



RAPID

POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT

MALAWI

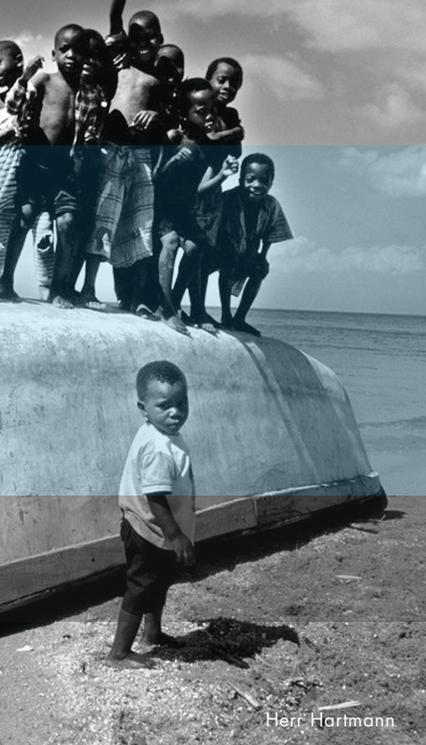
38 Million People by 2040?

CALL TO ACTION

- ▣ By 2040, Malawi could have nearly three times as many people as today if women continue to have nearly 6 children each.*
- ▣ More than half of Malawi's people are younger than 18.
- ▣ Individual decisions regarding childbearing and use of family planning will have a major impact on future population growth.
- ▣ Use of family planning has many benefits for individuals, families, and communities and contributes to lower maternal and infant mortality.



GOVERNMENT OF MALAWI



Malawi's development goals are stated in the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy 2006–2011, which aims to reduce poverty through sustainable economic growth and infrastructure development. Achieving these goals and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) will be challenging, especially in the face of rapid population growth. The most effective way to slow population growth is to ensure that family planning services are widely available. Over the past two decades, Malawi has made considerable progress in making family planning services more accessible. However, one in four Malawian women want to space or limit their next birth but are not using family planning. These women need family planning information and services in order to avoid unintended pregnancy.

Slower population growth would relieve pressure on the provision of free primary education and public health services and alleviate food insecurity and underemployment.

Malawi is in a position to improve the well-being of families and advance as a nation.

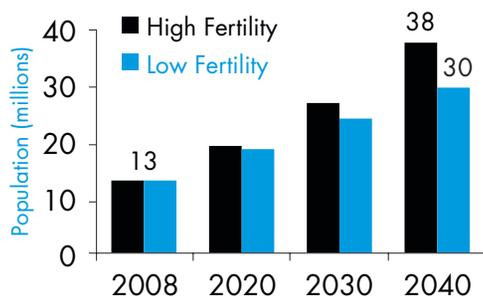
Slowing the rate of population growth will contribute to progress in achieving development goals. The government has demonstrated its commitment to expand family planning services, particularly at the community level. Improving access and uptake of contraceptives will lead to slower population growth. With slower growth, the Government of Malawi will have more funds available to provide free primary education, a reliable public health system, and more employment opportunities. Increased use of family planning will also contribute to lower maternal and infant mortality.

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Rapid Population Growth

If women continue to have nearly 6 children each,* Malawi's population will nearly triple in just 30 years. In contrast, if women were to have three children on average, Malawi's population in 2040 would be just 30 million instead of 38 million—a difference of 27%.

Projected Population Growth



* Women in Malawi have an average of 5.7 children each (MDHS 2010).

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Slower Growth Has Benefits

Benefits of Slower Population Growth for Social and Economic Development

- Allows for greater investment in education, health services, and job creation
- Reduces pressure on land use, thereby slowing rural-urban migration
- Helps to improve employment opportunities and ensure food security

Benefits of Family Planning

- Contributes to lower maternal and infant mortality because it reduces unintended pregnancy and allows for longer spacing between births
- Promotes family welfare because family income can be invested in the education of fewer children and better nutrition
- Enables couples to plan when and how many children they will have

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What Can Be Done

Policymakers can

- Support a comprehensive reproductive health strategy, including universal access to family planning information and services

Civil society leaders and media representatives can

- Educate the public on the implications of rapid population growth
- Dispel misconceptions about family planning methods

National and district health officials can

- Scale up successful strategies to extend family planning information and services at the community level and make long-term methods more widely available
- Ensure continuous availability of contraceptive supplies at all service delivery points
- Engage private sector providers and community members in the provision of family planning