



REPUBLIC OF KENYA



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## COUNTY DEVELOPMENT PLANNING IN KENYA:

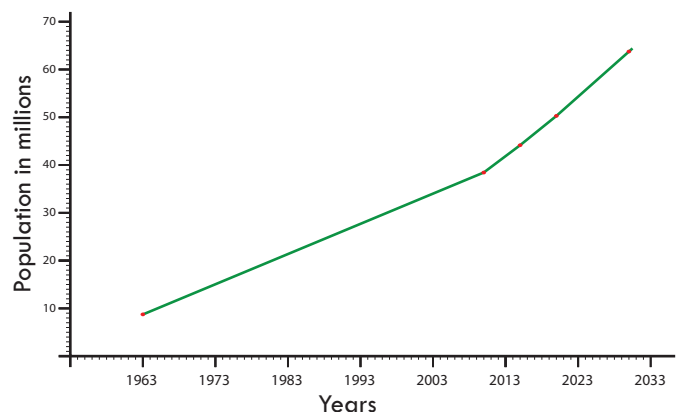
### Why Population Issues are Important.

**P**rior to The Constitution of Kenya 2010, Kenya’s administrative and development structure was of centralized nature with some elements of decentralized units. The system of devolved government presents various opportunities like development programmes which addresses county specific issues while at the same time addressing the national Government priorities. Moreover, the County Governments Act, 2012 (CGA), requires each county to have an Integrated County Development Plan which guides the development agenda for the Counties. Previously, population issues were not given the weight they deserved in the development plans and the section only highlighted the population figures without paying much attention to the linkage of population and development. This policy brief will focus on establishing the strong relationship between population and development planning and why counties must integrate population in development processes, policies, plans and strategies.

Kenya’s population has continued to grow from 8.1 million at independence to about 38.5 million in 2009. In 2015, the population was estimated to be about 44.2 million and projected to reach 50.3 in 2020 and 63.9 million by 2030. The population is estimated to increase by 1 million people per year<sup>1</sup> with a growth rate of 2.9 percent per annum. This growth is considered too fast when compared to economic growth of 5.8 percent in 2016<sup>2</sup>. During the 1974 and 1990, the country recorded the highest population growth rate of 3.8 percent per annum while the economic growth stagnated at only 4.2 percent. There is a great mismatch which has continued to expose more people to poverty where more than 4 in ten people are poor.<sup>3</sup> Poverty is distributed throughout the country although the magnitude differs within and across the counties. One of the greatest challenges facing leaders today is to reduce poverty and inequality; and improve people’s lives’ without compromising the well being of future generations.

Population and development inter-linkages concept is not new and can be traced to International Conference on Population and Development held in 1994 in Cairo. Changes in population dynamics are mainly attributed to socio-economic development processes through various proximate determinants<sup>4</sup>. The Sessional paper No.3 of 2012 on Population Policy for National Development aims at ensuring that population growth does not impede the attainment of targets set in Kenya

Vision 2030’s economic, social and political pillars. The rapid population growth which grew at 2.9 percent in the 1999-2009 period if not managed well would make it difficult to achieve Kenya Vision 2030 targets of transforming Kenya into a lower middle income county. The policy identified various population issues which needs special focus in the development planning processes in the country and more so at the county level. They broadly include: the population size and growth; population structure and population programme factors. The response to these issues will greatly influence the level and the rate at which different Counties achieve their development goals and targets due to the strong inter-linkages between population and development.



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## Introduction:

Population growth is mainly contributed by birth, death and migration which are commonly known as population dynamics. Births and deaths are the most important factors for population change within a country while migration is a major factor in population change if international migration is of high volume. Accurate demographic information is the basis for policy makers to plan for their people's current and future development needs. Planning parameters which include labour market, employment, education, health, job creation, poverty reduction and environmental sustainability among others are intrinsically linked to demographic variables such as age and sex distribution, fertility and mortality levels. High fertility levels increase socio-economic demands while low fertility can reduce the demand. Sustained low fertility decreases the dependency ratio hence decline of proportion of school going age, health care services, food and shelter.

