



UNFPA Regional Office for West and Central Africa  
Annual Report Executive Summary

2016

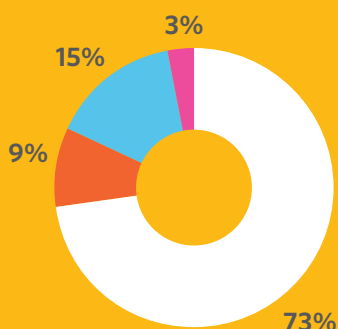
**Working together**  
to put young people and women first

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*The message is clear. We must put young people first if we are to harness the demographic dividend, build resilience and transform our region to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and the Africa We Want.*

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**DISTRIBUTION OF RESOURCES MOBILISED IN THE WCA REGION IN 2016**



- OECD-DAC
- Government contribution
- UN Transfers
- Private Sector

At the beginning of 2016, the African Union (AU) Heads of State and Government underlined this commitment by agreeing to focus on 'Harnessing the demographic dividend through investments in youth' throughout 2017.

It also asked UNFPA and other partners to help develop a roadmap with key deliverables and milestones for the year and beyond.

UNFPA West and Central Africa Regional Office (WCARO) is committed to supporting the region in this regard. Our proactive contribution to this continental priority corresponds with UNFPA's own strategic plan and its focus on improving people's lives – in particular young people, women and girls.

This strategic plan and its accompanying mode of engagement underline the need for a unified focus and an integrated approach – because by working together we can achieve so much more for the women and girls whose lives we seek to transform.

The AU's call has encouraged this partner-led approach to long-term development plans that will transform the continent and ensure shared prosperity whilst showing respect for our planet. By collaborating with others, we can better build the resilience of people, communities, health systems and countries.

This year, we have used that call as a lever to bring together and mobilise political leaders, parliamentarians, faith-based leaders, entrepreneurs from the private sector, researchers, scientists, voluntary groups and young people themselves, to proactively participate in delivering a better future.

The demographic dividend is so important in West and Central Africa (WCA) because nearly two-thirds of our population are under 24 years old. But it can only be harnessed by making strategic investments and policy interventions to allow parents to plan families better and to improve education, skills development, health systems, economic reforms, job creation, good governance and accountability.

The crucial factor is to bring about a demographic transition – a shift from high to low mortality and fertility levels and a resulting reduction of the dependency ratio. This transition is at the core of what UNFPA in WCA is striving for and at the heart of some of our ongoing regional flagship collaborative platforms.

Our focus is on improving the lives of women and young people but our overriding philosophy is to 'leave no-one behind'. If we bring about the demographic dividend by improving opportunities for young people, allowing mothers to plan their pregnancies and making childbirth safe for mother and child, the overall effect will make life better for the entire population – and we will, indeed, have helped ensure a life of dignity for all and realize the Africa We Want.

# 2016 Priorities

## Working in partnership to put young people first

In 2016, the team at WCARO and in our country offices prepared and actively engaged constituencies so that in 2017 we can focus on securing resources and moving forward actions to harness the demographic dividend in Africa.

We began new partnerships with the private sector, from collaborating with a technology company (CISCO) to prepare demographic dividend observatories to teaming up with a hotel chain (Radisson Blu) to fundraise for women suffering from obstetric fistula in Congo.

We brought faith-based leaders together to brainstorm ways of advancing family planning, ending child marriage and female genital mutilation and organized trainings for those in government responsible for developing policy.

We have helped young people voice their opinions and campaign for their needs by enabling them to participate in meetings with world leaders – as well as organize their own conferences.

Our partnerships with the Research Center for Economics and Applied Finance of University of Thies (CREFAT) and others are allowing us to offer solid research skills to countries as they work to prepare their own demographic profiles to plan for the challenges ahead.

Governments from across the world,<sup>1</sup> gave us the funding we need to train midwives and community nurses and provide family planning commodities to women and girls in some of the most remote areas of our region.

Former and current Heads of States pledged their support and commitment to bridge the generational gap and make a difference in the lives of our young people in the continent.

Thanks to sustained advocacy, parliamentarians are also fully onboard to pass and implement laws that will provide a safe environment for our young people to reach their full potential.

