

# Zambia:

## On the Cusp of a Promising Future

### KEY MESSAGES



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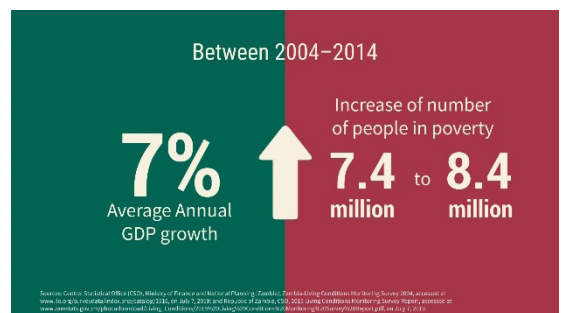
Zambia is laying the groundwork to meet its Vision 2030 goal of becoming a prosperous middle-income country.

We've achieved significant progress since the turn of the century: Our economy has grown, more mothers are surviving childbirth, and children are healthier and more educated.



Yet despite Zambia's noteworthy progress, poverty in the country remains high. During our period of economic growth, the number of Zambians living in poverty increased by 1 million. As of 2015, more than half of Zambians lived in poverty.<sup>1</sup>

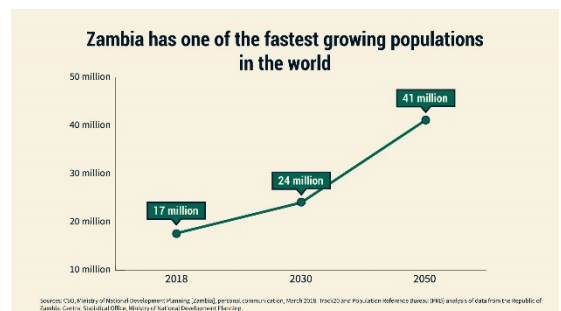
Economic success alone did not automatically lead to overall national development and improved quality of life.



Why is there still widespread poverty if our economy is growing? One possible explanation is that our population is growing faster than our economy.

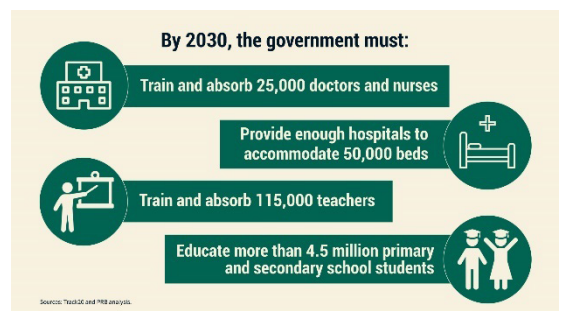
Zambia has one of the fastest-growing populations in the world. Today, we have 17 million people.<sup>2</sup> And each year, we add about 600,000 people to the population.<sup>3</sup> At this rate, our country will increase to 24 million by 2030 and 41 million by 2050.<sup>4</sup>

Half of our population is less than age 15. We have a very youthful population.



To meet the basic needs of the population in 2030 the government will need to:<sup>5</sup>

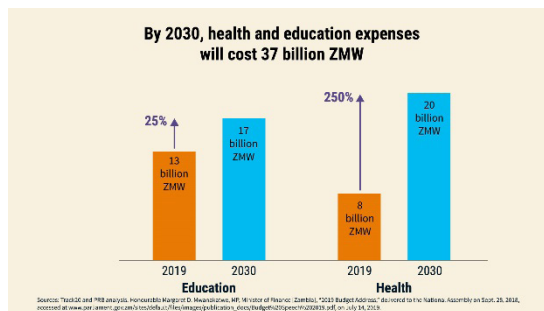
- Train and absorb 25,000 doctors and nurses.
- Provide enough hospitals to accommodate 50,000 beds.
- Train and absorb 115,000 teachers.
- Educate more than 4.5 million primary and secondary school students.



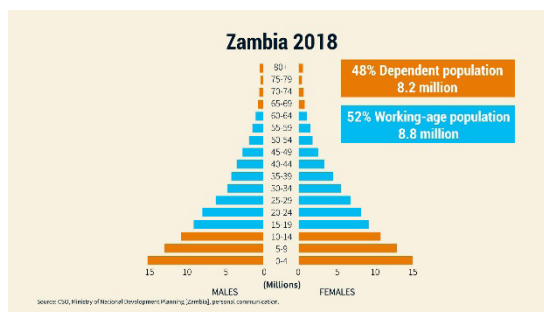
The increased demand for education and health services in 2030 will cost the government approximately:<sup>6</sup>

- 17 billion Kwacha in education expenses.
- 20 billion Kwacha in health expenses

...a significant increase from the 2019 education and health budgets.<sup>7</sup>



At the community and household level, the large number of dependents limits the working population’s ability to save money and makes it harder for families to escape poverty. Children are malnourished, families are struggling to make ends meet, and quality of life is slow to improve.



What can we do to break the cycle of poverty and open a window of opportunity for sustainable economic growth and improved quality of life in Zambia?

Experience has taught us that economic success alone is not enough to achieve middle-income status. Governments must also invest in the health and education of its people, along with sound economic policies and good governance practices.