Migration is an important component due to push-pull factors in the sending and receiving areas. Some areas will experience high inflows while others will have outflows due to employment factors which affect the size and distribution of labour market. Counties which are likely to experience high migration inflows are those with good prospects in offering employment like the big cities and large urban towns. This can escalate the problems of unemployment, insecurity, urban informal settlements and pressure on social amenities.

Kenya's population has been growing rapidly over the last 3 decades with the highest growth rate recorded in 1979. During this period, the total fertility rate was highest in the world with an average of 8.1 children per woman. This has resulted to a youthful population with more than 2 in every 3 persons falling below 25 years in 2015 and is projected to continue growing (KNBS, 2012). The youthful structure provides a momentum for future population growth with resultant high dependency ratio.

Demographic transition (DT) refers to the transition from high birth and death rates to lower birth and death rates as a country or region develops from a pre-industrial to an industrialized economic system. Research has shown strong relationship between population and development in that rapid population growth inhibits development. For meaningful development to be realised, it is necessary to mainstream population variables into development policies, plans and strategies due the complex nature of the interlinkages between the two components.

## Inter-linkages of population and Development

Population programmes are not new in Kenya as they date back to 1955 when the first private family planning programme was started targeting the Asians and European communities. In 1967 the National family planning programme was initiated. Ever since, this has evolved through development of various policies to address various population issues. Population issues do not occupy a high priority agenda in the country and has been politicised with consecutive governments failing to explicitly declare population as a key priority in development planning. With the advent of devolved system of government, sustained advocacy to ensure the gains made are not eroded is important in development planning processes.

## Migration, Urbanization and Development

Mainstreaming migration into policy design and planning is key in addressing migration related issues and harnessing the opportunities associated with it. Migration and development is becoming increasingly important due to its recognition in agenda 2030 on sustainable development goals which Kenya is a signatory. Migration has been for a long time been looked at as negative but countries are recognizing the economic benefit of migration as indicated in the Addis Ababa 3rd International Conference. Migration to urban areas give rise to urbanization which is a prerequisite for development and poverty reduction since no country has ever reached middle income status without significant migration to urban areas and many countries grow richer as they urbanize<sup>5</sup>. Migration is influenced by various factors which include economic, governance and public service, socio-political, demographic imbalance, conflict and environmental.

Internal migration is mainly due to economic factors across different areas. They include search of better prospects. The major form of migration in Kenya is rural-urban but with the devolved system, this is likely to change with more people migrating from one urban area to another within and across counties. This movement is associated with both negative and positive impacts both in the sending and receiving areas like: increases inequalities, environmental degradation, informal settlement, urban poverty as well as providing centres for innovations among others. Although receiving migrants can pose challenges, potentially prompting a political backlash, it can also be a boon for the host counties. Migration can relieve

the strain of population ageing and contribute to other long term gains such as higher growth and productivity.

## Urbanization and development

In Kenya, the largest proportion of the population resides in the rural areas with only about 32 percent living in urban areas. The Agenda 2030 has recognized the important role of cities in achieving Sustainable Development Goals. Urbanization and economic growth go together and they are essential for wealth creation, socio-economic transformation and development. Planning and management of urban areas will determine how well this transformation takes place. In Kenya, the urbanization process puts the population at risk since most of the urban cities are not well planned. There is need to have a paradigm shift in the way cities and urban areas develop in the counties by implementing the Urban Areas and Cities Act of 2011<sup>6</sup>. The pattern of urbanization needs to respond to various challenges like inequality, climate change, informal settlements, inadequate infrastructure and insecurity.

The counties should promote sustainable cities and human settlements that are environmentally sustainable and resilient, socially inclusive, safe and violence-free, economically productive; and better connected to and contributing towards sustained rural transformation. This is in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, especially Goal 11: (to make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable<sup>7</sup> which will in turn attract investors).

## Teenage pregnancy and development

Teenage pregnancy is a major population issue in Kenya and has remained a major health and social concern because of its high association with morbidity and mortality for mother and child. Early child bearing has also other socio-economic consequences especially in educational attainment. According to KDHS 2014, teenage pregnancy and child bearing was recorded at 18 percent nationally with huge disparities across counties. Teenage pregnancy is a key impediment to development as the opportunities for these girls to have meaningful future engagement are diminished. Children born to teenage mothers are more likely to be poor and may not survive to their fifth birthday.<sup>8</sup> Teenage pregnancy is also a driver of high population growth rate, which may not match the available resources thus straining delivery of services.