By cooperating, collaborating and communicating with our partners, we have seen improved results. In 2017, we will consolidate these partnerships and continue to drive their work forward.

1. Including Belgium, Denmark, France, Japan, South Korea, Sweden and the United Kingdom



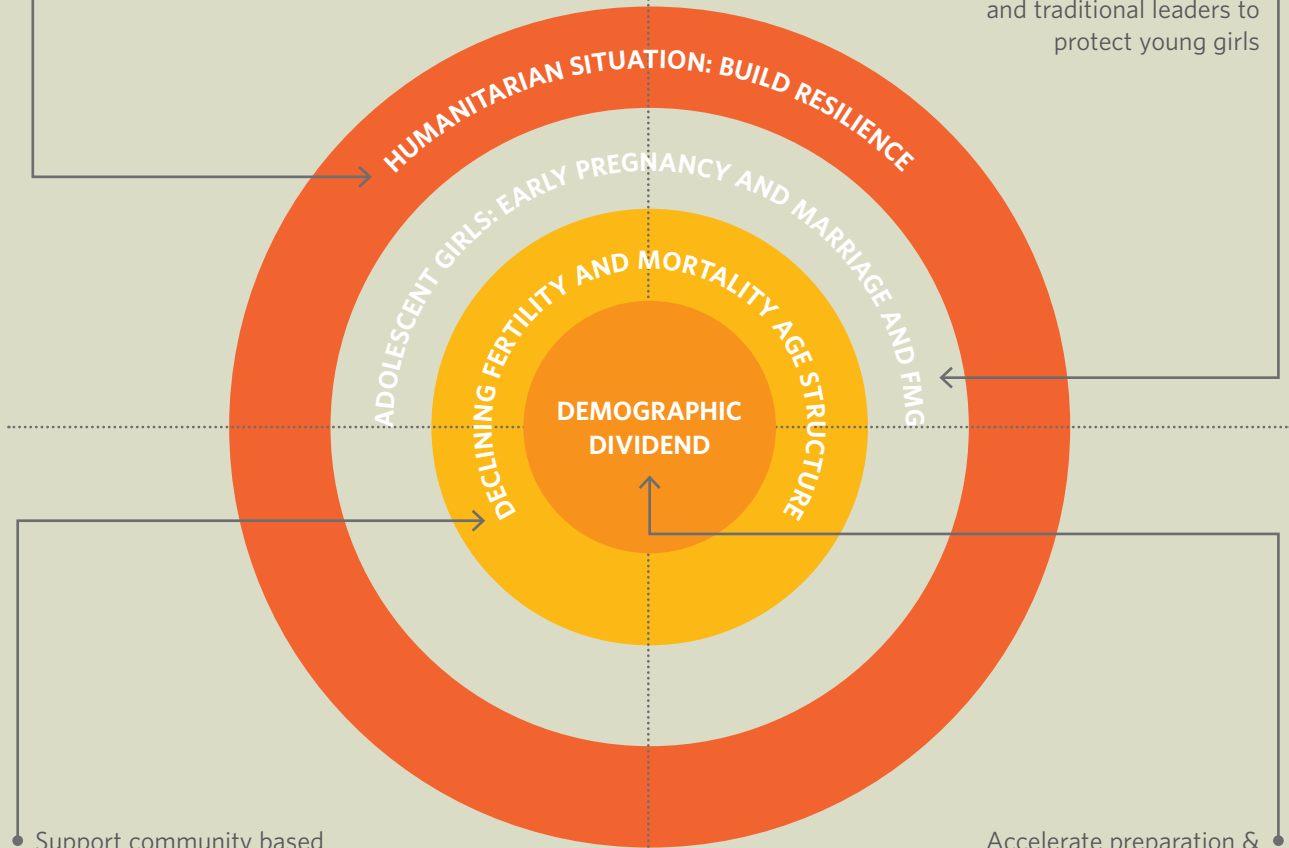
## 2016 PRIORITIES

### ADVANCE STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP

Addressing challenges and build resilience

### MOBILISE DOMESTIC & HUMAN RESOURCES

Support community based awareness through religious and traditional leaders to protect young girls



Support community based awareness through religious and traditional leaders on FP and the use of SRH services

Accelerate preparation & deployment of programming tools at national level (refer to the overall 9 step process)

### IMPROVE EFFICIENCY, ACCOUNTABILITY & EFFECTIVENESS (IMPACT)

### COMMUNICATE EFFECTIVELY



## Engaging Elders: Africa Forum of former Heads of State and Government.

The relationship between UNFPA and the African Forum was cemented through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that was signed on the occasion of the High-level Symposium on Demographic Dividend in June 2016 in Dakar, Senegal.

