

► **Slide 1: OPENING SLIDE**

In the past few decades, Ghana has made some remarkable achievements...

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Our economy is growing...with increasing income per person.

We are better educated...with more girls enrolled in school.

We are healthier than ever before...and we are living longer.

We are... a nation on the rise!

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But these gains are fragile, and not everyone is benefitting yet.

Many families still live in poverty. One in three Ghanaians lives below \$1.25 a day.<sup>1</sup> Why is there widespread poverty if our economy is growing?

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...Because our population is growing faster than our economy.

Today, we have 27 million people.<sup>2</sup>

And every year...

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<sup>1</sup> The World Bank, World Development Indicators, 2015, accessed at <http://databank.worldbank.org/> on April 19, 2015.

<sup>2</sup> United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division. *World Population Prospects: The 2012 Revision, DVD Edition* (2013).

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...Ghana adds almost 700,000 more, making it one of the fastest growing countries in the world!<sup>3</sup>

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What would this mean for our future?

Let's explore two scenarios:

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If we continue to have families with an average of 4 children, our country will grow to 60 million by 2050!<sup>4</sup>

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But if we start having smaller families and our population grows at a slower rate, we will reach a more manageable 40 million by 2050.<sup>5</sup>

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That's a difference of 20 million people – which is most of our population today!

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<sup>3</sup> PRB calculations based on UN, *World Population Prospects*.

<sup>4</sup> UN, *World Population Prospects*; and Jean-Pierre Guengant, "Population and Development in Ghana: The challenge of harnessing the demographic dividend" presentation delivered at the seminar on "Harnessing Ghana's Demographic Dividend for Development, Accra Ghana, Sept. 24, 2013 accessed at [www.afd.fr/home/pays/afrique/geo-afr/ghana/publications-ghana](http://www.afd.fr/home/pays/afrique/geo-afr/ghana/publications-ghana) on April 19, 2015.

<sup>5</sup> UN, *World Population Prospects*; and Guengant, "Population and Development in Ghana."

The effects of a growing population have brought about significant changes, especially to our cities. Here's a photo taken in 1960 in Accra, when the city's population was only half a million and traffic was uncongested.<sup>6</sup>

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... And here are our roads today ---a typical daily commute in Accra that now has a population eight times what it was in 1960!<sup>7</sup>

This is one of the challenges that we face as we struggle to improve our infrastructure to keep pace with the needs of our rapidly growing cities.

► **CLICK: Slide 12 Google Earth**

Let's turn to the Google Earth Satellite map and see what other kinds of impact rapid population growth has had on our cities.

As we zoom in on Ghana, here is a bird's eye view of Accra. Independence Square and the Accra Sports Stadium are on the right side of the screen. Now let's go back in time and watch the transformation of Nii Okaiman -- an area located just outside of the city's center.

In 2000, we see a large area of unoccupied land in the Nii Okaiman West neighborhood. However, it doesn't take long before it disappears as the housing needs of a rapidly growing population increase. In just ten years, we see that majority of the area is covered with buildings, houses and roads. And by 2013, no trace of the area's greenery remains.

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Rapid population growth affects our natural resources, including Ghana's farmlands.

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<sup>6</sup> Ghana Statistical Service, *2010 Population and Development Census, National Analytical Report* (Accra: Ghana Statistical Service, 2013): Table 4.2 p. 51.

<sup>7</sup> Ghana Statistical Service, *2010 Population and Development Census*.

Coupled with the effects of climate change, bigger populations reduce the amount of arable land available to farmers, make it harder to meet family needs and ensure a sustainable livelihood. While population is expanding, land is not. As farmers subdivide their lands among their children, farms will likely get smaller.

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Another example of the stress that population growth has on Ghana's resources and infrastructure is in the provision of energy.

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Over the last decade, as Ghana rapidly urbanized and more and more households connected to the power grid, demand for electricity went up by about six percent each year.<sup>8</sup>

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Our infrastructure, however, has had a hard time keeping up, and the supply of electricity grew by only three percent per year during the same time period.<sup>9</sup>

We see that the demand for electricity is growing at twice the rate of supply and, we are not generating enough electricity to meet our current needs, much less our future needs.

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<sup>8</sup> Resource Center for Energy Economics and Regulation, "Guide to Electric Power in Ghana," (Accra: University of Ghana Institute of Statistical, Social and Economic Research, 2005) , accessed at [http://www.beg.utexas.edu/energyecon/IDA/USAID/RC/Guide\\_to\\_Electric%20Power\\_in\\_Ghana.pdf](http://www.beg.utexas.edu/energyecon/IDA/USAID/RC/Guide_to_Electric%20Power_in_Ghana.pdf) on April 20, 2015.

