



Adjusting the focal length of poverty reduction policies and strategies in Africa

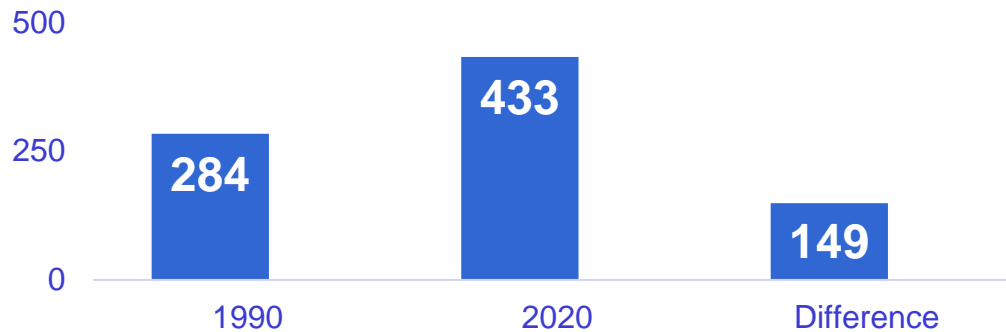
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The African Child Policy Forum (ACPF)

Poverty and the Sustainable Development Goals: From the local to the Global
Online Conference 27-29 April 2021

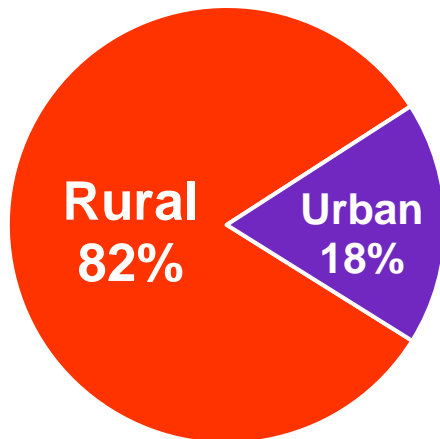
Hard facts

The number of people in poverty increasing, not decreasing

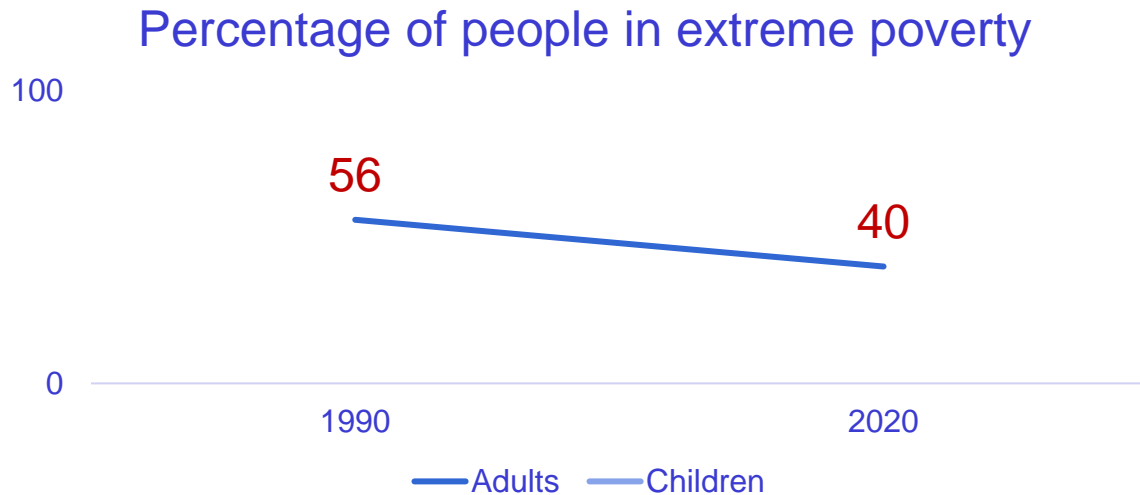
Number of people in extreme poverty (million)



Of these



- More than half are younger than 15 years
- 30% live in fragile countries.



- Average decline conceals the bulging base population
- Poverty reduction could not out pace population growth.
- Effort incommensurate with the magnitude.
- The need to change business as usual and step up.

