



## **AFRICAN POPULATION AND HEALTH RESEARCH CENTER**

*Promoting the well-being of Africans through policy-relevant research on population and health*

Shelter Afrique Center, Longonot Road, Upper Hill,  
P.O. Box 10787-00100 GPO, Nairobi, Kenya  
Tel: (+254) 20.2720.400/1-2; Fax: (+254) 20.2720.380  
Email: [info@aphrc.org](mailto:info@aphrc.org); Website: [www.aphrc.org](http://www.aphrc.org)

### **NEWS RELEASE**

#### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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Contact at PRB: Mary Mederios Kent, 202-939-5418, [mkent@prb.org](mailto:mkent@prb.org)

Contact at APHRC: Rose N. Oronje, +254-20-272-0400/1/2, [roronje@aphrc.org](mailto:roronje@aphrc.org)

### **Africa Faces Mixed Progress, Daunting Challenges, in Improving Population Well-Being**

Even as African women use family planning more and bear fewer children, the continent's youthful population will fuel the continent's growth for many decades to come. Africa's population of 967 million is projected to grow to 1.9 billion by 2050, according to the *2008 Africa Population Data Sheet*, produced by the Population Reference Bureau (PRB) and the African Population and Health Research Center (APHRC).

Contraceptive use has increased fastest in Northern and Southern Africa, and as a result, the number of children the average woman has during her lifetime has dropped from nearly six children in the early 1980s to around three in 2005. This has slowed population growth in those regions.

In most Eastern, Western, and Middle African countries, however, use of family planning remains low, and fertility rates have dropped little, with women averaging between five and six children.

Against this backdrop of population increases, many African countries in these regions face challenges in reducing poverty and educating children. As many as 90 percent of the population in Tanzania, Nigeria, and several other countries exist on less than US\$ 2 per day. Southern and Northern African countries tend to fare better than in other regions, but all face high poverty rates.

Educational attainment, considered an important element in reducing poverty, has increased in many countries, especially at the primary level. But fewer than 75 percent of primary school-age children were enrolled in primary school in Chad, Ethiopia, Nigeria, and several other countries. African countries have made less progress getting children to advance to secondary school. For all of sub-Saharan Africa, the average net enrollment for secondary school is 28 percent.

The 2008 Africa Population Data Sheet also includes a series of indicators on population

growth, urbanization, family planning use, teenage motherhood, HIV/AIDS, and gross national income per capita for African countries.

For a copy of the *2008 Africa Population Data Sheet* or to interview a staff member from PRB or APHRC on its findings, please contact Mary Mederios Kent, 202-939-5418, [mkent@prb.org](mailto:mkent@prb.org) at PRB, or Rose N. Oronje, +254-20-272-0400/1/2, [roronje@aphrc.org](mailto:roronje@aphrc.org) at APHRC, Nairobi.

The *Data Sheet* can also be accessed online at [www.prb.org/Publications/Datasheets/2008/apds2008.aspx](http://www.prb.org/Publications/Datasheets/2008/apds2008.aspx) or <http://www.aphrc.org/documents/AfricaDatasheet2008.pdf>

The Population Reference Bureau informs people around the world about population, health, and the environment, and empowers them to use that information to advance the well-being of current and future generations. The African Population and Health Research Center is a regional institute that conducts policy relevant research on population, health, and education and drives its use in policy and practice, as well as strengthens the research capacity of upcoming African scholars and institutions.