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1. Status and patterns of African fertility transitions
2. Evaluations of population interventions

Population Policy and Role of International Organizations: Case of Sub-Saharan Africa

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Extended abstract

Population policy for the reduction of fertility levels has been applied in many countries in Sub-Saharan Africa since 1960s after their independence from former European colonies. There is no doubt that international organizations have played a major role in influencing African governments to formulate and implement population policies. Not many studies, however, have been undertaken to evaluate the role of international organizations and its impact. In this study, the role of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), a major partner for population assistance programmes to promote family planning programmes (which later shifted to promote reproductive health programmes after the Cairo Conference in 1994), will be reviewed in terms of theory, ideology and practice. UNFPA has been playing a leading role in population assistance to developing countries since its creation in 1967. Its role ranges from the development of population policies to the technical and financial assistance to population programmes in developing countries. It also promotes population data collection and its analysis for better socioeconomic planning and programming.

In evaluating the role of the international organizations for population assistance and population policies, this study also reviews the status and patterns of fertility transitions in Sub-Saharan Africa in focusing on the differences in applications of population policies in various country contexts. In fact, the theory of demographic transition could not explain nor predict the timing of the onset of fertility transition and its pace towards the replacement level fertility. Thus, the review of current fertility transition patterns in Sub-Saharan Africa will contribute to further reflection on the theory of fertility transition.

This study will first review various policy documents of the international organizations and those adopted at regional and international population forum, but in particular on the changes in policy influence after the Cairo Conference in 1994. Because the trend before the Cairo Conference was relatively well documented especially historical context and policy influence on the organization of international population conferences at Bucharest in 1974, Mexico City in 1984 and Cairo in 1994, but the period after the Cairo Conference may need to be further analyzed with an emphasis on the examination of population policy status. Thus, in addition to the analysis on the establishment of the population policies in the reduction of fertility as well as the status of its implementation, this study will examine policy documents related to ICPD+5, ICPD+10 and ICPD+15 in Sub-Saharan African context. This will allow us to evaluate changing roles and policy influence of the international organizations with emerging new trends and concepts, to name a few, the fight against HIV/AIDS, the emphasis on maternal and infant mortality reductions, the MDG achievement orientation, and the alignment of national development framework with PRSP.

The study will also review actual fertility trends in Sub-Saharan Africa with an emphasis on the examination of the existence of either convergence or divergence of the fertility reduction

trend towards the replacement fertility level. The recent existing literature on fertility trend in Sub-Saharan Africa discusses about the stagnation of fertility declines in some countries around the year 2000 (John Bongaarts, 2008, “Fertility transition in developing countries: Progress or stagnation?”, *Studies in Family Planning*), but with the addition of recent DHS data on the period 2006-2010 we expect to show rather continuing fertility decline trend in many Sub-Saharan African countries where multiple DHS data were collected.