

# Zambia and Eastern Province Are on the Cusp of a Promising Future

Zambia has the potential to achieve a prosperous and competitive economy in the coming decades, but rapid population growth hinders its goal of becoming an upper middle-income country by 2030.<sup>1</sup>

## Rapid Population Growth Challenges Zambia's Ability to Provide for Its People

- Half of Zambia's 17 million people live in **poverty**.<sup>2</sup>
- The **unemployment** rate is 12.6%; the youth unemployment rate is 17.4%.<sup>3</sup>
- One in five married women (ages 15 to 49) have an **unmet need** for family planning—they want to space or limit childbearing but are not using a family planning method.<sup>4</sup>
- On average, Zambian women have five children.<sup>5</sup> At this rate, the population will increase to 24 million by 2030 and **more than double** to 41 million by 2050.<sup>6</sup>
- For every 100,000 live births, there are 252 **maternal deaths**.<sup>7</sup>
- To meet the basic needs of the population in 2030, the government will need to:<sup>8</sup>
  - Train and absorb 25,000 **doctors** and **nurses** and 115,000 **teachers**.
  - Educate more than 4.5 million primary and secondary school **students**.
  - Invest 37 billion Kwacha in **health** and **education**.



### Eastern Province...

- Fourth most-populated province—1.9 million people.<sup>9</sup>
- Fourth highest rate of poverty—70 out of every 100 people live in poverty.<sup>10</sup>
- Contributes 5.2% to Zambia's total GDP.<sup>11</sup>
- Second lowest unemployment rate—7.2%.<sup>12</sup>
- Second highest rate of family planning use—more than half of married women use a modern method of contraception, but one in five still have an unmet need for family planning.<sup>13</sup>
- Third highest adolescent pregnancy rate in Zambia—one in three adolescent girls (ages 15 to 19) have had a live birth.<sup>14</sup>

## With Investments in Family Planning and Reproductive Health, Eastern Province Can Help Zambia Achieve Upper Middle-Income Status

### HEALTH

Women in Eastern Province have an average of 5.8 children, while their mean ideal number of children is 4.6.<sup>15</sup> By expanding access to family planning and reproductive health services, women and couples will be better able to choose the timing and spacing of their pregnancies, meet desired family sizes, and improve child survival. These changes will help slow the country's rapid population growth and free up resources to address health issues like malnutrition, HIV, and malaria. Eastern Province is home to 13% of Zambia's malnourished children under age 5, and its mortality rate for children under age 5 is 115 per 1,000 live births—the highest in the nation.<sup>16</sup> The province's HIV prevalence rate is 9.3%—the third lowest in the nation.<sup>17</sup> In 2015, the incidence of malaria in the Eastern province was 370 per 1,000 people—the fourth lowest in the nation.<sup>18</sup>

## EDUCATION

In 2017, Eastern Province had more than 459,000 students enrolled in primary and secondary school, and 6,800 students received bursaries from the Ministry of General Education.<sup>19</sup> Only 18% of adolescent girls in Eastern Province completed secondary school, compared to the national average of 30%.<sup>20</sup> Well over half of girls in the province who experienced pregnancy in primary and secondary school that year did not return to school after giving birth.<sup>21</sup> Teenage mothers are more likely to experience adverse pregnancy outcomes, making it more difficult for them to pursue educational opportunities than young women who delay childbearing. Eliminating barriers to family planning for youth will enable them to avoid pregnancy and stay in school.

## ECONOMY

When girls are able to stay in school longer, they can attain higher-skilled jobs that allow them to better contribute to the economy and help increase the working-age population (ages 15 to 65). The working-age population supports Zambia's dependent population—those under age 15 and above age 65. Forty-nine percent of Eastern Province's population is dependent.<sup>22</sup> Supportive policies like expanded access to family planning and reproductive health services can help increase Zambia's working-age population relative to its dependent population. Such changes can create a more competitive workforce, decrease youth unemployment and poverty, and address rapid population growth.

### Recommended Actions for Sustainable Population Growth and Economic Success

To achieve sustainable population growth and meet national development goals, Eastern Province must:

- Use demographic data to inform development policies and programs, and invest in multisectoral approaches that integrate population issues, including age-structure dynamics.
- Increase prioritization and funding for and access to voluntary family planning and reproductive health services, with a focus on reducing unmet need and expanding access and services for young people.
- Improve educational outcomes by reducing adolescent pregnancy and ensuring that young mothers are able to stay in school.
- Invest in economic growth by creating youth employment and skills building opportunities.

## References

1. Central Statistical Office (CSO), Ministry of National Development Planning [Zambia], personal communication, March 2018; Republic of Zambia, CSO, 2015 Living Conditions Monitoring Survey Report; Republic of Zambia, Ministry of National Development Planning, Seventh National Development Plan 2017-2021.
2. CSO, Ministry of Health (MOH), and ICF, Zambia Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) 2018: Key Indicators (Rockville, MD: CSO, MOH, and ICF, 2019).
3. CSO, Ministry of Labour and Social Security, 2017 *Labour Force Survey Report* (December 2018).
4. Zambia DHS 2018: Key Indicators.
5. Zambia DHS 2018: Key Indicators.
6. Track20 and Population Reference Bureau (PRB) analysis of data from the Republic of Zambia, CSO, Ministry of National Development Planning, March 2018.
7. Zambia DHS 2018: Key Indicators.
8. Track20 and PRB analysis.
9. CSO, Ministry of Labour and Social Security, 2017 *Labour Force Survey Report*.
10. CSO, Ministry of National Development Planning, personal communication; Republic of Zambia, CSO, 2015 Living Conditions Monitoring Survey Report.
11. CSO, *National Accounts: Provincial Gross Domestic Product (GDP) Charts*, 2015.
12. CSO, Ministry of Labour and Social Security, 2017 *Labour Force Survey Report*.
13. Zambia DHS 2018: Key Indicators.
14. Zambia DHS 2018; Zambia DHS 2018: Key Indicators.
15. CSO, MOH, and ICF International, Zambia DHS 2013-14 (Rockville, MD: CSO, MOH, and ICF International, 2014).
16. Zambia DHS 2013-14.
17. Zambia DHS 2013-14.
18. Ministry of Health, National Malaria Elimination Centre, *National Malaria Elimination Strategic Plan 2017-2021* (January 2017).
19. Ministry of Education, Directorate of Planning and Information, *Educational Statistical Bulletin 2017* (March 2018).
20. Ministry of Education, Directorate of Planning and Information, *Educational Statistical Bulletin 2017*.
21. Ministry of Education, Directorate of Planning and Information, *Educational Statistical Bulletin 2017*.
22. CSO and USAID updated projections, 2018.

## Contact

### ADDRESS

Ministry of National Development Planning  
P.O. Box 30147, Lusaka, Zambia

TELEPHONE +260 211 252 395

WEBSITE [www.mndp.gov.zm](http://www.mndp.gov.zm)

