



**Population and Development Parliamentary and Policy Forum
9th African Population Conference
“Securing the Future of Our People”**

PREAMBLE

COGNISANT of the various declarations, protocols and agreements to accelerate progress in population and development in Africa over the last 30 years, including the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) Programme of Action; Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); African Union Agenda 2063; Abuja Declaration on health financing; Dakar Framework for Action on education; Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (Maputo Protocol); and African Union Data Policy Framework among several others;

COGNISANT of the efforts by the African Union in addressing emerging megatrends, threats and opportunities such as climate change, pandemic preparedness and artificial intelligence;

BUILDING on the successes that the continent has registered so far, including average life expectancy increasing from 65 years in 1994 to more than 73 years in 2024; girls reaching parity with boys in primary and secondary school enrolment; women representation in government and other leadership positions increasing; maternal and child mortality declining by one-third; and family planning accessible to millions more women and couples;

ACKNOWLEDGING that 77 percent of the population in Africa comprises persons aged below 35 years who deserve the best care and nurturing if a prosperous future for Africa is to be secured;

AWARE that Africa's young population is projected to make up 40% of the world's youth by 2030, with the potential to spearhead global entrepreneurship and innovation;

AWARE that Africa's population of 1.5 billion people is projected to grow to 2.5 billion by 2050 when Africa will house a quarter of the global population;

RECOGNISING that prioritising investments in education, skill development, governance and job creation will turn Africa's growing population into quality human capital to drive socioeconomic transformation through the demographic dividend;

AWARE that African countries face challenges in leveraging their youthful population for labour market demands, particularly in critical sectors like agriculture and science and technology;





RECOGNISING the great potential presented by the youth bulge; contribution of adolescents and youths to achieving the regional development agenda; adolescents' and young people's potential in reaping the demographic dividend amid high unemployment rates and skills mismatch; investing in their health, education and skills development is paramount;

ACKNOWLEDGING that the current rural-to-urban migration and high birth rates in urban areas within African countries is exerting pressure on social service provision;

NOTING that rapid population growth without clear implementable plans and development agenda for ensuring that our people live in dignity and are well skilled exacerbates our poor indicators including poverty and disease levels, undermines our resilience to the effects of climate change, and puts immense pressure on our environment and natural resources, leading to environmental degradation and food insecurity;

AWARE of the continued necessity to enhance healthcare access and reduce mortality rates on the continent;

ACKNOWLEDGING the continued prevalence of harmful traditional practices and acts which undermine the health and wellbeing of our populations;

CONCERNED that most African countries are faced with the problems of high teenage pregnancies and related consequential concerns including maternal mortality; the increasing number of HIV infections among adolescent girls and young people; sexual and gender-based violence against children, adolescents and young people; continuing cases of the practice of harmful traditions including female genital mutilation (FGM) and child marriages; limited access to health services and life skills education for adolescents and young people; cyber bullying and mental health among young people, and the inconsistent and inadequate policies and regulatory frameworks to address these concerns;

NOTING the need to fast track the improvements on health and education indicators affecting children, adolescents and young people in Africa and the need to provide an environment that will increase school attendance and learning outcomes; that will facilitate equal access to health and education services for all children, adolescents and young people; and guarantee safety for the most vulnerable groups in all spaces in society;

AWARE of the need to provide quality relevant skills and opportunities, especially in digital technologies to our youth, to equally participate in the emerging new order;





COGNISANT of the dangers presented by technology in eroding security and fuelling inequality in areas that are not connected; exposure to online abuse and harmful content;

NOTING the need for better partnerships and coordination across the continent to achieve *The Africa We Want*;

AWARE that that laws, policies and programmes on the continent must be informed by the best-available evidence that is tailored to the specific contexts and needs of Africa;

DECLARATION

We as parliamentarians commit to:

Population and Economic Development

- ensure development planning and budget processes are aligned to the needs of our populations as informed by the data and evidence from the different sectors, including health, education, agriculture and environment
- ensure stronger coordination and implementation mechanisms for population and reproductive health programmes and greater leadership of parliamentarians across Africa to champion these issues
- ensure that our budgets are aligned with game-changer interventions to propel the harnessing of the demographic dividend, with particular focus on human capital development approaches that open opportunities for girls and women
- oversight budget implementation to eliminate wastage and ensure allocated finances meet the needs of our populations
- appropriate more resources for productive sectors including climate-smart agriculture, adoption of advanced technologies and data-driven farm operations, to optimise and improve sustainability in agricultural production and ensure food security

Migration and Urbanisation

- advocate for decentralised services for equitable benefit by all our people from development programmes
- resolve to enact laws that promote equitable distribution of development and greater investments in rural areas
- enact laws that will ensure youths are adequately skilled to gain employment within and outside the continent
- advocate for international cooperation to ensure the protection of the dignity and rights of African youths who seek employment outside the continent





