

Nigeria makes up roughly half of all women of reproductive age in West Africa

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A ground-breaking report on family planning in the world's 69 lowest-income countries shows that Nigeria makes up roughly half of all women of reproductive age in West Africa, making the second slowest country adopting contraceptives.

Nigeria is one of the most densely populated countries in Africa, with approximately 200 million people, despite the country was part of the first group of countries to commit to the Family Planning FP2020 partnership when it launched in 2012.

"Over 6.5 million women using a modern method of contraception and modern contraceptive prevalence rate (MCPR) growing at roughly 0.3 percentage points per year, and estimated that the percentage of women in Nigeria with an unmet need for a modern method of contraception (married/in-union) stands at 23.7% in 2019," says a new report, FP2020: Women at the Centre, produced by Family Planning 2020.

The report was launched Monday on the side-lines of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in Nairobi, Kenya. FP2020's latest report is part of the 25-year arc of progress that has lifted hundreds of millions of women and girls since the Cairo Summit in 1994.

In Nigeria, a woman gives birth to an average of 5.5 children in her lifetime, the report estimates that as a result of modern contraceptive use in Nigeria, over 2.3 million unintended pregnancies have been prevented, and over 800,000 unsafe abortions and 13,000 maternal deaths have been averted in the last year alone.

The government of Nigeria is working with key stakeholders to address socio-cultural norms to address family planning such as: preference for large families, religious tenets, and women's lack of decision-making power related to sexual and reproductive health.

According to the report, governments and donors around the world are recognising the importance of family planning programmes with donor government bi-lateral funding for family planning rising to \$1.5 billion in 2018. This is the highest level since FP2020 was launched in 2012.

The report shows that in the world's 69 lowest-income countries today more women and girls have access to family planning than ever before. It reveals that 314 million women and girls are now using modern contraception, with 53 million new users in the last seven years, and 9 million in the past year alone.

With almost 60 percent of its population under the age of 25, Africa is the world's youngest region.

Ensuring that young women and girls have access to family planning is central to the continent's future development, paving the way for more educated communities, healthier populations and wealthier nations.

FP2020: Women at the Centre has been produced by Family Planning 2020 (FP2020) – a global partnership that supports the rights of woman and girls to decide – freely and for themselves – whether, when, and how many children they want to have.

Beth Schlachter, executive director of FP2020, said: "The evidence is clear – when you invest in women and girls, the good deed never ends. Barriers are broken and opportunities open up that not only lift women out of poverty but can elevate society and bring about economic gains. No other single change can do more to improve the state of the world."

She continued, "25 years on from the first ICPD, the family planning movement has gained huge momentum. Yet big challenges remain. With every day that passes, millions are denied the right to choose their own

future. As we look ahead to 2030, we must continue to push for progress, build on what works well, and ensure we leave no woman or girl behind.”

Challenges remain significant as FP2020 approaches a key time-bound deadline. Progress must keep pace unlocking the fullness of human potential

While progress has been significant, FP2020 approaches its deadline year and the initial numeric goal of reaching an additional 120 million women and girls has yet to be realized. The challenge of putting women and girls at the centre of development remains critical.

There are 926 million women of reproductive age today across the 69 FP2020 countries – 100 million more than there were in 2012. With this number expected to surpass 1 billion in 2025, millions more women will need vital family planning services.

As the global community looks ahead to the post-2020 framework, the importance of putting women and girls at the centre of the development is paramount. More work is ahead, and the challenge will be to deepen existing commitments and approaches to ensure that the needs and rights of women and girls around the world are met and respected.

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