<sup>9</sup> Resource Center for Energy Economics and Regulation, "Guide to Electric Power in Ghana"; Energy Commission, Ghana, "2013 Energy (Supply and Demand) Outlook for Ghana," (Accra: Energy Commission, Ghana: 2013), accessed at <http://energycom.gov.gh/files/Energy%20Commission%20-%202013%20Energy%20Outlook%20for%20Ghana.pdf> on April 20, 2015.

Due to this gap between supply and demand, we are currently experiencing frequent blackouts and power outages regularly. As our population size continues to increase and more people move to urban areas, we will need to connect hundreds of thousands of new households to the electrical grid.<sup>10</sup>

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Managing future population growth is one critical step in helping Ghana manage its long-term energy supply challenges.

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Growth in both urban and rural areas will increase demand for other social services, such as hospitals and schools.

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The government will have to use more resources which will strain the national budget and limit investments in other vital areas. This would slow economic growth with fewer jobs, put more pressure on our natural resources, and lower quality of life.

How will we achieve our national development plan if the population continues to grow so rapidly?

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What can we do to ensure families in Ghana have a better future?

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<sup>10</sup> Resource Center for Energy Economics and Regulation, "Guide to Electric Power in Ghana"; and Energy Commission, Ghana, "2013 Energy (Supply and Demand) Outlook for Ghana."

One way is by addressing the reproductive health needs of families with a special focus on family planning!

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Research shows that voluntary family planning:

- Improves the health of women and children
- Boosts social and economic growth and development
- And helps to reduce poverty

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Family planning would help us change the age structure of our population. This is the number of people who are young, middle-aged or old.

When there are more working-age adults to support children and the elderly, this can lead to a more rapid economic growth for the country.

**Family planning** is a key missing link to achieving our development goals.

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Let's look at an example of how changing the age structure and lowering fertility affects the economy.

Here is Thailand's population in 1960. Each bar of this diagram shows how many people are a certain age.<sup>11</sup>

It looks like a pyramid because when couples have many children, more people are in the younger age groups at the base of the pyramid.

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<sup>11</sup> UN, *World Population Prospects*.

In 1960, more than 40 percent of Thailand's population was under the age of 15, and women had an average of six children. The government recognized that rapid population growth hindered economic development, and established policies aimed at slowing it.<sup>12</sup>

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During the next 25 years, Thailand's national economic and social development plans centered on lowering fertility rates throughout the country by providing and increasing access to voluntary family planning services.<sup>13</sup>

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By the 1990s, women were having an average of two children each.<sup>14</sup>

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And by 2010, we see that the age structure has transformed, with a smaller portion of young people at the base.<sup>15</sup>

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Now, there are more working-age adults than non-working age people, and they will be part of a productive labor force for many years.

Thailand has been able to achieve what is called a demographic dividend.

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<sup>12</sup> UN, *World Population Prospects*.

<sup>13</sup> United Nations Population Fund, *Impact of Demographic Change in Thailand* (Bangkok: UNFPA, 2011).

<sup>14</sup> UN, *World Population Prospects*.

<sup>15</sup> UN, *World Population Prospects*.

...—when a country’s change in *age structure* and investments in key sectors, such as health, education, the economy, and governance speeds economic growth.<sup>16</sup>

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Ghana’s age structure today looks like Thailand’s in 1960.<sup>17</sup>

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We have a very young age structure with 40 percent of the population under the age of fifteen, and an average of four children per woman.<sup>18</sup>

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If fertility remains high, by 2050 the working-age population will have to...

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...support more dependents on their income. This restricts the ability to save, reduces purchasing power, and leads to slower economic development.<sup>19</sup>

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But if couples have smaller families, with a national average of 2 or fewer children, we will see a much different picture in 2050. The age structure will have a higher proportion of working-age adults...<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> David E. Bloom, David Canning, and Jaypee Sevilla, *The Demographic Dividend: A New Perspective on the Economic Consequences of Population Change* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2003).

<sup>17</sup> UN, *World Population Prospects*.

<sup>18</sup> UN, *World Population Prospects*.

<sup>19</sup> UN, *World Population Prospects*; and Guengant, “Population and Development in Ghana.”

<sup>20</sup> UN, *World Population Prospects*; and Guengant, “Population and Development in Ghana.”

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...with fewer dependents to support. This means parents will have more resources to invest in their families' health, education and well-being.<sup>21</sup>

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A side-by-side comparison shows the significant impact we can have on our country's age structure, depending on whether fertility stays high with a wide base as shown on the left, or whether it declines--with a narrowing base on the right.