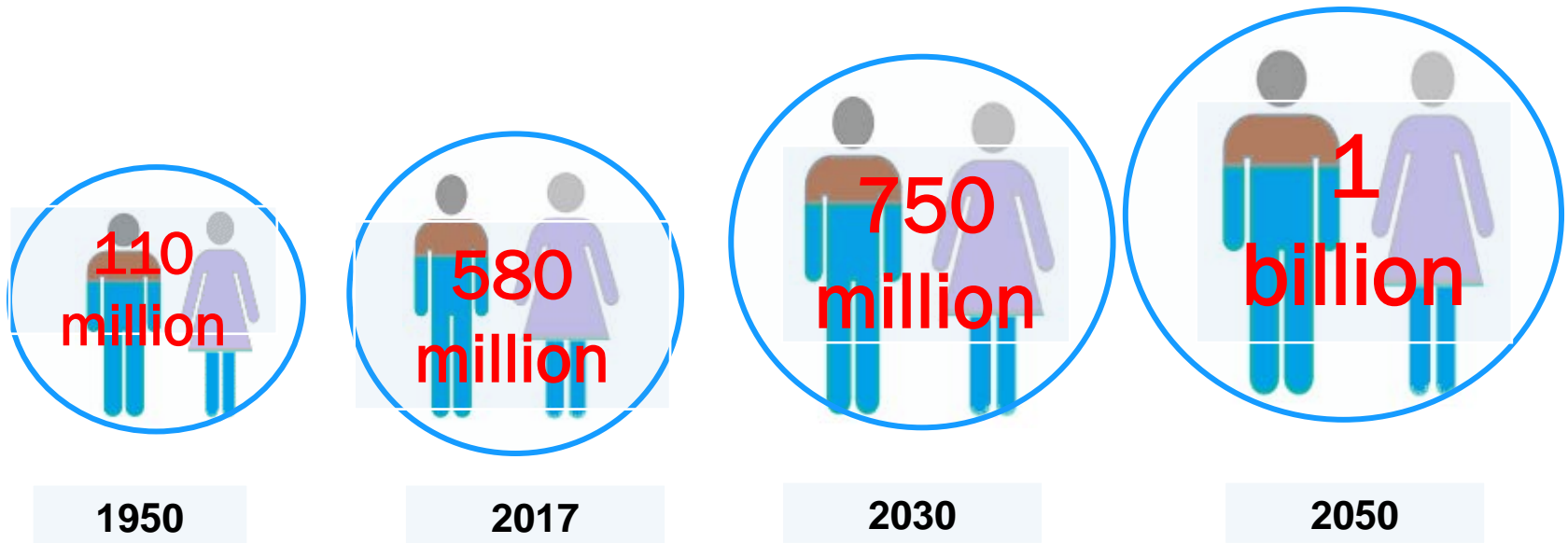


Underlying causes that have not been given adequate attention in combating poverty

Persistently high fertility rate

❑ Fertility rates remains stubbornly high:

- ✓ In rural communities
- ✓ In poor households



❑ Such growth rate is both a challenge and an opportunity

The two scenarios:

1. Reap the demographic dividend through:

- Coordinated social, economic and political interventions
- Investing heavily on children and youth,
- Dedication to long-term interventions to build human capital

2. Or, go on with business as usual and

- Increase the burden of poverty and inequality
- Pose serious security, stability and prosperity of countries

- Outcome depends how governments act now.

Bad governance – A chronic problem

“Good governance is perhaps the single most important factor in eradicating poverty and promoting development in Africa”

~ Kofi Annan

- Decline in good governance
(Mo Ibrahim IAG 2020)
- Performance declined in critical aspects for SDGs:
 - ✓ Security; Rule of law
 - ✓ Participation; Inclusion.
- Unaccountable/unresponsive institutions
- Corruption and wastage of resources deepen poverty
- Gaps in effective sanctions



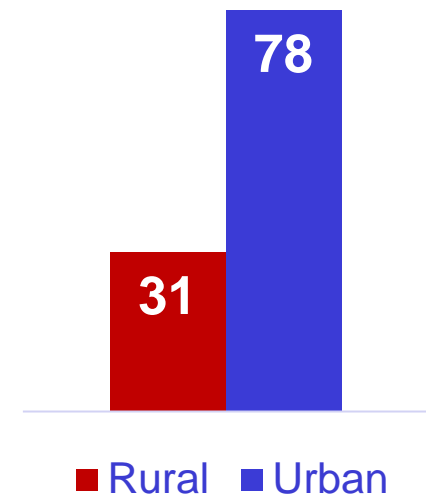
Armed conflict exacerbating poverty

- ❑ A number of countries have active conflicts
- ❑ Countries in active conflict have notably higher poverty rates.
- ❑ Numerous factors contribute to armed conflict:
 - ✓ Lack of functional systems and mechanisms of resolving grievances
 - ✓ Systemic marginalization, grave violation of human rights
 - ✓ Scarcity of resources
- ❑ Even long after the conflict ended, they experience the slowest poverty reduction.
- ❑ Conflict is a critical factor that needs to be seriously considered

Neglect of the rural majority

- ❑ Persistent gap in access to essential services between urban and rural areas
- ❑ Neglect of the rural majority causing extreme inequalities
- ❑ Africa's rural populations:
 - ✓ Clustered on a small share of the arable land
 - ✓ Increasing land pressures due to high population growth
 - ✓ Poor condition of girls and women
 - ✓ High prevalence of child marriage and early childbearing
- ❑ All these calling for coordinated effort.

Access to electricity
(Africa)





What needs to be done?

Accelerate the Fertility Transition

- Meet the unmet need for family planning
- Strengthen health facilities in rural areas
- Invest in the elimination of child marriage
- Investing in child-sensitive social protection schemes such as cash transfers
- Investing particularly in girls
- Fight temptation to have short-term interventions

Enhance governance to enhance performance and address conflict

- Reform and build the capacity of public institutions
- Enhance functionality of accountability mechanisms
- Strong commitment to combat corruption/inefficiency
- Reform law enforcement bodies and ensure their independence
- Upholding the rule of law as key government priority
- Minimize military and security apparatus interference in politics.

Foster investments in technologies appropriate for rural development

Start from the simple

- ❑ A solar powered irrigation pump that is portable and can be easily be transported between fields.
- ❑ Expand mobile phones to enable farmers:
 - ✓ Receive market information
 - ✓ Selling at the best possible price
 - ✓ Monitor weather forecasts
 - ✓ Accessing financial services.
 - ✓ Receive advice/recommendations tailored to their needs

Foster investments in technologies appropriate for rural development

Technologies to:

- ✓ Boost productivity
- ✓ Agricultural inputs such as seeds and fertiliser
- ✓ To protect crops from diseases and pests

These interventions alone will not be enough. . . .

- Investments in physical infrastructure
- Increasing access to electricity
- Expand internet connectivity/Data sharing for greater impact

Final remarks

Value attachments

- Leaving no one behind hinges on the value given to each and every individual
- Sentiments that some lives matter more than others can dictate philosophies, policies and practices
- Those whose life is “considered” to have less value are left behind
- Individual and collective responsibility to do better