

UNION FOR AFRICAN POPULATION STUDIES (UAPS)
9th African Population Conference
Lilongwe, 2024
THE LILONGWE DECLARATION

The Government of Malawi and the Union of African Population Studies (UAPS) organized the 9th African Population Conference in Lilongwe, Malawi from 20th – 24th May 2024. At the end of the five-day meeting, a conference declaration called the Lilongwe Declaration was presented at the closing ceremony.

THE DECLARATION:

As participants of the 9th African Population Conference, held in Lilongwe, Malawi, from 20th to 24th May 2024, we acknowledge that in line with the overarching theme of the conference “**Road to 2030: Leveraging Africa’s Human Capital to Achieve Transformation in a World of Uncertainty**”, considerable progress has been made across the continent in the implementation of recommendations from the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) held thirty years ago in Cairo.

Progress across countries has been uneven, meaning the agenda emanating from Cairo remains unfinished as work must continue, not just to address the substantive issues but also to close the geographic differentials seen across the African space. The need to address the defined issues at the same time that new challenges emerge calls for us, as Africans, to intensify our response to the salient population and development issues that still confront our countries, and our continent as a whole.

As a continental body,

- a) We fully **recognize** that Africa, generally, has embarked on a demographic transition that heralds prospects for a demographic dividend that we must work harder to harness.
- b) We fully **appreciate** the evolving demographic profile the ongoing transition portends for the continent, as well as the opportunities and challenges presented thereby.
- c) We fully **acknowledge** the uneven demographic and developmental progress across countries and the implications in terms of the variegated efforts required.
- d) We **articulate** the enduring need for our African governments to continue on the path of *good* governance, in order to attain *greater* accountability, and forward the *greatest* commitment to rooting out corruption.
- e) We **contend** that the salient lessons from the 9th African Population Conference evidence, clarify and support the population-development linkages that undergird the interventions that African governments must invest in to improve population health and wellbeing on the continent.

CALL TO ACTION:

Committing to work even more collaboratively and assiduously with our national governments, private sector, civil society organizations, media, and development partners to address the extant population-related development challenges to attain the Africa we all desire, **we ask African governments to pledge to:**

1. Mainstream population issues in all medium- and long-term development planning.
2. Strengthen coordinating units to ensure cross-sectoral collaboration in the implementation and delivery of a robust development agenda.
3. Demonstrate their belief in the extant evidence-to-policy agenda by committing African resources for research and capacity building, particularly of young scholars, and exercising leadership in promoting the utilization of research for evidence-based decision making.
4. Support **civil society organizations, the media, and the private sector** to play their respective roles in Africa's development through programming, financing, and holding governments to account.

Finally, we call on African and Africanist researchers to:

1. Demonstrate belief in the autonomy of African researchers by taking up leadership of the conduct of demography on the continent and beyond. (As African researchers we must believe in ourselves, believe that African research has matured, and therefrom assume leadership of demography, globally).
2. Recognize that our superior understanding of our continent implies a greater comprehension of the context we live and work in, still requires us to listen, engage, and encourage our brothers and sisters around the world to join us in research endeavors.
3. Be confident in our research leadership ability by defining the emanating projects from the ground up, while still being open to alternate opinions and critiques.
4. Appreciate that research that resides on shelves is necessarily research that will be underutilized and that, concomitantly, research that is "good research" should be research that is available to all.
5. And, finally, have the humility to acknowledge that there is not just one truth in science, and that other perspectives actually enhance our search for, and approach to, the truth.

WE HAVE ALWAYS CALLED OURSELVES OUT TO ACTION AND NOW THE TIME HAS COME FOR US TO ACTUALLY "DO" THE ACTION. WE MUST TAKE ADVANTAGE OF OPEN WINDOWS, SUCH AS THAT OF THE DEMOGRAPHIC DIVIDEND, BEFORE THEY CLOSE.