President Kaufmann of Mauritius and President Gebuza from Mozambique, together with Nigeria's Emir of Shonga and ministers from Cameroon, Cote d'Ivoire, Liberia and Sierra Leone, had participated in a brainstorming meeting to devise ways to facilitate high-level policy dialogue and intergenerational engagement.

As made clear by the **Regional Director during his encounter with former leaders at their Annual Assembly in Malabo** in August 2016, this collaboration with the Africa Forum includes momentum building around the demographic dividend with their peers and members. More specifically, it seeks to facilitate and promote the creation of incentives to provide young people with socio-economic opportunities to allow them to become agents of development and change across Africa.



## UNFPA and the United Religions Initiative Africa signed a partnership agreeing to work together at all levels in July 2016.

The agreement saw faith-based organizations and religious leaders pledge to play a leading role in the promotion of the demographic dividend across the region.

They agreed to join UNFPA's work to protect and empower young people by stopping child marriage, avoiding early pregnancy and ending female genital mutilation.

"Community and religious leaders can help us achieve large scale and sustainable progress we cannot deliver with billions of USD," said Mabingue Ngom, UNFPA WCARO Regional Director.

"It is crucial to ensure the involvement of religious and traditional leaders as indispensable partners and influencers."

# UNFPA WCARO and Country Office achievements in 2016

Over the course of 2016, we have committed to achieving the demographic dividend by investing in partnerships. We believe we can best achieve change by working closely with all those striving for a better future.

This past year has seen us work closely with regional and continental institutions including:

- the African Development Bank,
- the Africa Forum
- the Africa Parliamentary Forum on Population and Development
- the African Union,
- the Economic Commission for Africa,
- the Economic Community of West African States,
- the West African Development Bank (BOAD) and
- the West African Economic and Monetary Union (UEMOA).

Together, we have focussed efforts and engaged in partnerships to empower women and broaden investments that leverage the potential of Africa's young people.

We have worked with our UNFPA headquarters and others from the UN system as well as the World Bank to organise high-level discussions with a number of leaders and stakeholders. These discussions have in turn rallied a broad range of partners, from government officials to the private sector, to work collaboratively towards harnessing the demographic dividend.

UNFPA-supported research institutions, including CREFAT, have helped build local capacity and develop national demographic dividend profiles to form the base for sector-wide development.

Simultaneously, there has been a growing interest in regional initiatives that support national efforts. These include:

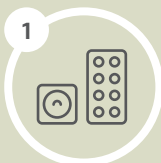
- the Sahel Women's Empowerment and Demographic Dividend (SWEDD) project,
- The Mano River Youth Development and the Demographic Dividend Initiative,
- the Muskoka Fund,
- the Ouagadougou Partnership and
- FP2020.

We have invested more than USD 33 million in purchasing contraceptives and introducing new long-term modern contraceptive methods.





## Another year of transforming and uplifting lives, UNFPA in West and Central Africa<sup>2</sup>:



We make sure FP services get to places with no other coverage: we provided more than **10.5 million couple years protection (CYP)**<sup>3</sup>.



We reached **more than 5.2 million new users of FP methods** to save lives, give women choices and improve their health and that of their children.



Proper use of FP commodities is estimated to have **prevented more than two million unintended pregnancies as well as nearly 600,000 unsafe abortions and saved almost 9,000 women from dying** in or from childbirth.



We provided **SRH services to more than 1.6 million adolescents and 2.3 million girls and women**, many of whom had suffered GBV.



We supported **more than three thousand obstetric fistula repairs surgeries and trained nearly 10,000 health care providers**.

2. Figures are from 2015 - UNFPA/WCAR Country Offices. 2016 data are yet to be compiled.
3. CYP is the estimated protection provided by FP services during a one-year period, based upon the volume of all contraceptives sold or distributed free of charge to clients during that period.



