorism by groups such as Boko Haram, Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQMI), not to mention political instability in some countries;
- Humanitarian and crisis situation leading to an increase in the number of internally displaced persons and the increasing incidence of migration;



## Key demographic concerns

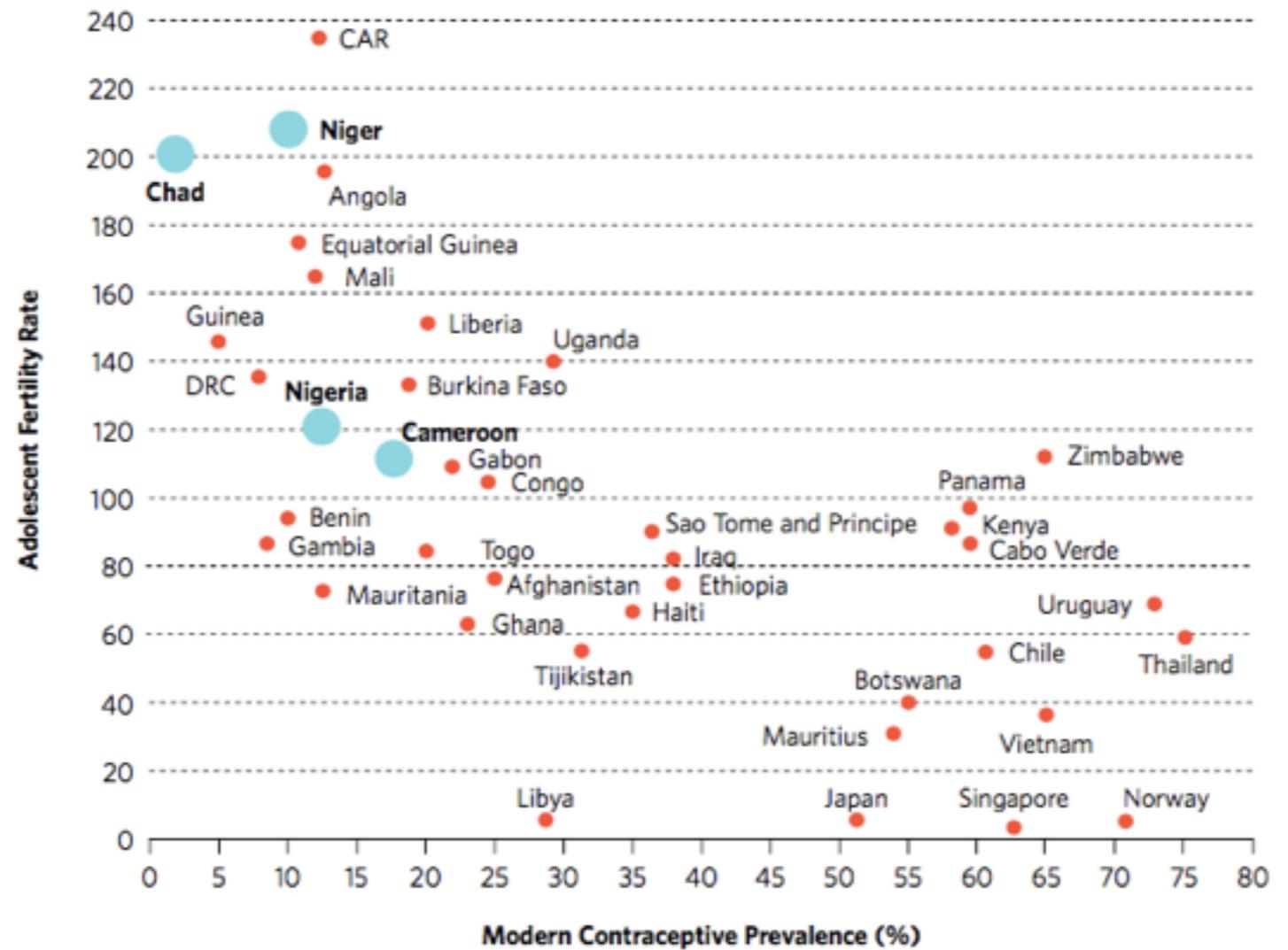
- Growing unemployment and increasing levels of poverty;
- Issues related to gender with high prevalence of child marriage and female genital mutilation (FGM);
- High fertility rates averaging 5.5 in countries with protracted crises compared to fertility rates of 2.3 in stable countries;
- Percentage of people living on less than \$ 1.90 per day in countries with prolonged insecurity is 4 times higher than the percentage of people in more stable countries;
- Relatively low access to education ;
- Demographic challenges with rapid population growth estimated at 2.8% per year;
- Maternal mortality in countries in crisis is nearly 6 times higher than in the most stable countries;
- Adolescent fertility rates (number of births per 1,000 adolescent girls aged 15-19) are very high in crises hit countries;
- Youth dependency ratio is also much higher in countries in crisis: stable countries 37% - countries in crisis 81% - Lake Chad 85%.