Improve child survival and reduce fertility by promoting voluntary family planning.

Research shows that couples choose to have smaller families when they know that each child has a better chance of surviving.

And, as women and couples have smaller families, they are better able to provide for their children, save money, and escape poverty.

In fact, studies show that shifting the age structure of the population can lead to a 47 percent increase in per capita income!<sup>8</sup>



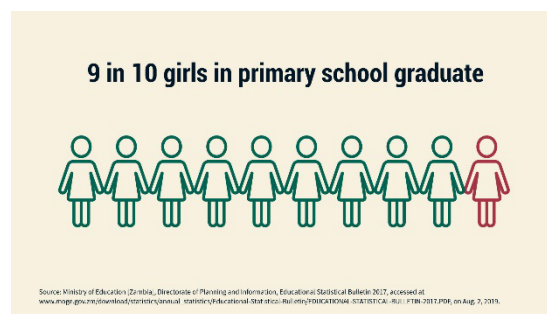
Increase secondary school completion rates among youth, especially girls.

Women with higher education delay marriage and childbearing, hold high-skilled jobs, contribute to the economy, and better provide for herself and her family.<sup>9</sup>

A World Bank analysis revealed that every extra year of secondary school for women can boost wages by 15 percent to 20 percent.<sup>10</sup>



Unfortunately, national figures show that although 9 in 10 girls in primary school graduate, less than 1 in 3 girls in secondary school complete their studies.<sup>11</sup>



Child marriage and adolescent pregnancy also pose a serious challenge to girls' education, contributing significantly to school dropout rates.

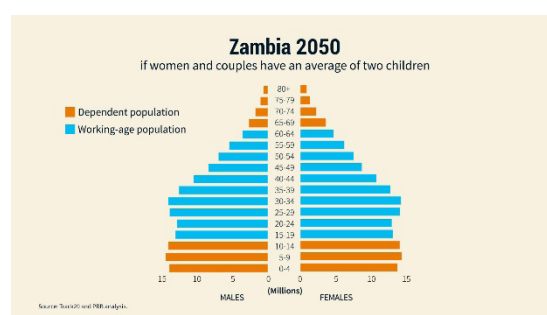
In 2014, more than 150,000 girls ages 15 to 19 were married, and in 2018 about 1 in 3 girls ages 15 to 19 had already given birth or are pregnant with their first child.<sup>12</sup>

Of the 14,000 girls who dropped out of primary and secondary school in 2017 due to pregnancy, only 7,500 returned after giving birth.<sup>13</sup>



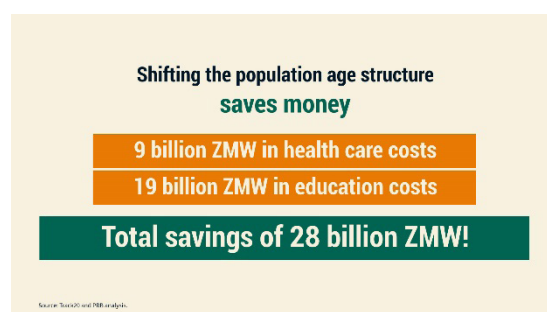
If we invest in the health and education of the population, especially in women and girls, we may see a different Zambia in the years to come.

The share of working-age adults will be higher to support the dependent population, easing the pressure on the government to keep up with the increasing demand for social services.<sup>14</sup>



The government doesn't have to spend as much money to meet the needs of the population and can save money on health and education expenditures.

By 2050, Zambia can save 9 billion Kwacha in health care costs and 19 billion Kwacha in education costs—a total savings of 28 billion Kwacha.<sup>15</sup>



We can invest these savings in areas that support our continued progress towards becoming a middle-income country, such as:

- Promoting economic diversification and job creation.
- Enhancing human development.
- Creating a conducive governance environment.
- Reducing poverty and vulnerability.

All these investments comprise the strategic areas of our Seventh National Development Plan.

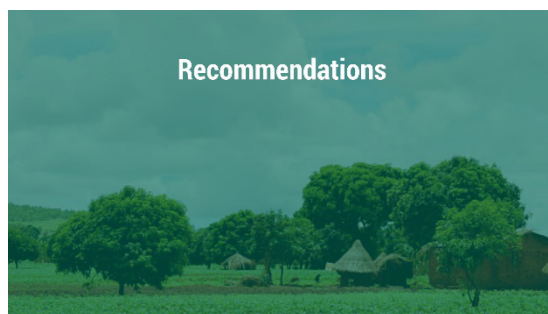


And now, with the launch of the 2019 National Population Policy, policymakers and key stakeholders have the policy frameworks in place to ensure that Zambia remains on the path towards achieving its development goals.



To shift the population age structure and achieve a population growth rate that is sustainable and beneficial to national development, Zambia must:

- Expand access to voluntary family planning outreach and services, especially in rural areas.
- Increase investments in child health and secondary education, especially for girls.
- Integrate population issues into the overall development planning process.
- Use population and demographic data to inform development policies, programs, and resource allocation.



By recognizing the importance of population growth and taking action now, we can keep the nation on the path to becoming a middle-income country.



## Key Messages Handout References

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