

Presentation Script—English Version

The presentation opens with a black screen. When ready to begin, click the forward arrow.

► Click Forward

The nations of sub-Saharan Africa are poised to take off.

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Throughout the continent, Africans are healthier, and mortality for children under 5 has fallen to only 13%.

Children are better educated, with nearly two-thirds of youth completing primary education—more than ever before.

And Africa has joined the information age, with 33 percent of people subscribing to mobile phones, rising from almost none just 10 years ago.

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To stay on this course, UN member nations have agreed to the Millennium Development Goals, a set of global commitments designed to help countries reduce poverty and achieve their development potential.

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Goal number one is to eradicate extreme poverty, and specifically, to cut in half the proportion of people whose income is less than \$1 per day. And some progress has already been made.

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Between 1990 and 2005, the proportion of people living in extreme poverty in sub-Saharan Africa dropped from 58% to 51%. This is a great achievement, BUT...

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...due to population growth, the **absolute** number of people living in poverty actually increased. We see here that in 1990, the population of sub-Saharan Africa was approximately 513 million people. And 58%, or 298 million people, were living in poverty.

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In 2005, the population of sub-Saharan Africa had **increased** to approximately 762 million people. Although the proportion in poverty has gone down to 51%, due to the increase in the overall population size, that 51% equals 388 million people.

So in fact...

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...throughout the sub-Saharan African countries, the total number of people living in poverty has increased by 90 million in the last 15 years. That's almost equivalent to the entire population of the country of Ethiopia. At the same time, there is extreme income inequality in many African countries.

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What can we do to reduce poverty among African families?

One proven solution is family planning.

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Throughout sub-Saharan Africa, there has been a substantial increase in family planning use in the last 20 years. Between 1990 and 2010, the proportion of married women using any form of family planning nearly doubled, from 12% to 23%.

But despite this progress...

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...sub-Saharan Africa still has the highest regional fertility rate in the world, averaging more than 5 births per woman. This rate is...

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...twice that of Asia, and...

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... nearly 3 times as high as Europe.

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At the same time, 22% of married women in sub-Saharan Africa have an **unmet need** for family planning. The term “unmet need” means that these women want to delay their next birth or not have any more children, but are not using any form of family planning.

So while there are many couples using family planning in sub-Saharan Africa right now, there are many more who WANT to do so. Meeting this need for family planning can help to reduce poverty among African families.

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With family planning, women and couples can choose the timing and spacing of each pregnancy. It also ensures that couples can have the number of children they want and can care for.

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This can reduce the economic burden on poor families; and at the same time, women have more time to work outside the home, and meet the needs of their families.

Together, these lead to increased family income.

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And with more income, families can invest in health, food, and education for each child.

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Families can also invest in their own livelihoods, and break the cycle of poverty.

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At the same time, at the national level, family planning can lead to more manageable population growth.

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With a slower growth rate, the government can better provide social services such as education and health care, can invest in economic infrastructure and job growth, and can sustainably manage natural resources for future development. The population of workers can also increase relative to the number of children.

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The result is increased economic productivity and growth for the entire nation.

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So family planning leads to poverty reduction and economic growth *both* at the family level, and at the national level.

And this is something we've actually seen happen in other countries around the world.

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Here we have a trend graph, where we can look at changes and trends over time. We're going to focus on the relationship between the average number of children per woman and Gross National Income in Bangladesh. Bangladesh is a country in South Asia that is a predominantly Muslim nation.

We are using Bangladesh as a case study because it is the only country with over 30 years of data and information about the economic benefits of family planning.

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On the left axis we have the average number of births per woman, which we call the fertility rate, and it goes from zero up to about 6 children per woman.

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On the bottom axis we have the Gross National Income per person, or GNI. This is in U.S. dollars, and it is standardized for what a dollar can buy today in the country. And GNI may be higher than the GDP because it also accounts for income received from outside the country. On this bottom axis, we go from \$0 over to \$3,000.

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So this blue bubble here represents Bangladesh, and in 1980, the fertility rate, or average number of births per woman, in Bangladesh was 5.5 — very similar to the fertility levels we see across sub-Saharan Africa today. The gross national income per person was only US\$280.

So let's move forward in time...

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In 1983 Bangladesh expanded its community distribution program to more rural areas, and you can see that fertility is dropping dramatically.

And then in the 1990s, Bangladesh focused on integrating services for both population and health. But you see that right around 3 children per woman, the gross national income per person starts to really increase.

And now, in 2008, Bangladesh has less than 3 children per woman and the national income per person is US\$1,460. This means that while the average family in Bangladesh today has two or three children fewer than their parents' generation, that family has **five times** the purchasing power. These changes in income at the family level are really quite dramatic.

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Researchers in Bangladesh have studied family planning use and impacts such as this for the last 30 years. They have been able to show that family planning not only helps couples to achieve their desired family size and spacing...

