Population Growth and Policy Options
In Sub-Saharan Africa

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Outline

1) Population trends

3) Impact of the AIDS epidemic

4) Benefits of family planning programs
Population trends by region 1950-2050 (2000=100)

Source: UN 2007
Population growth 2005-2050 (2000=100)

Source: UN 2007
Adverse effects of rapid population growth

- **Environmental:** Depletion of natural resources, pollution, climate change
- **Economic:** Low wages, unemployment, poverty, inequality
- **Governmental:** Lagging investment in education, health services, and infrastructure
- **Health:** High birth rate raises maternal and child mortality
- **Political:** Growth of unrest
The demographic impact of the AIDS epidemic
HIV infection level in sub-Saharan Africa

Source: UN 2007

Peak of epidemic
Population size

Sub-Saharan Africa

Without AIDS

With AIDS

South Africa

Without AIDS

With AIDS

The benefits of family planning programs
123 million women in the developing world have an unmet need for contraception

Objectives of family planning programs:

• Provide access to and information about contraception

• Reduce unintended pregnancies
Fertility levels 2000-2005

Births per woman

Source: UN 2007
Pregnancy outcomes in sub-Saharan Africa, 2003

36.9 million pregnancies (per year)

23.3 million intended pregnancies

23.3 million intended births

13.6 million unintended pregnancies

8.5 million unintended births

5.1 million induced abortion (often unsafe)

Source: Vlassof et al 2005. Miscarriages excluded
Reducing unintended pregnancies and population growth contributes to:

- Reducing child mortality and improving maternal health
- Achieving universal primary education
- Ensuring environmental sustainability
- Combating HIV/AIDS
- Reducing poverty and unemployment
Development gains from $1 invested in family planning

Source: Moreland 2006
Conclusions

1) Rapid population growth continues in much of sub-Saharan Africa despite the AIDS epidemic.

3) Rapid population growth has substantial health, socioeconomic, environmental, and political consequences.

3) Strengthening family planning/RH programs is highly cost-effective.