

Population Dynamics, Climate Change and Sustainable Development in Africa

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Population is important for climate compatible development, yet pertinent policies on issues like family planning, reproductive health, and women's education and empowerment are rarely considered in climate planning. Despite strong inter-linkages between population and climate change and their direct implications for sustainable development, opportunities are often missed to address these links because many policy makers do not fully understand the inter-linkages and their role in development.

This paper will present findings from a North-South research collaboration between Population Action International and African Institute for Development Policy, which seeks to generate and translate evidence to demonstrate the importance of population parameters for climate compatible development planning in Africa. The project is analyzing the impact of different scenarios of population growth on climate vulnerabilities, such as the projected availability of fresh water resources and agricultural productivity. The analysis is identifying population and climate hotspots, which are defined as areas of opportunity where addressing rapid population growth will help increase resilience to climate change, while contributing to development goals such as enhancing food and water security. The quantitative analyses examine all African countries, while in depth policy and program environment analyses are done, together with partners, in Kenya and Malawi.

The results, expected by March 2012, will highlight policy and program implications of the analyses and guide national and regional responses to consequences of climate change and rapid population growth. The results will be presented in compelling ways that cater to policy makers and program planners, including GIS maps.

By contributing to efforts to enhance resilience and the capacity of African countries to adapt to and mitigate consequences of climate change while addressing another very critical development challenge (population growth), the project stands to make a substantive contribution to sustainable development in Africa.