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Can rapid population growth increase GDP ? It would be tremendously challenging to keep up with the health, education and employment needs of our people. And, we need to keep in mind that we will have to plan for the resources to meet those needs.

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For instance, if we continue to have large families, in 2050 we will need to:<sup>22</sup>

- Educate 8 million primary school children
- Hire and train 200,000 teachers
- Build 40,000 new school buildings, and
- Create and provide 600,000 new jobs to meet the employment needs of the population.

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<sup>21</sup>UN, *World Population Prospects*; and Guengant, "Population and Development in Ghana."

<sup>22</sup> Futures Group calculations, March 2015.

However, if we slow our population growth, there would be lower demand for social services, we would have fewer children to educate, and the government wouldn't have to provide as many teachers, school buildings and jobs.

The savings from spending less on resources could be invested in other sectors, and ensure our continued progress toward becoming a higher-income country.

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Family planning is not only a missing link to the success of our economy.

It is also a missing link to the health and well-being of our people.

► **CLICK: Slide 43**

Meeting the reproductive health needs of Ghana's women and men will enable us to better plan and space our children.

When parents are able to plan their families, they can better provide for their children and improve their quality of life.

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And when women are able to decide for themselves when to have children, they can stay in school. They find jobs and contribute to the economy. Today, women represent 44% of the workforce.<sup>23</sup>

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Data gathered from countries worldwide show a correlation between fertility and economic growth.

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<sup>23</sup> Ghana Statistical Service, *2010 Population and Development Census, National Analytical Report*, Ghana Statistical Service (2013): Table 11.5.

Here we have a graph that shows the link between the average number of children per woman and gross national income.

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On the left axis we have the total fertility rate, or the average number of children a woman has in her lifetime, and it goes from zero up to about 8 children per woman.

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On the bottom axis we have the Gross National Income per person or GNI. It goes from \$0 to over \$40,000. This is in US dollars, and is adjusted for what a dollar can buy today.

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Each bubble on the graph represents a country, and each color indicates a different region of the world.

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Starting with the red, we have East Asia and the Pacific...

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The orange ones are in Central Asia and Europe...Many of these countries are at the bottom right, with few children per woman and high gross national income per person.

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Yellow is for North and South America...

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Green is the Middle East and North Africa

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The Light Blue is for South Asia...

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The dark blue ones are in Sub-Saharan Africa. These countries are grouped towards the upper left, with high levels of fertility and lower levels of income.

The size of each bubble represents the population size of that country – so the bigger bubbles have bigger populations.

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This is what the world looked like in 1980. In Ghana, women had an average of about 7 children and the gross national income per person was 470 dollars.

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As the years go by, fertility decreases in countries throughout the world, and income per person goes up.

In 2011, all countries have moved towards that bottom, right corner where women are having fewer children and income per person is higher.

Now, a Ghanaian woman has an average of 4 children and income per person has risen to over eighteen hundred dollars.<sup>24</sup> Though Ghana has one of the lowest fertility rates in Africa, it trails other lower-middle-income countries such as Lesotho and Cape Verde.

So, why is Ghana growing so quickly?

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<sup>24</sup> The data in the graph was compiled by Gapminder from the 2012 World Bank Development indicators databank. However, the World Bank recently updated GNI per capita (PPP, current international \$) based on new formulations from the International Comparison Program 2011 Road and Ghana's GNI per capita (PPP, current international \$) for 2011 as \$3,340.

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Though the average number of children per woman declined from 6.4 to 4.2 in the last 20 years, the sharpest part of the decline...

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...occurred by 1998, more than 15 years ago.<sup>25</sup>

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Since then, the decline in fertility has stalled and fertility has remained at an average of 4 children per woman.

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Our most recent national survey shows that only one in five married women uses modern contraceptive methods.<sup>26</sup>

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Yet, about one in three women in Ghana wants to delay or prevent another pregnancy, but is not using any method of family planning.<sup>27</sup>

These women have what is called an unmet need for family planning. High rates of unmet need lead to high rates of unplanned pregnancies.

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<sup>25</sup> Ghana Statistical Service (GSS), Ghana Health Service (GHS), and ICF Macro, *2008 Ghana Demographic and Health Survey* (Accra, Ghana: GSS, GHS, and ICF Macro, 2009); GSS, GHS and ICF Macro, *2014 Ghana Demographic and Health Survey Key Indicators* (Accra, Ghana: GSS, GHS, and ICF Macro, 2015).

<sup>26</sup> PRB calculations using 22.2% mCPR among married women based on GSS, GHS, and ICF Macro, *2014 Ghana Demographic and Health Survey Key Indicators*.