Other key actions include:

- Supporting and/or organizing high-level conferences and meetings to discuss the demographic dividend and engage stakeholders including former and current leaders, parliamentarians and faith leaders.
- Bringing young people into decision making and programme planning by enabling them to attend conferences and promoting their inclusion in national and regional policy planning. Initiatives including the #PutYoungPeopleFirst digital campaign, the Summit of Young African Leaders in Gabon, the Banjul +10 Summit and the Conference of Young People in Burkina Faso.
- Embracing a partnership-driven approach which saw us engage with new private sector partners including companies such as Radisson Blu, Coca Cola Africa Foundation, SOCO CIM, TIGO and Cisco.
- Supporting the establishment of a regionally-pooled procurement mechanism for reproductive, maternal, newborn, child health and nutrition commodities with a regional technical hub to improve the supply chain.
- Providing extensive training across the region – from training community health workers how to ‘task share’ and supply modern contraceptives to training government workers on interpreting their country’s population structure and spending patterns to develop better policy (the National Transfer Accounts model).
- Working in humanitarian crises – both natural and manmade – to deliver services including dignity kits and counselling for victims of gender-based violence. We reached more than 1.1 million people with emergency reproductive health services.
- Developing a regional network of religious actors to help combat social norms including child marriage, female genital mutilation and denying girls an education.



# Looking forward to 2017 and beyond: the road ahead

The UNFPA leadership is using the organization's business model to commit considerable resources and undertake strategic actions to support 23 governments in WCA as they use partnerships to maximize the demographic dividend.

In 2017, we will build on these ambitious efforts by reinforcing our advocacy and broadening our partnerships.

As well as leveraging the contribution and replicating the experience of initiatives like the Muskoka French Fund and SWEDD, UNFPA will also use more high profile engagements like those

organised in 2016 in Accra, Addis Ababa, Dakar and New York to engage governments, partners and other stakeholders in implementing the African Union's roadmap on demographic dividend in 2017.

The AU's theme of 'Harnessing the Demographic Dividend through Investments in Youth' has the potential to have far-reaching implications on the key issues that governments are contending with. With joined up action from governments and development actors, it could change the development trajectory of Africa and help us build the Africa We Want.

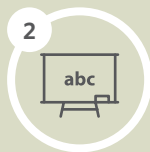


The overall objective of the *African Union Demographic Dividend Roadmap* is to guide and facilitate the implementation of the 2017 theme by member states, Regional Economic Commissions (RECs) and partners, through key deliverables, milestones and concrete actions.

**It spells out the necessary areas for key investments** (labeled as pillars). They are needed for countries to maximize their potential to harness a demographic dividend in the decades ahead. These gains must be sustained beyond 2017. These **thematic pillars** are:



**Pillar 1:**  
Employment and entrepreneurship.



**Pillar 2:**  
Education and skills development.



**Pillar 3:**  
Health and wellbeing.



**Pillar 4:**  
Rights, governance and youth empowerment.

In 2017, UNFPA WCARO will continue to mobilise resources and strategically engage stakeholders and constituencies. We will rationalize our human and financial resources to best support governments as they work to uplift and transform lives.

This work will include:

- Streamlining interventions and prioritizing resources by focusing on the **where, when, and how** UNFPA should carry out its mandate with a focus on the demographic dividend framework.
- **Leveraging partnerships and securing resources** to ensure all young people stay in school, have access to quality learning, benefit from health services including sexual and reproductive health services, be protected from forced migration, violent extremism, female genital mutilation, gender-based violence, early marriage and adolescent child-bearing, and participate in the workforce with a living wage. This will include optimising collaborations with youth organizations such as AfriYAN and ROJALNU as well as the Africa Forum, so as to make them more effective in support of the demographic dividend.
- **Creating learning opportunities and expanding experiences** around promising initiatives such as the Global Finance Facility, the SWEDD and increasing engagement with the private sector and other non-traditional donors. The focus will be on encouraging the sharing of information to educate and inform others, promoting South-South Cooperation and other knowledge sharing.
- **Mobilising action through high-level policy dialogue, strategic advocacy, effective communications and partnership building.** Continuing to **engage actors at all levels** (for example, faith-based organizations, youth actors, parliamentarians and the media) to build support. This brings communities, clients, beneficiaries and the broader public into the conversation on issues affecting sexual and reproductive health rights.

