



GENEVA CONFERENCE ON
AFGHANISTAN

27 – 28 November 2018



Side Meeting Concept Note

Population Dynamics

28 November 2018, 08:00 – 09:30
Palais des Nations, Building C, Room I

BACKGROUND

Currently, the basis for population estimates in Afghanistan is the 1979 population census and the household listing carried out in 2003-2005. The data from these sources recorded an annual population growth rate of 2.03 percent placing the country as having the highest population growth rate among countries in South-Central Asia. Other sources of data recorded an annual population growth rate to be somewhere in the range of 2.4 to 3.1 percent.

The high population growth in Afghanistan is mainly due to the high fertility rate. According to the 2015 Afghanistan Demographic Health Survey, the total fertility rate (TFR) in the country is 5.3 children per woman. This high fertility rate positions the country among the top 10 countries with the highest fertility rates in the world (World Bank Group, 2015) and has resulted into a young population where about half of the population are below 15 years of age.

With very limited natural resources and the continuing insecurity, a high population growth poses serious challenges when designing and envisioning the path to national development. Traditional preference for large families still exist and children are seen as assets, contributing to family income through labor, thus making it difficult to convince couples on the importance of family planning and producing fewer children.

Although Afghanistan made some progress in strengthening family planning services e.g. the Contraceptive Prevalence Rate (CPR) increased from a reported low of 5 percent in 2003 to 20 percent in 2015 and TFR decreased from 6.6 to 5.3, 25 percent of women of reproductive age have an unmet need for modern contraception. More investments in family planning can pave the path for a fertility decline and ensuing demographic transition.

In countries such as Afghanistan with high fertility rates, investing in voluntary family planning can change their demographic structure. This, in turn, can improve health, education and employment outcomes and accelerate economic growth. By using rights-based approaches to slow population growth now, the government can promote a population age structure that will open up opportunities for investments and savings over the long term.

OBJECTIVES

The side meeting aims to mobilize support at the political level and from the civil society to the following recommendations:

- While adolescent and youth policies must have a national scope, some targeted interventions should be advanced in urban areas and selected districts, which would showcase the interventions, helping to improve strategies and mobilize additional support to scale up interventions in a more effective way.
- Interventions are multi-sectoral, and must include education, income generation skills, sexual and reproductive health, prevention of substance abuse and risk behavior, employment and so on; hence, a close inter-sectoral coordination is required and this needs to be developed through mobilization of support and advocacy.
- There are concrete development dividends in the urbanization process, gender equality and the demographic bonus; further synergies can be promoted by bringing together interventions in these three dimensions, speeding up progress and enhancing results.
- Emphasize the contributions of investments in youth as a powerful component of poverty reduction strategies, avoiding piece meal approach to adolescent and youth policies.
- Improve policy analysis and strategy design through further in-depth studies of available survey data, which would allow more precise scenario building by establishing in a more exact manner the level and trends of demographic variables and population projections.
- Incorporate youth policy components into local government structures, which allow better tailoring of the interventions to specific local situations, while maintaining a national scope for the policy.

FORMAT

The side meeting will be opened with a keynote address by H.E. Dr. Mustafa Mastoor, Minister of Economic, followed by a panel discussion. Audience will have the opportunity to ask questions during the moderated open floor discussion.

PROPOSED AGENDA

Time	Agenda	Speaker
08:00	Welcome	Moderator – Ms. Monica Ferro, Director, UNFPA Geneva
08:05	Key Note Address	H.E. Dr. Mustafa Mastoor, Minister of Economic
08:25	Panel Discussion The panel discussion will share trends and policy examples on demographic dividend in Afghanistan as well as provide information and experiences for other countries in the region and beyond.	Panelists: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Deputy Executive Director (Programme), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) 2. H.E. President General of Afghanistan National Statistics and Information Agency (ANSIA) 3. Representative of Donor community 4. Afghanistan Midwifery Association President - TBC
09:05	Open Floor Discussion	All
09:25	Concluding Remarks	Moderator – Ms. Monica Ferro, Director, UNFPA Geneva