

Peter West, British High Commissioner

British High Commissioner announces new £38 million family planning programme

Since I moved to Uganda in 2016, I have been struck by what a young and energetic country it is: with the second fastest population growth rate in Africa, half of the population are below 15 years old.

Like many developing countries, Uganda's largely young population is a result of recent decades of high fertility along with improvements in child survival. It creates enormous opportunities for the country, with a million young people entering the workforce each year, but it also raises some real challenges such as increased pressure on social services.

Uganda's youthful population has the potential to be a driving force behind economic prosperity in future decades, but only if policies and programmes are in place to enhance their opportunities and encourage smaller families. Today, the UK government joins the Government of Uganda in commemorating the World Population Day under the theme "Strengthen youth competitiveness for sustainable development." Expanding access to contraception and family planning programmes is one of the most cost-effective ways to break the cycle of poverty and foster development.

It empowers people to plan their futures and reach their fullest potential. Over the



next few years, the success of programmes that reach young people and other vulnerable populations may be a deciding factor between poverty and prosperity for Uganda.

Yet in Uganda, at least 1,700,000 women and girls who want to avoid pregnancy are not using safe and effective family planning methods, for reasons ranging from lack of access to information or services to lack of support from their partners or communities.

These include women and girls who have goals they want to achieve before having a baby, mothers who wish to space births to focus on feeding, educating and caring for the children they already have, and women who may not want to have children at all. To address some of these challenges, the

UK government will provide up to £38 million (sh177b) to support the Government of Uganda in the implementation of the Family Planning Costed Implementation Plan. This is expected to accelerate the uptake of contraception with at least 380,000 additional women using modern family planning methods, reducing the negative health, social and economic consequences of high fertility rates.

This year's World Population Day, July 11, coincides with the Family Planning Summit in London and I am delighted that the Minister of Health, Jane Aceng and the Minister of State for Finance Evelyn Anite are attending this summit co-hosted by the UK Government, UNFPA and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

In 2012, His Excellency President Museveni attended the London Summit on Family Planning and made commitments that have contributed to the progress Uganda has made over the last five years in addressing high fertility rates.

The 2017 Family Planning summit is a landmark event that provides an opportunity to galvanise progress and strengthen the foundations for universal access to sexual and reproductive health, including family planning.

The writer is the British High Commissioner to Uganda

Volkan Sahinkaya



The morning of the post-July 15 trauma

July 16, 2016, around 09:30a.m. I woke up suddenly in stress. I must have fallen asleep on my sofa on the night from July 15 to 16. I immediately checked my iPad on the table. And thank God surrendered putschist soldiers on the Bosphorus Bridge marked the victory of the Turkish people.

On that night, the militants of Fetullahist Terrorist Organisation (FETO) through its followers within the Armed Forces bombed many public buildings including the Parliament and Presidential Complex, fired at innocent civilians and attempted to assassinate the president and prime minister. Indeed, it was not a mere terrorist coup plot, but also an attempt in vain to prepare the ground for a civil war in Turkey. The coup perpetrator FETO is a secretive cult which promotes the perverted religious ideology of Fetullah Gülen, who distorts Islam by claiming to be the "Imam of the Universe" and places himself above the Prophet. FETO disciples infiltrated into and spread over all the Turkish state organs clandestinely like a cancer, so as to ultimately replace the constitutional order with a fundamentalist dictatorship. Therefore, it is a new generation terrorist organisation.

The coup plot was thwarted thanks to the heroic resistance of the patriotic Turkish nation. Obviously, they gave an unprecedented democracy lesson to the whole world. One of them even threw a broom to a flying F-16 fighter jet hijacked by FETO, with the same resolve displayed by the ant who was carrying a drop of water to extinguish the great fire lit to burn Prophet Abraham.

