

► **Slide 1: OPENING SLIDE**

In the past few decades, Ghana has made some remarkable achievements...

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Our economy is growing.

We are better educated.

We are healthier than ever before...and we are living longer.

We are... a nation on the rise!

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But these gains are fragile, and not everyone is benefitting yet.

One in three Ghanaians lives below \$1.25 a day.¹ Why is there widespread poverty if our economy is growing?

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...Because our population is growing faster than our economy.

Today, we have 27 million people.²

And every year...

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...Ghana adds almost 700,000 more, making it one of the fastest growing countries in the world!³

¹ The World Bank, World Development Indicators, 2015, accessed at <http://databank.worldbank.org/> on April 19, 2015.

² United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division. *World Population Prospects: The 2012 Revision, DVD Edition (2013)*.

³ PRB calculations based on UN, *World Population Prospects*.

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What would this mean for our future?

Let's explore two scenarios:

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If we continue to have families with an average of 4 children, our country will grow to 60 million by 2050!⁴

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But if we start having smaller families and our population grows at a slower rate, we will reach a more manageable 40 million by 2050.⁵

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That's a difference of 20 million people – which is most of our population today!⁶

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The effects of a growing population have brought about significant changes, especially to our cities. Here's a photo taken in 1960 in Accra, when the city's population was only half a million and traffic was uncongested.⁷

⁴ UN, *World Population Prospects*; and Jean-Pierre Guengant, "Population and Development in Ghana: The challenge of harnessing the demographic dividend" presentation delivered at the seminar on "Harnessing Ghana's Demographic Dividend for Development, Accra Ghana, Sept. 24, 2013 accessed at www.afd.fr/home/pays/afrique/geo-afr/ghana/publications-ghana on April 19, 2015.

⁵ UN, *World Population Prospects*; and Guengant, "Population and Development in Ghana."

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ghana Statistical Service, 2010 Population and Development Census, National Analytical Report (Accra: Ghana Statistical Service, 2013): Table 4.2.

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... And here are our roads today ---a typical daily commute in Accra that now has a population eight times what it was in 1960!⁸

This is one of the challenges that we face as we struggle to improve our infrastructure to keep pace with the needs of our rapidly growing cities.

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Another example of the stress that population growth has on Ghana's resources and infrastructure is in the provision of energy.

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Over the last decade, as Ghana rapidly urbanized and more and more households connected to the power grid, demand for electricity went up by about six percent each year.⁹

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Our infrastructure, however, has had a hard time keeping up, and the supply of electricity grew by only three percent per year during the same time period.¹⁰

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⁸ Ghana Statistical Service, *2010 Population and Development Census*.

⁹ Resource Center for Energy Economics and Regulation, "Guide to Electric Power in Ghana," (Accra: University of Ghana Institute of Statistical, Social and Economic Research, 2005) , accessed at http://www.beg.utexas.edu/energyecon/IDA/USAID/RC/Guide_to_Electric%20Power_in_Ghana.pdf on April 20, 2015.

¹⁰ Resource Center for Energy Economics and Regulation, "Guide to Electric Power in Ghana"; Energy Commission, Ghana, "2013 Energy (Supply and Demand) Outlook for Ghana," (Accra: Energy Commission, Ghana: 2013), accessed at <http://energycom.gov.gh/files/Energy%20Commission%20-%202013%20Energy%20Outlook%20for%20Ghana.pdf> on April 20, 2015.

Due to this gap between supply and demand, we are currently experiencing frequent blackouts and power outages regularly.

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Managing future population growth is one critical step in helping Ghana manage its long-term energy supply challenges.

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Growth in both urban and rural areas will increase demand for other social services, such as hospitals and schools.

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The government will have to use more resources which will strain the national budget and limit investments in other vital areas. This would slow economic growth with fewer jobs, put more pressure on our natural resources, and lower quality of life.

How will we achieve our national development plan if the population continues to grow so rapidly?

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What can we do to ensure families in Ghana have a better future?

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One way is by addressing the reproductive health needs of families with a special focus on family planning!

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Research shows that voluntary family planning:

- Improves the health of women and children
- Boosts social and economic growth and development
- And helps to reduce poverty

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Family planning would help us change the age structure of our population. This is the number of people who are young, middle-aged or old.

When there are more working-age adults to support children and the elderly, this can lead to a more rapid economic growth for the country.

Family planning is a key missing link to achieving our development goals.

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Let's look at an example of how changing the age structure and lowering fertility affects the economy.

Here is Thailand's population in 1960. Each bar of this diagram shows how many people are a certain age.¹¹

It looks like a pyramid because when couples have many children, more people are in the younger age groups at the base of the pyramid.

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In 1960, more than 40 percent of Thailand's population was under the age of 15, and women had an average of six children. The government recognized that rapid population growth hindered economic development, and established policies aimed at slowing it.¹²

¹¹ UN, *World Population Prospects*.

¹² Ibid.

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During the next 25 years, Thailand's national economic and social development plans centered on lowering fertility rates throughout the country by providing and increasing access to voluntary family planning services.¹³

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By the 1990s, women were having an average of two children each.¹⁴

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And by 2010, we see that the age structure has transformed, with a smaller portion of young people at the base.¹⁵

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Now, there are more working-age adults than non-working age people, and they will be part of a productive labor force for many years.

Thailand has been able to achieve what is called a demographic dividend...

