

# ON THE ROAD TO NAIROBI



## Strong Political Leadership and Financial Accountability are Fundamental for Building an Inclusive Sustainable Future for all People and the Planet

An in-depth focus on High and Upper Middle Income Countries in Southern Africa

Windhoek Country Club Resort, Windhoek, Namibia, 11 September 2019

“

We generally agree on what has to be done. We have come a long way. But, the pace of progress is not enough.”

- Monica Geingos,  
First Lady of the Republic  
of Namibia



## How can Upper Middle Income Countries in Southern Africa Achieve a Sustainable Future in the 21st Century?

This thought-provoking question underpinned the discussions during the ‘What’s Changed in Middle Income Countries (MICs)?’ dialogue, which focused on people-centered development in Upper Middle Income Countries (UMICs) in Southern Africa, particularly the quality of life and well-being of women and young people. Themed ‘A changing and diverse sustainable development landscape: Impact on sexual and reproductive health and rights outcomes for women and youth in Southern Africa’, the dialogue led to renewed commitments as governments, development partners, academia, private sector, civil society representatives and young people charted a way forward to accelerate the building of an inclusive and sustainable future for all people and the planet.

This is in line with the Sustainable Development Goals, the aspirations of the African Union Agenda 2063, the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan, and respective National Visions and Development Plans.

“

Development actors need to accelerate actions in ensuring the availability of relevant disaggregated data and evidence with models of monitoring progress of the ICPD agenda. These will ensure parliamentarians will listen.”

- Boemo Sekgoma,  
SADC Parliamentary Forum  
Secretary General



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**There is a need to reflect on our past, look forward and recommit ourselves to fast-track accelerated actions in order to achieve the ICPD goals."**

*- Tshenolo Claurinah Modise, Botswana High Commissioner to Namibia*



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**Simply put, placing people and human rights at the centre of development is non-negotiable if we are to achieve true prosperity, peace and well-being of all population groups."**

*- Dr. Julitta Onabanjo, UNFPA East and Southern Africa Regional Director*



The 'Multi-Country What's Changed Dialogue' celebrated the huge gains made in the respective countries (Botswana, Mauritius, Namibia, Seychelles and South Africa) and in the SADC region since 1994, and also underscored the persistent and deepening inequalities. The dialogue was enriched by insights on drivers and catalysts for change in the countries. These included the role of Universal Health Coverage and integration of sexual and reproductive health and rights in the countries, the need to address deepening inequalities alongside economic growth, and scale up sustainable financing required to close remaining gaps, as well as critical leadership at all levels to make further progress a reality.

The dialogue reaffirmed collective intentions of the MICs in Southern Africa to advance people-centered development by harnessing the potential of the demographic dividend and leveraging new emerging markets and smart digital economies. The participants – representing government, civil society organizations (CSOs), parliamentarians, academia, the private sector, UN system, young people and marginalized groups – made commitments to fulfil the Promise of Cairo for all irrespective of age, gender, income status, geographic location or physical ability.

## Have we Delivered on the Promise of Cairo? Perspectives from Young People

The Multi-Country What's Changed Dialogue closed with a strong set of indicative commitments by countries amplified by the voices of young people, who urged leaders at household, community, national and regional levels to commit to fulfilling the Promise of Cairo adopted 25 years ago.

"Why should it be easier for young people to access alcohol and other drugs than youth-friendly and responsive healthcare services...and economic opportunities? Governance deficits need to be addressed if UMICs in Southern Africa are to achieve sustainable development. Economic investments need to address drivers of disempowerment of the larger proportion of women and young people, with the sole purpose of closing inequality gaps. The face of inequality, marginalization, poverty and HIV in UMICs is young and female. Solutions should therefore be young and female," – Gogontlejang Phaladi, youth activist from Botswana.

Drawing on her experience of being a teen mom, Vergenie Thomas, a young person from Seychelles, said: "I am more concerned about [the alarming rising levels of] teenage pregnancy... amid youth complaints of the lack of youth centres to equip them with the right information as well as youth-friendly centres, where young people can access sexual and reproductive health services. Youth must be able to feel comfortable to access contraceptives without stigma or [being] denied access, especially young girls."

Emma Theofelus, a student from Namibia, said: "There is a need to translate policy into action and investments in areas of quality education across primary, secondary and tertiary levels, including technical and vocational education, for the current emerging markets in Southern Africa."



"We live in a time of 'Great Promise', as the Fourth Industrial Revolution is for the most part an enabler, amplifier and accelerator to achieve inclusive growth. We must, however, be careful to ensure it does not serve as a detriment to inclusive development," said Daisry Mathias, Presidential Advisor: Youth Matters and Enterprise Development, Namibia.

Youth also recognized their leadership roles in ensuring sexual and reproductive health, reproductive rights, women's empowerment and gender equality as well as serving as critical drivers in accelerating sustainable socio-economic development and environmental sustainability.



