



*Young people aged between 10 and 24 now comprise 25% of the total world population, investment in young people's health, education and rights is necessary for economic development (UNFPA State of World Population 2014 report) | Photo credit CIFOR*

## ***Population Dynamics and the Sustainable Development Goals***

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A new report by the UK All-Party Parliamentary Group on Population, Development, and Reproductive Health entitled [Population Dynamics and the Sustainable Development Goals](#) was launched in early July, coinciding with the celebrations of [World Population Day](#) and the preparations for the [UN Sustainable Development Goals summit](#) in September. The report calls for greater attention in international development to the links between population dynamics- including migration, urbanization, and growth- and climate change.

The report was informed by evidence presented by the [Population and Sustainability Network \(PSN\)](#) on the linkages between population dynamics, reproductive health, and sustainable development.

PSN is a UK-based organization and international network working to advance understanding of the relationships between population, health and sustainable development issues and to promote and implement integrated approaches to these interconnected challenges. PSN brings together civil society organizations from the Global North and South in cross-sector discussion and collaboration to increase awareness of the significance for sustainable development of both population and consumption factors and the importance of universal access to reproductive health and rights, including voluntary family planning services. As a network encompassing the Global North and South, PSN aims to strengthen the voice of civil society in policy and advocacy forums and processes.

The [presentation](#) delivered by PSN during the parliamentary hearings is a prime example of the advocacy work undertaken by the organization nationally. At the international level, PSN will participate at [COP 21 in Paris](#) later this year to raise awareness and provide recommendations on how to mainstream sexual and reproductive health and rights in climate change adaptation and mitigation approaches.

Sir Richard Ottaway, Inquiry Chairman, former Chair of the House of Commons Foreign Affairs Committee, and PSN Chairman, explained:

*We know that many of the Millennium Development Goals and targets have not been achieved, and the planned follow-up framework, the Sustainable Development Goals, may suffer similar pitfalls. Many countries face the challenge of productively engaging large populations of young people to achieve a demographic dividend. Others will need to adjust to aging populations.*

The report offers recommendations to governments at a time when they are struggling to cope with the needs of young populations on the one hand and aging ones on the other, while simultaneously trying to adapt to and mitigate the effects of climate change and conflicts.

According to [Population Dynamics and the Sustainable Development Goals](#), to achieve sustainable development, governments, as well as their national and international partners should:

- Increase funding for family planning and the wider sexual and reproductive health agenda to 10% of official development assistance and 10% of national development budgets.
- The Sustainable Development Goals and targets must not be renegotiated. The [draft framework](#) contains goals on healthy lives and gender equality and targets on sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights, including family planning. It is imperative that these goals and targets are subsequently included in all national development plans.
- Advocate for Sustainable Development Goal indicators at a global level and in national development plans that are reliable and comparable, and that measure progress in achieving universal access to family planning and the sexual and reproductive health and rights agenda, as listed in the full recommendations. These indicators must be disaggregated by income, gender, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability, geographic location and other characteristics relevant in national contexts.
- Urgently press for further commitments to reduce resource consumption and carbon emissions, and support investment in low-carbon forms of development.
- Amend the [UK International Development Act 2002](#) to mandate the Secretary of State to consider the impact of development assistance on population dynamics, and vice versa.

- Utilize the economic arguments presented in this report to support governments, and finance ministries in particular, to develop appropriate laws, policies and investments that promote universal access to family planning and the wider sexual and reproductive health agenda.
- Legislate and develop policies to combat gender-based violence and invest in long-term planning capabilities with better quality data on population dynamics, contraceptive prevalence and unmet need for family planning.
- Support and invest in secondary education for girls to promote gender equality and empower women.
- Champion universal access to health care and remove unnecessary barriers, particularly for young people and migrant workers.
- Work with conflict, humanitarian, security and climate change groups to promote a holistic approach to sustainable development that ensures universal access to family planning and sexual and reproductive health and rights.

The full report is available [here](#).

Carina Hirsch is PSN's Advocacy and Policy Manager. She holds postgraduate degrees in Economics and Public Management. Prior to joining PSN, Carina worked for the [Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations](#) carrying out research and implementing projects on women's empowerment in agriculture and food security in several West African countries and India, collaborating closely with women's organizations. She has also advocated for rural women and sustainability issues in various international policy making forums as Policy Officer at the [World Farmers' Organization \(WFO\)](#). You can read more about PSN on their [website](#) and follow them on Twitter: [@PopSusNetwork](#)

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*MAHB-UTS Blogs are a joint venture between the University of Technology Sydney and the Millennium Alliance for Humanity and the Biosphere. Questions should be directed to [joan@mahbonline.org](mailto:joan@mahbonline.org)*

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