Education for girls, especially secondary education, boosts resilience for women and their families in their

lifetime. Every additional year of education increases a person's wages by 10 percent.<sup>9</sup> Research shows that when women have secondary education, they use more health services for their families and improve household nutrition, making their whole family healthier<sup>10</sup>. Women with more education and skills are better positioned to find work and contribute towards development.

The young people in Kenya are vulnerable to various challenges that require focus in the development planning processes. Sexual and reproductive health for young people is an important indicator of a lifelong health and wellbeing and creates a solid future for a health and productive workforce in a country. Addressing a myriad of challenges faced by young people during transition to adulthood is crucial in achieving long term development and health goals. Prevention of Sexually transmitted infections including HIV, early teenage pregnancy, retrogressive cultural practices like and child marriages are sound investments that will ensure huge returns as the youth enter the productive years.

## Population size, growth, structure and development

Kenya's population is referred to as very young due to its youthful structure. The proportions of persons under 18 years constitute 55 percent of the total population according to 2009 population and housing census. This segment of the population strains the economy in provision of services such as health, education, food, shelter and protection. The youthful structure is a result of many decades of high fertility and declining mortality rates across the country. Although Kenya has made a lot of progress in lowering the fertility rates nationally, huge disparities among the counties still exists with some recording as high as an average of 7 children per woman as compared to 2.3 in others. High fertility levels inhibit development as the high dependency ratio competes with resources for development. Counties with high fertility are likely not to have disposable incomes for investments as the special needs of the population that is not working will take up the resources which would have been utilized in development programmes. Many developing nations, such as Kenya, are still struggling to meet the needs of rapidly growing populations amid huge disparities between the rich and the poor<sup>11</sup>. Since independence, Kenya has grappled with the increasing demands for health care, education, housing, water and sanitation, and employment brought about by the rapid increase in the population.

However, if the counties puts in proper measures to tap

into the potential of the large youth bulge like investments in education, health, employment and expansion of the labour sector, they are likely to harness the opportunities presented by the young people normally referred to as demographic dividend<sup>12</sup> in years to come. Kenya has developed the demographic Dividend roadmap outlining the actions that should be taken for the country to harness the opportunities presented by the large youth bulge. Coordinated implementation and close monitoring of the action points is important to harnessing the demographic dividend.

## Maternal & child health and development

Maternal and child health is an important indicator of measuring the socio-economic development of a country. Kenya is among the countries with highest burden of maternal deaths in the world with huge disparities between regions. Maternal mortality rate (MMR) has not changed much over the last decade. Currently MMR stands at 362 from 488 in per 100,000 live births in 2008/2009 and still remains above the global average of 210 deaths per 100,000 live births. Counties in Kenya have very huge disparities with about 15 out of 47 counties accounting for 98.7 percent of all total maternal deaths.<sup>13</sup>

Kenya has recorded a lot of improvement in maternal and child health but a lot still needs to be done especially closing the gap between counties. The under-5 mortality ranges from 42 deaths in Central region to a high of 82 deaths per 1000 live birth in Nyanza. This is also the case with maternal mortality with Mandera recording 3795. Most maternal deaths are due to causes directly related to pregnancy and childbirth, unsafe abortion and obstetric complications such as severe bleeding, infection, hypertensive disorders, and obstructed labour. These deaths could be averted through investments in family planning and maternal and child health interventions. In 2009, almost half (47.1 percent) of the births that occurred were unplanned for. Unmet need for family planning exposes women and their children to the risks of dying through increased abortions and closely spaced births among others.

Healthier women are able to support their children to realize their full potential hence with lower maternal mortality, families have a better social support system to respond to a crisis and care for children and the elderly. Healthier mothers are also more likely to have the time and energy to actively participate in the labor force.