<sup>27</sup> PRB calculations using 29.9% unmet need for FP based on GSS, GHS, and ICF Macro, *2014 Ghana Demographic and Health Survey Key Indicators*.

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In Ghana, more than one in three pregnancies are unplanned.<sup>28</sup>

This is a problem because unplanned pregnancies are more likely to result in unsafe abortions and to be high-risk for both the mother and her baby.

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Among adolescent girls, the issue is even graver as 3 out of 5 pregnancies are unplanned<sup>29</sup>...

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...and 16% of all abortions in Ghana occur among girls ages 15 to 19.<sup>30</sup>

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Family planning prevents unsafe abortions and can ensure that pregnancies are healthy and well-timed, which increases the chances of a healthy baby.

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For instance, babies who are born 2 or more years apart are more likely to survive...

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...compared to babies who are born less than 2 years apart.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> PRB calculations using 37% unplanned pregnancies based on GSS, GHS, and ICF Macro, *2014 Ghana Demographic and Health Survey Key Indicators*.

<sup>29</sup> PRB calculations using 38.9% mistimed births and 19.9% unwanted births based on GSS, GHS, and ICF Macro, *2014 Ghana Demographic and Health Survey Key Indicators*.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

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In Ghana, 10 women die every day from causes related to pregnancy or childbirth.<sup>32</sup>

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And those deaths represent only the tip of the iceberg, because for every woman who dies from pregnancy or childbirth...

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...20 to 30 women suffer from complications, such as obstetric fistula and infection.<sup>33</sup>

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If Ghana's unmet need for family planning was met by 2030, 7,000 maternal deaths would be prevented<sup>34</sup>...

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...and 380,000 children's deaths would be avoided.<sup>35</sup>

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Family planning saves lives!

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<sup>32</sup> PRB calculation based on *Trends in Maternal Mortality: 1990 to 2013*, estimates by WHO, UNICEF, UNFPA, The World Bank and the United Nations Population Division.

<sup>33</sup> World Health Organization, "Why do so many women still die in pregnancy or childbirth?" (May 6, 2014), accessed at <http://www.who.int/features/qa/12/en/>, on April 19, 2015.

<sup>34</sup> Futures Group calculations, May 2015

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

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What will it cost to meet Ghana's unmet need for family planning? It would actually save money overall.

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For the next 15 years, it would cost \$154 million dollars to meet our needs in family planning.

This translates into savings because as women are having smaller families, the government doesn't have to spend as much money to meet the needs of the population and can save money on costs related to...<sup>36</sup>

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...education

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...malaria

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...immunization

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...water

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<sup>36</sup> Futures Group calculations, May 2015.

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...and maternal health.

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By saving money in other areas, investing to meet the unmet need for family planning would actually save Ghana \$349 million dollars!<sup>37</sup>

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**Family planning is a best buy!** We would save more than \$2 for every dollar spent on family planning.

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A lot is possible for Ghana's economic future. And many countries that have managed their population growth have enjoyed this type of progress.

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Research has shown that families who had access to comprehensive family planning services had:

- Larger incomes
- Greater accumulation of wealth and assets, and
- Higher levels of education

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Family planning is a key strategy for addressing rapid population growth. Combined with investments in health, education, economy and governance, it can

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<sup>37</sup> Futures Group calculations, May 2015.

reduce poverty and grow the economy, both at the family level and at the national level.

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Our national Growth and Development Strategy recognizes that population plays a key role in achieving our developmental goals:

“Maintaining population growth rate at a level capable of supporting and sustaining economic growth and social development is indispensable as the three are intrinsically linked.”

The stage is set for us to increase our efforts,

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And we have policies in place, like:

- The National Population Policy
- The Adolescent Reproductive Health Policy, and
- The Roadmap to Reposition Family Planning

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So what can be done now?

Leaders and policymakers can join together and take action to ...

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Ensure that family planning is a key component of all national development strategies.

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Include reproductive health and contraceptives in the National Health Insurance Scheme's benefit package.

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Increase access to family planning services at the community level by expanding the CHPS program, and

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And expand the group of policymakers and leaders who support family planning and mobilize political and community resources.

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The progress Ghana has made so far shows us that we can achieve even more. We cannot reach our goals if we just bask in our past successes. It is time to step up the pace.

Everyone has a role to play, but most critically, leaders at all levels need to demonstrate their support for family planning as important to help Ghana achieve its development goals.

Investing in family planning today is investing in the future of our country and people.

By recognizing the importance of population growth and taking action now, we can keep the nation on the path to becoming a higher-income country.

**END**