

th series

# TAKE ACTION

Zero Unmet need for  
Family Planning

*YOUR RIGHTS. OUR MISSION.*





## Access to safe, voluntary family planning is a human right.

Family planning is central to gender equality and women's empowerment, and it is a key factor in reducing poverty. Yet in developing regions, an estimated 217 million women who want to avoid pregnancy are not using safe and effective family planning methods, for reasons ranging from lack of access to information or services to lack of support from their partners or communities. This threatens their ability to build a better future for themselves, their families and their communities.

UNFPA works to support family planning by ensuring a steady, reliable supply of quality contraceptives; strengthening national health systems; advocating for policies supportive of family planning; and gathering data to support this work. UNFPA also provides global leadership in increasing access to family planning, by convening partners – including governments – to develop evidence and policies, and by offering programmatic, technical and financial assistance to developing countries.



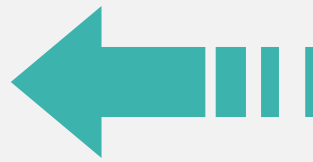
Investing in  
voluntary family  
planning is one of the  
smartest decisions  
that governments  
can take..

Papua New Guinea is at a critical stage of its economic and social development. While geographical barriers, political insecurity and the impact of years of internal strife still pose challenges for comprehensive improvements across the country's health and social sectors, there is currently a sizeable window of opportunity to push forward the country's development agenda. However, key indicators for health still remain below optimal levels: the modern contraceptive prevalence rate (mCPR) still averages at around 31% of married or in-union women, with high rates of unmet need for family planning among this group at around 26%. Urgent investment is needed to close the gap and end unmet need for family planning.

Low rates of modern contraceptive prevalence have a considerable impact on several aspects of health, social and economic development. Low use of contraceptives is linked with high rates of maternal mortality, as well as with increased rates of child and infant mortality and lower female life expectancy. In terms of economic development, high rates of fertility tend to substantially limit women's participation in education and in a productive workforce – with a direct impact on a country's economy and social development.



Just US\$1 dollar invested in voluntary family planning services in developing regions can save up to US\$2.2 dollars in maternal and newborn healthcare,



## Harnessing the Demographic Dividend

Access to voluntary family planning services is instrumental to lowering fertility rates, which is a precondition to achieving the demographic dividend. The demographic dividend is a window of opportunity for economic growth which begins with demographic shifts in a population's age structure, mainly when – because of fertility declines – the share of the working-age population is larger than the non-working-age share of the population. These demographic shifts result in lower numbers of dependents (children and older adults), meaning that working-age adults can be more productive, spearheading economic growth and other social developments.

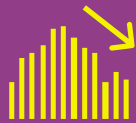
In Papua New Guinea the window of the demographic dividend has not started yet, as total fertility rates are still high. But if modern contraceptive prevalence increased gradually by 2030, then thousands of mothers and children's lives would be saved, there would be a decline in fertility rates and an increase in GDP per capita.



If a modern contraceptive prevalence rate of 47% was achieved by 2030, the results would be impressive:



Hundreds of thousands of mothers' and children's lives could be saved by 2030;



Fertility rates would decline to around 2.7 children per woman by 2030, from a starting point of 4.2 children per woman in 2016;



Female life expectancy rates would improve to almost 70 years;



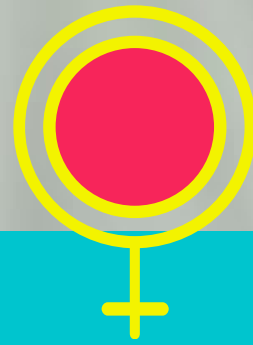
GDP per capita would increase to US \$4,280 per capita in 2030 from \$2,450 in 2016;



Population changes will reduce the number of dependents and increase the numbers of adults considerably, allowing Papua New Guinea to reap the benefits of the Demographic Dividend;



Papua New Guinea will be able to achieve its target of satisfying 75% of demand for family planning with modern methods by 2030, as per SDG Goal 3.7.



## TAKE ACTION

- Increase the investment in voluntary family planning services. Continued investment is needed to reach the current family planning commitment modern contraceptive prevalence rate.
- Establish a transition plan to start procuring contraceptives with national funding, and prepare for the phasing out of funding from UNFPA and other external partners. Continue using UNFPA Procurement Services, which provides access to WHO prequalified products at significantly lower prices.
- Consider the value of long-acting methods (implants and IUDs) versus short-acting methods (injectables, pills and condoms), as they are more effective in preventing unintended pregnancies and are likely to produce better value for money.
- Invest in demand generation activities, which are a precondition for a successful increase of the modern contraceptive prevalence rate.