CHART 10

Variations in fertility based on contraceptive prevalence

Source: UNFPA-WCARO, 2017



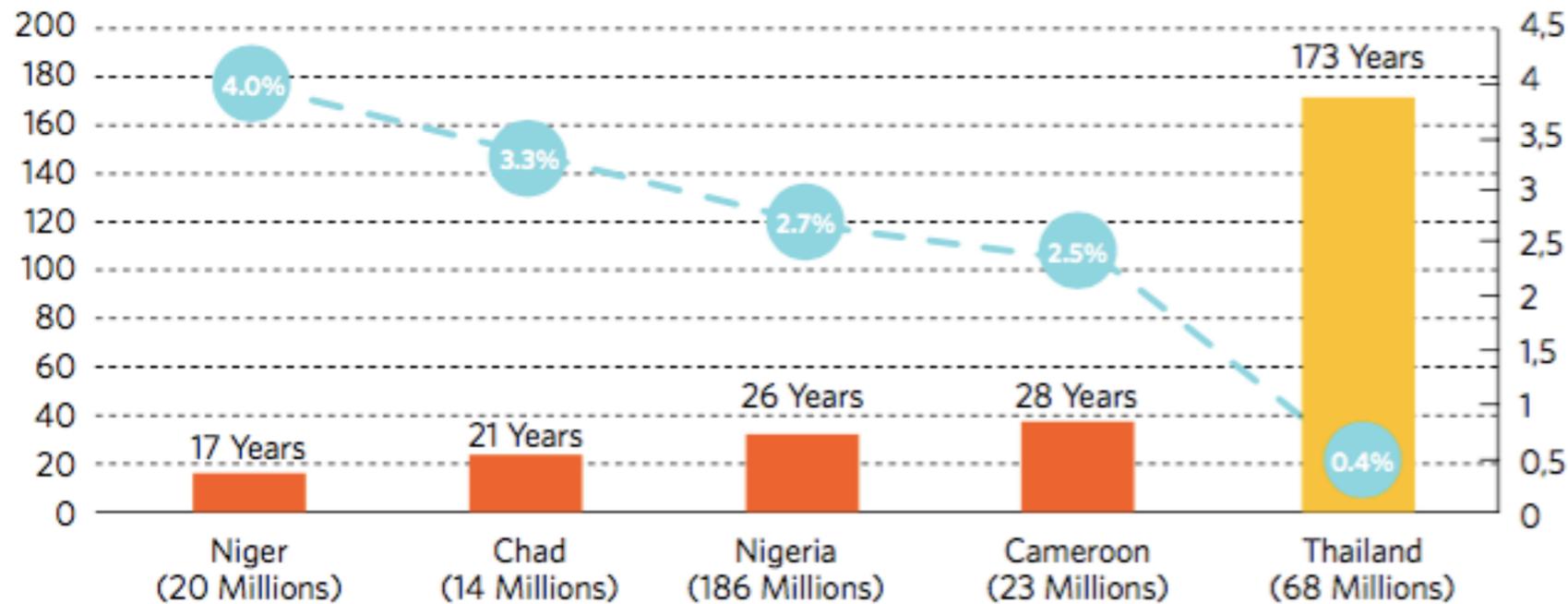
GRAPH 1

Doubling time by country according to the population growth

Source: UNFPA-AOC, 2017

Doubling time of the population

Demographic growth rate



## Women's Empowerment and Demographic Dividend Initiative in the Sahel (SWEDD)

The initiative is a multi-stakeholder partnership based on the belief that peace, security, stability and development cannot be achieved in the Sahel, if population growth remains high and women continue to be denied opportunities to education and if adolescent girls are not protected from gender-based violence, including child marriage.

Implemented in six countries: Burkina Faso, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger, these countries have invested 210 million USD to build resilience and accelerate development.

The countries have developed an emerging and innovative partnership model that combines specific national interventions and integrated regional actions with support from the World Bank, ECOWAS and UNFPA and a sustained commitment from the Gates Foundation and African regional institutions countries such as CREFAT (Centre de Recherche en Economie et Finance Appliquées de Thiès).

Promising results in demand creation, communication for social and behavioral change, supply chain management with a focus on last mile distribution and policy dialogues have generated strong interest in tailoring the SWEDD Initiative to address the root causes facing the Lake Chad Basin.



## Mr. Mabingue Ngom, Regional Director, United Nations Population Fund for West and Central Africa

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At the beginning of the session, the moderator, Mr. Mabingue Ngom, Regional Director of the United Nations Population Fund for West and Central Africa, recalled the development challenges of the sub-region, the challenges and Opportunities for investment in youth. Sahel countries are threatened by dramatic drought, desertification, climate change and the overexploitation of natural resources. This phenomena, rooted in natural and human causes, have relatively impoverished the regions and have posed a threat to the entire environment in regions where livelihoods depend mainly on agriculture. In addition, as a result of these crises, the affected regions, particularly the Sahel and the Lake Chad Basin, have experienced an exacerbation of barriers to women's empowerment, particularly gender-based violence, early marriage, among others. The crisis - violence, radicalization and poverty - facing the Lake Chad Basin region, is the underlying effect of a growing population composed disproportionately of children and adolescents without economic power, and largely dependent on the active population, the Regional Director emphasized.