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...—when a country's change in *age structure* and investments in key sectors, such as health, education, the economy, and governance speeds economic growth.¹⁶

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¹³ United Nations Population Fund, *Impact of Demographic Change in Thailand* (Bangkok: UNFPA, 2011).

¹⁴ UN, *World Population Prospects*.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ David E. Bloom, David Canning, and Jaypee Sevilla, *The Demographic Dividend: A New Perspective on the Economic Consequences of Population Change* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2003).

Ghana's age structure today looks like Thailand's in 1960.¹⁷

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We have a very young age structure with 40 percent of the population under the age of fifteen, and an average of four children per woman.¹⁸

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If fertility remains high, by 2050 the working-age population will have to...

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...support more dependents on their income. This restricts the ability to save, reduces purchasing power, and leads to slower economic development.¹⁹

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But if couples have smaller families, with a national average of 2 or fewer children, we will see a much different picture in 2050. The age structure will have a higher proportion of working-age adults...²⁰

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...with fewer dependents to support. This means parents will have more resources to invest in their families' health, education and well-being.²¹

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¹⁷ UN, *World Population Prospects*.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ UN, *World Population Prospects*; and Guengant, "Population and Development in Ghana."

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

A side-by-side comparison shows the significant impact we can have on our country's age structure, depending on whether fertility stays high with a wide base as shown on the left, or whether it declines--with a narrowing base on the right.

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Family size will greatly influence how our population's age structure will transform in the years ahead.

So why is Ghana's population growing so rapidly?

Let's take a closer look at Ghana's fertility rates in last two decades.

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Though the average number of children per woman declined from 6.4 to 4.2 in the last 20 years, the sharpest part of the decline...

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...occurred by 1998, more than 15 years ago.²²

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Since then, the decline in fertility has stalled and fertility has remained at an average of 4 children per woman.

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²² Ghana Statistical Service (GSS), Ghana Health Service (GHS), and ICF Macro, *2008 Ghana Demographic and Health Survey* (Accra, Ghana: GSS, GHS, and ICF Macro, 2009); GSS, GHS and ICF Macro, *2014 Ghana Demographic and Health Survey Key Indicators* (Accra, Ghana: GSS, GHS, and ICF Macro, 2015).

Our most recent national survey shows that only one in five married women uses modern contraceptive methods.²³

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Yet, about one in three women in Ghana wants to delay or prevent another pregnancy, but is not using any method of family planning.²⁴

These women have what is called an unmet need for family planning. High rates of unmet need lead to high rates of unplanned pregnancies.

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In Ghana, more than one in three pregnancies are unplanned.²⁵

This is a problem because unplanned pregnancies are more likely to result in unsafe abortions and to be high-risk for both the mother and her baby.

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In fact, 10 women die every day from causes related to pregnancy or childbirth.²⁶

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And babies who are born less than 2 years apart are less likely to survive...

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²³ PRB calculations using 22.2% mCPR among married women based on GSS, GHS, and ICF Macro, *2014 Ghana Demographic and Health Survey Key Indicators*.

²⁴ PRB calculations using 29.9% unmet need for FP based on GSS, GHS, and ICF Macro, *2014 Ghana Demographic and Health Survey Key Indicators*.

²⁵ PRB calculations using 37% unplanned pregnancies based on GSS, GHS, and ICF Macro, *2014 Ghana Demographic and Health Survey Key Indicators*.

²⁶ PRB calculation based on *Trends in Maternal Mortality: 1990 to 2013*, estimates by WHO, UNICEF, UNFPA, The World Bank and the United Nations Population Division.

...than babies who are born 2 or more years apart.²⁷

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But, if Ghana's unmet need for family planning was met by 2030, 7,000 maternal deaths would be prevented²⁸...

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...and 380,000 children's deaths would be avoided.²⁹

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Family planning saves lives!

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What will it cost to meet Ghana's unmet need for family planning? It would actually save money overall.

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For the next 15 years, it would cost \$154 million dollars to meet our needs in family planning.

This translates into savings because as women are having smaller families, the government doesn't have to spend as much money to meet the needs of the population and can save money on costs related to...³⁰

²⁷ PRB calculations using 38.9% mistimed births and 19.9% unwanted births based on GSS, GHS, and ICF Macro, *2014 Ghana Demographic and Health Survey Key Indicators*.

²⁸ Futures Group calculations, December 2014

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid.

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...education

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...malaria

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...immunization

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...water

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...and maternal health.

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By saving money in other areas, investing to meet the unmet need for family planning would actually save Ghana \$349 Million!³¹

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Family planning is a best buy! We would save more than \$2 for every dollar spent on family planning.

³¹ Futures Group calculations, May 2015.

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Family planning is a key strategy for addressing rapid population growth. Combined with investments in health, education, economy and governance, it can reduce poverty and grow the economy, both at the family level and at the national level.

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Our national Growth and Development Strategy recognizes that population plays a key role in achieving our developmental goals.

The stage is set for us to increase our efforts.

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So what can be done now?

Leaders and policymakers can join together and take action to ...

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Ensure that family planning is a key component of all national development strategies.

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Include reproductive health and contraceptives in the National Health Insurance Scheme's benefit package.

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Increase access to family planning services at the community level by expanding the CHPS program, and

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And expand the group of policymakers and leaders who support family planning and mobilize political and community resources.

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The progress Ghana has made so far shows us that we can achieve even more. It is time to step up the pace.

Investing in family planning today is investing in the future of our country and people.

By recognizing the importance of population growth and taking action now, we can keep the nation on the path to becoming a higher-income country.

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