Research from Bangladesh shows that, over time, women who had consistent access to a comprehensive family planning, maternal, and child health program became better off financially than similar families who did not have access to that program. The benefits included higher incomes, owning more farmland, greater investments in diverse crops and non-agricultural assets, and a higher home value.<sup>14</sup>

## 'POPULATION ISSUES: A PRIORITY AT THE COUNTY DEVELOPMENT PLANNING PROCESSES

### Rapid population growth rate impedes on social economic development in the following areas:

#### High Dependency ratio

The rapid population increase results to a high dependency ratio which depletes resources which would otherwise be invested. The youthful population presents both opportunities and challenges. For instance the large youth bulge is a resource to the county if proper infrastructure is put in place to tap their potential. However, this may not be true if counties overlook the youth issues during development planning. Unemployment is still widespread and pre-disposes the young people as a soft target for organized crime and radicalization which in turn may make a county not attractive for investors.

*With high dependency ratio, high recurrent expenditure for supporting early childhood development education which is a devolved government function is likely to prejudice development. Therefore high fertility rate in some counties may not match the county 's available resources. This sector has continued to expand yearly : Number of Early Childhood Development Education(ECDE) Centers increased by 1.2 percent from 40,775 in 2015 to 41248 in 2016<sup>15</sup>. The ECDE enrolment increased marginally to 3.2 million in 2016. County Governments play a crucial role in augmenting the sector bursary fund and support development of infrastructure.*

This is likely to exert pressure if rapid growth outstrips the economic development. There is need to strengthen family planning programme to ensure that women and couples have access to family services and information to ensure that couples are able to plan whether and

when to give birth and provision of quality reproductive health services and information to reduce the number of unplanned births.

The high unmet need for family planning and contraceptive prevalence rate which varies across counties need to be urgently addressed to ensure women and couples are able to make informed choices on their fertility preferences. The KDHS 2014 indicated wide gaps in contraceptive use among women in Kenya. Some counties had as low as 1.9 while others had 81 percent. Counties with low use also experience high fertility, high unmet need for family planning and are likely to lag behind in development.

## Regional disparities in health indicators

Although Kenya has made remarkable improvements in bringing down the high fertility from 4.6 children per woman on average in 2008/2009 to 3.9 in 2014, huge regional disparities still remains a challenge towards the countries development agenda. Some counties still post very high fertility levels (7.8) in Wajir as compared to 2.3 in Kirinyaga. Teenage pregnancy and motherhood is not different with some counties like Narok having 40 percent as compared to Muranga with 6.3 Percent. Counties will require to develop county specific policies, plans and strategies to respond to these challenges. Accessibility and provision of quality services with the resultant implications presented by inadequate infrastructure, inadequate man power in some counties will present unique challenges. Health is a devolved function and counties will have to prioritize investments in family planning and creating a budget line. Policies, plans and strategies focusing on girl child will have to be developed and implemented to address the various barriers that expose girls to early pregnancy and motherhood.

## Policy Implications

Rapid population growth undermines investments in health, education, employment, environment and security. Counties that will plan their development without integrating population in development planning will only compound the existing challenges. Rapid expansion of cities and urban town with the influx of migrants from neighbouring counties is likely to present new challenges to receiving areas in provision of basic services. Unplanned informal settlements will raise urban poverty and increase insecurity. However, counties can take advantage of labour migrants by

developing labour policies. Urban areas are also a hub of innovations, which could spur growth, and therefore proper development plans should be in place to attract investors.

## 1. Recommendations

- Build the capacity of county policy makers in inter-linkages of population and development
- Build the capacity of counties to generate population data on a continuous basis
- Utilize population data in development planning
- There is need for policy makers to appreciate the important role of population in development
- There is need to integrate population variables in county development planning processes
- Develop county specific policies and strategies to address the various challenges in each county
- County specific mapping of population issues and sound interventions
- Counties to embrace multi-sectoral programming and planning

## Conclusion

Integrating fertility, mortality and migration into county development planning processes is key to socio-economic development to ensure that the population growth rate does not outpace the rate of economic development. Counties must maintain a balance between population growth and the available resources for sustained economic development by putting proper interventions to address the various challenges

## Key message

Integrating Population variables in all county development policies, plans and strategies must be prioritized for sustained economic growth and well being of the population. Leaders and policy makers must look at population in totality rather than just numbers

NCPD is a semi-autonomous government agency that formulates and Promotes population policy and coordinates related activities for sustainable development in Kenya.

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