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Investing in the universal access to modern contraception and family planning is fundamental for achieving the demographic dividend.



## Ms. Amina J. Mohammed, United Nations Deputy Secretary-General

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If you do not have Family Planning, it is impossible to reap the fruits of the Demographic Dividend.

Ms. Amina J. Mohammed, Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations, reiterated that, in the case of the Sahel, contexts are important; It is clear that the Sahel region and the Lake Chad Basin are very similar. The complex and interconnected challenges they face require a holistic approach. She said that such a "holistic" response requires the involvement of all stakeholders, the commitment of the governments concerned, development partners in all areas: family planning, health, education, labor and employment, governance, among others. The role of security agents and peace builders, including religious organizations and community leaders, is also crucial the Deputy Secretary-General added.



*Ms Nancy Wildfeir-Field, and H.E. M. Abdourahmane Diallo*

Speaking on behalf of the President of the African Union, H.E. Mr. Abdourahmane Diallo reaffirmed the commitments made by African Union Heads of State for the theme of "Harnessing the demographic dividend through investment in youth" and how the family planning agenda is central to this theme. He then invited the World Bank, UNFPA and other development partners, including the private sector, to extend the SWEDD initiative, Women Empowerment and Demographic Dividend model, to other countries in sub-Saharan Africa.

Taking the floor on behalf of Burkina Faso, Prof. Nicolas Meda, Minister of Health of Burkina Faso, thanked UNFPA and the World Bank, and cited some tangible results of the SWEDD project within just two years of implementation—mentioning improved reproductive health commodity security including contraceptives, increased investment in health human resources, roll-out of a regional behavioral change campaign for women's empowerment, protection of the young girl, education, the use of modern contraceptives, and the mobilization of national resources for youth entrepreneurship, as well as the mobilization of civil society.



*Prof. Nicolas Meda, Ms Sameera Al-Tuwaijri, and Ms Amina J. Mohammed*



*H.E. Prof. Issac Adewole and Prof. Nicolas Meda*

The **Minister of Health of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, H.E. Mr. Issac Adewole**, said the Sahel countries share the same challenges and that the solutions to development problems in the Lake Chad Basin require a national and regional approach, and that the results of SWEDD must be scaled-up and replicated in all the countries of the Sahel.

**Ms. Sameera Al-Tuwaijri, World Bank Representative** said that SWEDD is respected in its approach to cooperation with countries for the empowerment of women and girls, for the demographic dividend from the states' own resources. She thanked all governments of the countries participating in the SWEDD project and acknowledged the leadership of Ms. Amina J. Mohammed, Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations for her tireless efforts through the UN Integrated Strategy for the Sahel (UNISS).



*Mrs Sameera Al-Tuwaijri,*

## Ms. Natalia Kanem, UNFPA Acting Executive Director

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The Acting Executive Director of UNFPA, United Nations Population Fund, Dr. Natalia Kanem, thanked the entire audience for this initiative very dear to the late Executive Director, Prof. Babatunde Osotimehin, and hoped to see the promising results extended and replicated in other regions including the Horn of Africa. She reiterated the important points of the speech by Ms. Amina J. Mohammed, Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations, and called on all development partners to find long-term solutions that begin with the empowerment of girls, securing contraceptives, and a holistic investment solution in adolescents and young people.

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**“We need to make sure  
that we can offer family  
planning  
up to the last kilometer “**





**Mr. Mabingue Ngom**, UNPFA Regional Director for West and Central Africa thanked the panel members for their special participation in the session on Family Planning in the Sahel:

**Ms. Amina J. Mohammed**, Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations,

**H.E Mr. Abdourahmane Diallo**, Minister of Health of Guinea, (representing the President of the African Union),

**H.E. Prof. Nicolas Meda**, Minister of Health of Burkina Faso, representing the six countries of the SWEDD Initiative, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, Mauritania, Niger and Chad,

**H.E. Prof. Issac Adewole**, Minister of Health of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (representing the countries of the Lake Chad Basin, Cameroon, Nigeria and Chad),

**Ms. Sameera Al-Tuwaijri**, Representative of the World Bank,

**Mr. Ibrahim Lumumba Idi-Issa**, Deputy Executive-Secretary of the Permanent Inter-State Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS),

**Ms. Nancy Wildfeir-Field**, President of GBC Health (representing the private sector),

**Ms. Natalia Kanem**, Acting Executive Director of UNFPA,

and the Ministers of Health of Senegal, Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia, Togo, Rwanda and CILSS, and their partners for their presence during the session.



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[Sahel Women's Empowerment and Demographic Dividend \(SWEDD\)](#)

[From crisis to development around Lake Chad](#)

[Demographic Dynamics and the crisis of Countries around Lake Chad](#)