## Highlights of Indicative Commitments



“Upper Middle Income Countries in Southern Africa are among the most unequal countries in the world... we need to accelerate actions as the SDGs and Africa Agenda 2063 cannot be achieved without inclusion and equity.”

- Pieter van der Walt,  
Deputy Minister of Economic Planning

① **Reinvigorated political and financial leadership to accelerate the Promise of ICPD** is required to address governance deficits and promote solutions to create equitable wealth.

✿ Concerted actions by the political leadership at all levels to **achieve people-centered development**. This will entail renewed efforts to address governance deficits, ensure inclusive laws and policies backed with responsive enforcement systems, as well as inform targeted financial investments;

✿ Urgency in leadership is required to address persistent and rising levels of gender inequality, including unacceptably high levels of gender-based violence. This requires intensified actions to **address drivers, enforce protection measures and scale up multi-sectoral response systems**;

✿ Leadership is required to acknowledge growing income and social inequalities, which slows down MICs development, and to **take concerted action to close the inequality gaps**.



“Population dynamics in UMICs in Southern Africa illustrate falling fertility and mortality levels, as well as co-existence of a youthful and increasingly ageing population.”

- Obeth M. Kandjoze, Minister of Economic Planning and Director General of the National Planning Commission, Namibia

## 2 Understanding demographic diversity and its implications for sustainable development

✿ Understanding population dynamics across fertility levels, mortality and migration is necessary for **inclusive growth and prosperity**;

✿ The age structures in the UMICs, with lower dependency rates, a large youthful population, an increase in the working age population and growing ageing populations, **can be a catalyst for harnessing the demographic dividend and boosting economic transformation.**

However, this will only be achieved through rights-based policy actions and investments in addressing gaps in equitable access to quality education and health, achieving gender equality, promoting good governance and addressing high unemployment levels.

## 3 Timely availability and use of disaggregated data and evidence to guide people-centered development

✿ Advancing the use of digital technology to ensure timely **availability and use of disaggregated data** to guide inclusive laws and policies, resource allocation, programme design and implementation will ensure **appropriate targeting** to Leave No One Behind;

✿ There is a need to ensure a **balance between advancements in science, technology and innovation with creation of decent jobs for the large youth population.** Skills acquisition for young people, tailored to the emerging markets and developing economies, will be critical in this regard.

## 4 Addressing the paradox of wealth and inequality

“We need updated evidence and disaggregated data to urgently scale up the equipping of young people with the right information to help them make the right choices.”

- Monica Geingos,  
First Lady of the Republic of Namibia

“The equality of men and women is crucial, where both are entitled to equality in wages, freedoms, rights and choices. These are seen as prerequisites for development in post-independence Seychelles.”

Dr. Bernard Valentin, Principal Secretary, Ministry of Health, Seychelles

✿ Specific attention is required in **addressing various inequalities faced by women and youth in respective countries and SADC region.** These include ending preventable maternal and newborn deaths; reducing high levels of teenage pregnancy, which also entails ensuring all women and young people who need or want contraception and family planning have access to them, without judgement or discrimination; and addressing drivers of gender-based violence and harmful practices;

✿ **Reversing the growing trend of new HIV infections among adolescents and young**





**people**, curbing high levels of alcohol and substance abuse by young people, and addressing persistent youth unemployment;

✿ **Regional integration, trade and industrialization efforts** by national governments, SADC and the African Union need to ensure free and safe movement of women and youth within and across national borders;

✿ Addressing the issue of fewer women in the labour market requires **supportive policies for women to enter and stay in the labour force**, as well as a more equitable distribution of work in the household.

**5 A case in point: Resilient and functional health-care delivery systems to ensure equitable access to sexual and reproductive health services within Universal Health Coverage modalities**

✿ **Evidence-based and responsive universal health coverage benefit packages**, effective coverage of population groups, financial inclusion and client satisfaction dimensions were noted as typifying the needed social service delivery systems in countries. Social determinants of education, social protection, water, sanitation, food security and nutrition, housing and economic opportunities are

required to respond to the needs of current and future generations. The integration of SRH information and services across the life cycle within Universal Health Coverage is important;

✿ Health system **resilience to the effects of climate change** will define long-term impacts and threats to people and planet. Africa's position on rights-based and people-centered climate adaptation measures was underscored.

**6 Sustainable financing or 'oil for the wheels of sustainable development'**

✿ Accelerating financial leadership by state and non-state actors is required to achieve the much-needed transformative results. This will require actions by public and private actors with domestic and international financing sources that works for people and planet;

✿ Strong monitoring and accountability mechanisms to curb inefficiencies in spending and illicit financial flows were noted as fundamental.

As the world celebrates ICPD25 and UNFPA50, collaborating countries commended UNFPA on its contributions to achievements recorded in advancing people-centered development in UMICs in Southern Africa.





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