The world has to understand that no matter what kind of a regime change is plotted against Turkey from outside, the brave Turkish nation will never allow this to happen. That's why 250 innocent people gave up their lives on July 15 last year and why at least 10 million Turkish

people from different political views came together in the August 7, democracy rally. By declaring a state of emergency, the Government started to take resolute steps to eradicate the parallel state structure of FETO, which posed an existential threat to the Turkish state and nation.

Concrete evidences such as the testimonies of the coup plotters, usage exclusively by the FETO militants of an encrypted communication application called "ByLock" for their illegal activities, and the relevant CCTV footages, affirm that FETO was behind the coup plot. Based on the above evidence, thousands of traitors were dismissed from public service and also, FETO-affiliated entities were shut down.

Currently there are 78 ongoing court cases in 23 different provinces, with regard to the coup perpetrators and their civilian orchestrators and supporters from all walks of life. While fighting against even such a sheerly brutal terrorist organisation, Turkey acts in full conformity with the constitution and its international obligations.

With a view to ensuring the rule of law and justice, the Government of Turkey has recently established an Inquiry Commission, in accordance with the recommendation of the Council of Europe, which will review the measures taken during the state of emergency. So far, over 300 institutions that were shut down were reopened, and 30,000 public employees have already been reinstated through various administrative boards of review.

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The writer is the Deputy Head of Mission Turkish Embassy in Kampala

Amin Mawji, diplomat

Youth are Uganda's greatest asset

Today, the international community marks World Population Day. It is a timely moment to reflect on the reality that Uganda is now one of Africa's largest and fastest-growing countries.

For some, the population growth may be a cause for concern. But, as President Museveni has reminded us, a large population can be an important resource for economic development and transformation.

The experience of Asian countries like South Korea, Japan and India shows that a young growing population brings the advantages of abundant manpower supply and a large domestic market for goods and services. This is what demographers refer to as "the demographic dividend", being the benefit that flows from having a young labour force that is still growing faster than the retired force and dependent children.

For Uganda, the growing labour force represents a powerful engine for development. It is to the Government's credit that life expectancy in Uganda has increased by over 20% over the past decade. With increasing emphasis on better healthcare, water supply, nutrition and hygiene, we can expect life expectancy in Uganda to continue to increase. Alongside public policy to support social development and economic growth, the return of peace and stability in the country has also provided the enabling environment necessary to allow the youth to flourish and realise their full potential.



An added factor relevant in the Ugandan context is the declining fertility rates and dependency ratios. This will likely free up more women to participate actively in the workforce. The Government's emphasis on gender issues recognises the importance of ensuring that skills and work opportunities are enriched for all segments of society, including women.

The availability of a growing pool of talent and an expanding market for goods and services present powerful opportunities for development and investment. There is a role here for both the public and private sectors to capture these opportunities.

Indeed, all parts of society, including employers, educators, architects, planners and civil society generally can play a crucial role in delivering the demographic dividend for Uganda. One example of

this can be found in the work of the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN) – which illustrates how civil society not only complements, but often completes the work of the private and public sectors.

Today also marks the commemoration of His Highness the Aga Khan's Diamond Jubilee, being the 60th anniversary of his accession to his role as the hereditary Imam of the Shia Imami Ismaili Muslims.

Looking back over the past 60 years, the agencies of Aga Khan Development Network have been proud to partner with the Government of Uganda in its efforts to drive economic growth and social development.

As Uganda strives to reap the demographic dividend, the AKDN's work illustrates how civil society can partner with government across many different fronts to ensure that population growth does not result in a demographic burden. This includes, for example: involving youth in planning for their future, supporting education for girls, creating jobs in sectors such as tourism, industry and agriculture, developing youth skills, ensuring a healthy environment for the people and promoting sound urban planning.

Uganda's aspiration for socio-economic transformation and transition into an upper-middle-income country by 2040 calls for each of us to play our part to harness a sizeable demographic dividend.

The writer is the diplomatic representative of the Aga Khan Development Network based in Kampala