Data and Methods

- foster greater collaboration with national, regional and international experts to understand demographic dynamics and develop plans that are suited to the needs of our people through the design of cost effective and sustainable interventions
- ensure that appropriated budgets for every sector include resources that are intended for research and evidence use purposes
- undertake to use research evidence and data to inform the development and implementation of policies and the enactment of laws
- appropriate more resources that strengthen and harmonise data governance frameworks in Africa to bolster intra-African digital trade, entrepreneurship, and digital innovation while safeguarding against risks and harms of the digital economy

Health and Mortality

- enact laws that improve access to healthcare through decentralised initiatives and strengthened primary healthcare systems, including primary healthcare and maternal health services
- appropriate resources towards greater investments in healthcare to fast track the achievement of universal health coverage (UHC) within our countries
- appropriate more resources towards preventative healthcare, including for the nutrition of young children
- strengthen African regional inter-governmental mechanisms to hold each other accountable in achieving UHC
- enact laws that create and increase domestic financing mechanisms for health and population programmes, including innovative financing and efficiency in utilising allocated resources

Sexual and Reproductive Health

- strengthen the legal frameworks relating to child defilement and other sexual and gender-based violence
- advocate for age-appropriate life skills as shall be determined by each country that ensures the protection of children, adolescents and young people
- facilitate partnerships and collaborative mechanisms between governments and community gatekeepers, including faith-based organisations and traditional rulers, for effective implementation of appropriate SRHR initiatives, especially for girls and women





Education and Human Development

- allocate greater resources to equip our youths with the right skills to thrive in a digitised and technology-driven world
- appropriate more resources towards investments in education and skill development for youths

Environment and Climate Change

- strengthen laws governing the environment and natural resources to protect them against exploitation that is largely driven by corruption and illicit financial flows
- enact laws that strengthen the legal frameworks for industrialisation as well as intellectual property rights, in order to engage in value-addition of our natural resources rather than the current export of our raw materials
- foster intra-Africa collaborative mechanisms on sustainable management of environmental and natural resources to avert the negative impacts of climate change
- appropriate more resources towards climate adaptation and disaster preparedness to protect our populations from the harmful impacts of climate change

Adolescent Health

- resolve to pay greater attention to the laws, policies, and gender data on factors affecting adolescents and young people with a view to providing protective policy and legislative environments which will ensure safety for children in society and zero tolerance for harmful acts including teenage pregnancies, FGM, child marriages and sexual and all forms of violence against children, adolescents and young people, including those with disabilities and in fragile environments
- interrogate and monitor budget processes to ensure greater allocation, appropriation and ring-fencing of resources for improving the education, health, social and economic wellbeing outcomes and other indicators affecting adolescents and young people, including facilitating access to menstrual health and hygiene products for girls

Youth and Development

- enact laws and develop relevant policies and frameworks that would encourage greater investment in industry to grow our economies and create employment opportunities for our youths
- appropriate more resources on youth skills development to promote entrepreneurship and innovation on the continent
- enact enabling laws to promote greater youth participation in governance and leadership positions





Peace and Security

- enact laws that ensure the proper use and control of firearms and weapons to avoid the wanton destruction of lives, especially of our youth
- enact laws that promote co-existence among African citizens (including tribe, race and religion), to enable our youths and entire population live in peaceful and enabling environments to develop their potential
- strengthen laws that protect children during times of civil unrest and conflict
- appropriate adequate resources to capacitate our security agents in ensuring that there is a focus on conflict prevention and the deterrence of security threats in advance
- strengthen existing mechanisms on peace and security which eliminate unnecessary foreign intervention on issues related to African security

Partnerships

- establish strategic partnerships with national, regional and global stakeholders, including civil society organisations and research institutions, in areas of research to collaborate in evidence generation and leverage expertise in understanding Africa's demographic dynamics
- facilitate strategic partnerships among parliaments within the sub-regions, intra-Africa and globally.
- work towards connecting various regional parliamentary networks on education, health, population and sustainable development, and sexual and reproductive health to explore forming an umbrella network to stimulate leadership and accountability of parliamentarians on population, reproductive health and sustainable development issues. The process will start with national caucuses setting priorities to be addressed in the next 12 months, and a follow-up Africa-wide convening to report on commitments and share experiences in 2025
- engage in regional peer review in legislative frameworks, fast track new and existing laws, and support implementation by ensuring allocation of adequate budgets and political leadership support and to hold each other accountable to the implementation of the Lilongwe resolutions

OUR PLEDGE

We the parliamentarians from the different regions of Africa gathered here for the 9th African Population Conference have made these commitments in an effort to secure the future of our people.