Having helped secure political will in 2016, UNFPA in WCAR intends to secure resources, advance partnerships and fully promote, support and implement interventions that put young people first in 2017 and the years ahead. We will continue to advocate for all those young men and women whose social and economic rights are denied, and wherever we see successes, we will work to replicate them. **We intend to deliver a region where every pregnancy is wanted, every childbirth is safe and the potential of every young person is fulfilled.**



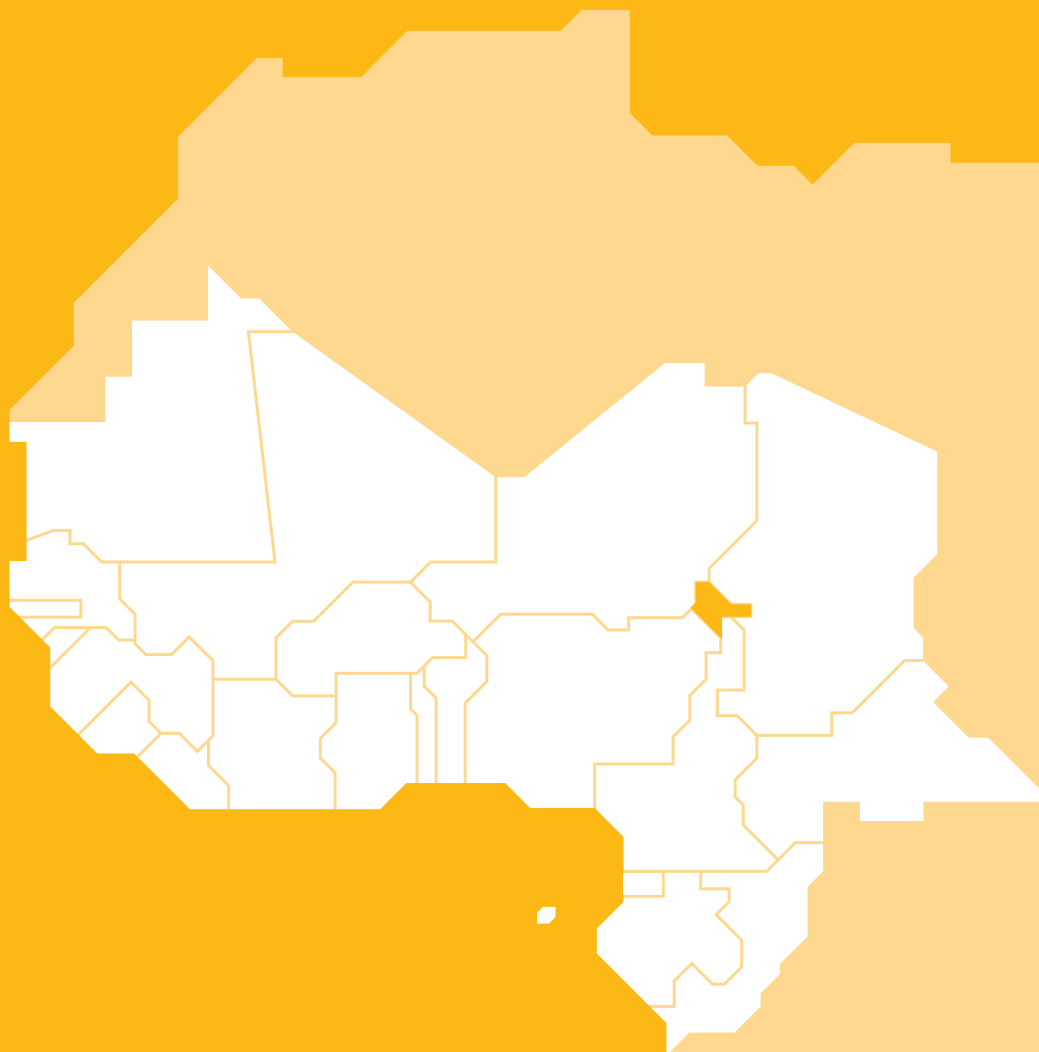
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Delivering a world where  
every pregnancy is wanted  
every childbirth is safe and  
every young person's  
potential is fulfilled



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