



## OUTCOME DOCUMENT OF THE **SECOND CHINA-AFRICA CONFERENCE ON POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT**

*Theme: South-South Cooperation for Population and Development and  
Achievement of Demographic Dividend in Africa*

8 – 10 JULY, 2018  
GUANGZHOU, CHINA

### **Preamble**

1. The second China-Africa Conference on Population and Development (CACPD), hosted jointly by the National Health Commission (NHC) of the People's Republic of China, China Population and Development Research Center (CPDRC), China Population Association (CPA) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) with local coordination supported by Guangdong Provincial Health and Family Planning Commission, and China South Medical University, aimed to reinforce consensus and strengthen South-South Collaboration (SSC) between China and Africa on population and development.
2. The conference attended by over 100 dignitaries, representing government ministries, academic/research institutions and think-tank agencies, and the UNFPA, discussed multi-sectoral strategies and policy solutions to harnessing demographic dividend in Africa, reflecting on the experiences and lessons from China and elsewhere.
3. The second conference reiterated the resolutions adopted at the first China-Africa Conference on Population and Development held in Nairobi during 18-19 April 2017 – hosted by the National Council for Population and Development (NCPD), Government of Kenya – highlighting policy priorities, shared goals and capacity strengthening to harness sustained demographic dividend in Africa, and embracing the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the roadmap outlined in African Union's (AU) Agenda 2063 with a reflection on the broader vision of the 'Africa We Want'.
4. Following the Nairobi meeting, the Government of China and the UNFPA launched the Population and Development South-South Cooperation Centre of Excellence (PDSSC) to facilitate technical capacity building in data collection, analysis and dissemination. The China-Africa collaboration developed a number of proposals addressing issues related to population



and development, sexual and reproductive health, and maternal and child health.

5. The Guangzhou conference was inspired by the commitments outlined in the Beijing Call for South-South Cooperation on Population and Development adopted at the Ministerial strategic dialogue held on 18<sup>th</sup> March 2016 in Beijing, aimed at addressing cross-cutting population and development issues including sexual and reproductive health, reproductive health rights, gender equality, economic and social development, the UN SDGs, the AU Agenda 2063 and the Roadmap on Harnessing the Demographic Dividend through Investments in Youth.
6. Demographic transition is a shift from high mortality and fertility to a state of low mortality and fertility. The fall in infant and child mortality, which is attributable to advancements in modern medicine and health care, better education, skilled health-sector workforce, better access to water and sanitation, technology, power and transport, and more generally improvements brought by economic and social progress, eventually leads to a fall in fertility rates. A fall in the fertility rate triggers a major change in the age structure of the population. When the generation of the baby boomers moves into working age, which is often defined between age 15 and 64, there are relatively fewer dependents per person in the working age. This expansion of the working-age generation lasts for 30 - 40 years depending upon the country, as people will ultimately move out of working ages, which offers the opportunity to realize a demographic dividend.
7. The demographic dividend is not an automatic process of demographic change, it rather results from the empowerment, education and employment of young people who move into working age. If societies are able to productively engage young people entering working age, then it can lend a boost to economic growth, and because there are relatively few dependents, countries can increase their investments in economic and human capital, generating a virtuous cycle of social and economic development.
8. The realization of the “first demographic dividend” which comes with the expansion of the absolute and relative working-age population, is one of the best ways for countries to prepare for the realization of a ‘second demographic dividend”, or longevity dividend, which comes with the accumulation of physical and human capital, a growth in productivity, and opportunities for active and healthy ageing.
9. Realizing a demographic dividend requires multi-sectoral interventions and investment. Indeed the most fundamental requirement is building skills and capabilities of people and ensuring their rights and freedom to achieve their full potential. Young people need opportunities to gain appropriate quality education, skills and experience to succeed in a competitive global job market – which demands more knowledge, skills, competency and technical expertise. Dividends will be constrained without simultaneous investments in decent job creation, good governance, infrastructure and enabling business environment.
10. More importantly, sustainable development cannot be achieved without ensuring that all women and men, girls and boys, enjoy the dignity and



human rights to expand their capabilities, secure their reproductive health and rights, find decent work, and contribute to inclusive and equitable economic growth. Developing policies and investments to secure that future, therefore, inevitably requires governments to systematically collect, monitor, analyse and use population and socioeconomic data for planning and forecasting, particularly to document the changing age composition and structure of the past, present and future populations.

11. It is essential that the investments in people and human capital, which can help to strengthen employability and entrepreneurship of people, be complemented by productive investment in the real economy and growth-oriented economic policies, which in-turn strengthen productive capacities and create work opportunities. Both conditions must be met to help countries realize the demographic dividend and accelerate social and economic development.

