

## **What Do Experts Think About the Future Fertility of African Countries?**

### **Abstract**

We will present the result of an exercise which is part of the IIASA-Oxford expert-based demographic and education projection project to be released in 2012. The end product will consist of projections of the population of all world countries to 2050 by age, sex, and education levels. For all determinants of the projection (fertility, mortality, migration, education) a questionnaire will be sent early June to a large number of individuals (members of population associations, statistical offices, and other key researchers). The presentation will deal with results for African countries, where future fertility trends are already the object of speculation especially considering the diversity of experiences: from countries completing the fertility transition to countries that have barely started. The questionnaire is structured around five forces under which some arguments are presented to which the evaluator will be asked to agree or not and to rate its potential influence on future fertility.

### **Extended abstract**

We will present some results of an exercise which is part of the IIASA-Oxford expert-based demographic and education projection project under the leadership of Wolfgang Lutz. For all the determinants of the projections: fertility, mortality, international migration, as well as education, a questionnaire will be sent to a large number of individuals (members of population associations, statistical offices, and key researchers). This exercise is ongoing and questionnaire will be sent out in June 2011. We would like to present at the conference the result of the questionnaire for countries having a TFR above replacement level. The questionnaire is structured around five forces under which some arguments are presented to which the evaluator will be asked to agree or not and to rate its potential influence on future fertility. We will concentrate our analysis on the results for African countries, where future fertility trends are already the object of speculation due mostly to the large diversity of experiences. The latest draft of the questionnaire for High Fertility countries is presented below:

#### 1. Cultural Change in ideal family size

- 1.1 Family size decisions will increasingly be made by couples themselves rather than surrounding networks
- 1.2 Religions and religious beliefs will become more important for fertility decisions
- 1.3 The traditional preference for boys will eventually disappear
- 1.4 The government will take leadership in promoting the idea of small family size
- 1.5 Negative attitudes towards modern methods of contraception will diminish
- 1.6 Childlessness will become socially acceptable
- 1.7 Educational differentials in desired family size will diminish

#### 2. Health and Child Survival

- 2.1 Adolescent pregnancy will become less frequent
- 2.2 There will be increasing access to improved sanitation and health care for mothers and children
- 2.3 Parents will expect that most of their children survive to adulthood

2.4 Mothers will increasingly see the benefits of birth spacing

### 3. Status of women in family and society

3.1 Marriage arranged by parents or relatives will lose ground

3.2 Female educational enrolment rates will increase

3.3 Male partners will become more supportive of modern contraceptive use

3.4 The age at first marriage will continue to increase

3.5 The participation of women in the labour force will increase

3.6 More women will decide to stay unmarried

3.7 Women will increasingly be able to decide on their own about using contraceptives

### 4. Economic costs and benefits

4.1 Pension funds and social security systems will replace family support in old age

4.2 Parents put increasing value on good education of their children

4.3 Mothers will increasingly return to paid employment even when their children are small

4.4 The cost of raising children in urban settings will increase

4.5 The gap in access to education of boys and girls will be removed

4.6 The prevalence of child labour will decline

### 5. Reproductive Health

5.1 The availability of modern family planning services will significantly increase

5.2 Convenient contraceptives without side effects will become broadly available

5.3 Traditional methods of family planning will remain/become widespread

5.4 Abortion (whether legal or illegal) will be more widely practiced than today

5.5 Modern contraception will be banned for religious, political or other reasons

5.6 Educational differentials in actual fertility will diminish