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...it also **directly** contributes to improved economic security for families and communities through larger incomes, greater accumulation of wealth, and higher levels of education.

In fact, this same pattern can be observed around the world.

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We're going back to our trend graph, and this time we have all the countries of the world on our graph, and each bubble represents a country.

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On the left axis we still have the average number of births per woman, and now it ranges from zero up to about 8.5.

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On the bottom we still have the Gross National Income per person, ranging from \$0 over to about US\$40,000.

The color of each bubble indicates the region.

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Starting with the red, we have East Asia and the Pacific...

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Orange is Central Asia and Europe...

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Yellow is for North and South America...

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Green is the Middle East and North Africa...

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the Light Blue is for South Asia...

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And the Dark Blue is for sub-Saharan Africa.

The size of each bubble represents the population size of that country—so the bigger bubbles have bigger populations.

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Now, through the middle here you can see a trend—as the average births per woman decreases, the income per person increases. And we also see some outliers from this trend—like these green Middle Eastern and North African (MENA) countries. This group includes some of those oil-rich countries...

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...like Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.

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And over here, this big red bubble is China. China has the largest population in 1980, but also one of the lowest levels of income per person.

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And we also see that in 1980, the dark blue sub-Saharan African countries are clustered toward the back of this trend—with higher levels of fertility, and lower levels of income.

Of course, there are some African countries that are exceptions...

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...like South Africa and Gabon.

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So let's look at what has happened since 1980.... As the years pass by you can see that as fertility is decreasing in countries throughout the world, income per person is increasing.

When we come to 2008, we see that all the countries of the world have moved toward that bottom, right corner.

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We see that China made really significant progress in improving the economy. But fertility in China is also very low—fewer than two children per woman. This allows for a very large workforce with a smaller youth population to support with social services like education and health.

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The same is true for India, this big light blue bubble.

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You can see that some of those Asian Tiger countries we hear so much about, like South

Korea and Singapore, have made major increases in income per person; but they also have very low fertility rates—close to ONE child per woman—again allowing for very large workforces in relation to the overall population size.

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And we see that the sub-Saharan African countries, while they've certainly made a lot of progress, are still clustered toward the back of this pack.

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So we're going to go back to the beginning of our trend graph and look at several countries in East Africa. We also decided to include some English-speaking countries in West Africa, such as Ghana and Nigeria, as well as some southern African countries, like Zambia. We can see these countries have lower levels of income and higher levels of fertility, between 6.5 and 8.5 children per woman.

Let's take a look at the progress these countries have made over time. And keep in mind that as time passes, new countries will appear on the trend graph.

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Once again, you can see that as fertility decreases in these particular African countries, income per person is increasing.

In 2008, we see that these countries have a lower total fertility rate, between 4 and 6.5 children per woman. At the same time, we can also see that all of the countries have higher levels of income. In fact, Nigeria, Ghana, and Kenya have a gross national income per person of over \$1,500. But family planning use still lags behind in these countries compared to other regions of the world.

One of the reasons why the countries in the bottom right corner have been able to make so much economic progress is that women started having fewer children. This set the stage for the country to better manage its population growth and reduce constraints on economic growth. When families are able to achieve their desired family size, they accumulate greater wealth over their lifetime. This allows them to contribute more to the economy, and invest in the development of the country.

However, this kind of progress is not automatic. The association between family planning and economic growth is further enhanced by the following additional investments:

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- Strengthening health systems to improve child survival and to support a healthier population;

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- Improving primary and secondary school completion rates, so that children have the knowledge and abilities to build a skilled workforce; and,

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- Stabilizing economic conditions to create more jobs and make sure that there are economic opportunities for a growing workforce.

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In today's financially strapped environment, family planning is a best buy for families, communities, and nations.

The improvements to economic development and poverty reduction can be achieved in a short time, *starting with families today*. Investing in family planning will help to achieve all of the Millennium Development Goals, and especially Goal Number One of reducing extreme poverty. There are actions that **you** can take to make this happen.

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1. Top political leaders must advocate for the inclusion of family planning as a key component of all relevant development programs, such as poverty reduction strategy papers and programs aimed at achieving the MDGS.

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2. Political leaders must also allocate sufficient funds for family planning in annual budgets at the national, sub-national, and district levels.

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3. Health sector leaders should partner with policymakers to issue policies integrating family planning into relevant health services, as well as ensure that services are available at all levels of health care.

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4. Leaders at all levels, in all sectors, should support slower population growth and issue public statements supportive of family planning to mobilize political and popular support.

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5. And religious and civic leaders should speak out about the health and economic benefits of family planning.

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Through simple, effective interventions like family planning, countries can:

- Have healthier families.
- Reduce poverty at the household level.
- And spur economic growth throughout the country.

As the cycle of poverty is broken, the cycle of opportunity begins for each family... moving sub-Saharan Africa forward, achieving health and development goals and emerging as competitive nations in a global economy.