### ***Challenges and prospects for Africa***

12. The vision 'Africa We Want' articulated in Agenda 2063 aspires an "integrated, people-centered, and prosperous Africa, at peace with itself" - leaving no one behind, reflecting particularly on inclusive growth and sustainable development; a people-driven development addressing the potential of African people, especially its women and youth, and caring for children; and an Africa as a strong, united, resilient, and influential global player and partner.
13. Africa is the second most populous continent with diverse demographic, social, economic and cultural attributes. Among African countries, only Mauritius has completed fertility transition, and another 5 out of 56 countries are rapidly converging towards a demographic transition without possibly realizing a demographic dividend. On the other hand, while most countries are in the process of experiencing a demographic transition, the situation is largely uncertain and complex in a few conflict and post-conflict countries.
14. According to the 2017 revision of the UN world population prospects, by 2050, most African populations with an annual current growth rate exceeding 2%, will almost double its current size. The faster decline in child mortality levels seen over the last decade and the increase in demand for family planning along with improvements in female school enrolment suggest that a rapid demographic transition is possible across Africa in the near future. However, fertility rates have remained persistently high and varied in the region for economic and socio-cultural reasons including widespread poverty, low female education attainment rates and culturally rooted desire for larger families. A few countries particularly in the East and Southern African region have recently shown considerable progress in gradually reducing fertility through investment in family planning. However, despite sustained economic growth achieved over the last decade, poverty and inequalities in wealth, education and health remain a critical concern in most countries within the region. On the other hand, religion and cultural



beliefs continue to exert influence on couple's fertility decisions in many African countries.

15. Africa has a larger representation of youth population: over three-fourth of its population is below 25 years. However, the vast majority of the youth population are poorly educated, modestly skilled and unemployed, which put enormous pressure on family and national resources. To harness and sustain successful demographic dividend would inevitably require consideration of comprehensive population and family planning policies, financial sector reforms, larger investment in infrastructure projects and manufacturing sector, good governance and stability, investment in human capital, technology development, creation of high-productivity jobs, and opportunities for innovation and competition.
16. A strategic and region-based approach to harnessing demographic dividend in Africa would be to prioritize efforts for accelerating demographic transition by lowering fertility and child mortality through greater investment in family planning, health, and education. Equally important is the need to: promote gender equality in education; prevent child early and forced marriages; gender-based harmful practices; and enable opportunities for young women to participate fully in the labour market. Through proper investment in health, education and human capital, a skilled and healthy labour force can be generated to enhance greater productivity and economic growth.
17. Africa is confronted with significant demographic and developmental challenges. Population projections show that, by 2050, over one-half of the African population will live in urban areas. The urbanisation process in Africa, so far, has been largely unplanned. Rapid urbanisation is also driven by high volumes of rural-urban migration and mobility, especially of young people with little or no skills and professional competency. Climate change and related changes in environmental conditions further push people, especially those engaged in agricultural sectors, from rural areas to urban areas in search of employment opportunities. Youth unemployment is also high in many African cities, which puts further strain on households.
18. On the other extreme, with reduction in under-five mortality attributed to infectious diseases including malaria and HIV and improvements in life expectancy, the absolute number of older people has also begun to increase steadily across Africa. The emergence and re-emergence of disease threats such as Ebola along with a high burden of chronic and non-communicable diseases exacerbate the situation and increases uncertainty. The prospects for a potential 'second demographic dividend' in Africa would be determined by higher per-capita income, greater accumulation of savings, reduced disease burden, and an active and healthy ageing.

### **Experiences and lessons from China**

19. China's experience of demographic dividend and economic growth, unlike other Asian tiger economies, is unique in terms of scale, reforms and governance. The country experienced sustained economic growth for over the last four decades, with an annual GDP growth rate as high as 10% by 2010 with an average annual population growth rate around 0.56%, and China has recently emerged as the world's second largest economy. The



Chinese experience clearly demonstrates that the window of opportunity created by demographic transition, only if combined with appropriate economic reforms, investment, social development policies and stability, shall be turned into demographic dividend and become an important source of economic growth.

20. Since the foundation of the People's Republic in 1949, Chinese population experienced high birth and death rates until late 1960s. In the 1970s, China adopted a '*later, longer and fewer*' family planning policy with the notion of delayed marriages, longer birth intervals and smaller families as a means to reduce high population growth rates and facilitate economic development. The birth control efforts were intensified in 1979, along with the announcement of an open market economy encouraging foreign companies to invest and operate in China. Meanwhile, family planning policies were adapted to the development needs and priorities, disaggregated by geographical regions, residence and ethnicity.
21. The reform and opening-up drive initiated in 1978 represents an important milestone in modern China. The reform involved phased expansion from rural areas to cities, from coastal to inland regions, from piloting to scaling up, and from economic system reform to comprehensive and in-depth reforms. A series of economic and social policies were implemented in the process that complemented the demographic window especially through employment generation interventions, investment in human capital, establishment of special economic zones, enhanced labour productivity, women's empowerment and foreign direct investment.
22. Towards the end of 1980s, population in China gradually presented an olive-shaped age structure characterized by a larger cohort of working age population in the middle and smaller cohorts of children and older people at both ends. The working-age population increased steadily with a relatively low dependency ratio, thereby creating a demographic window of opportunity and a favourable age structure.
23. By early 1990s, China was able to successfully lower and sustain fertility rates below replacement level. The progress of Chinese family planning policy was attributed to several influential factors: rigorous governance, grassroots level public health awareness campaigns, effective coordination and provision of quality family planning services and follow-up, education and human development, synchronised social and economic investment,

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