2. RECENT SOCIAL DEVELOPMENTS IN AFRICA

The chapter reviews recent social development trends in Africa by addressing three questions.

WHY IS THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE IN EXTREME POVERTY NOT DECLINING FAST ENOUGH IN AFRICA?

The economic growth seen in many African countries in the last couple of decades or so, and especially since the early 2000s, has had less of an impact on poverty than expected. The continent's poverty headcount ratio declined from 54.3 per cent in 1990 to 41 per cent in 2013, though the second half of this period was more encouraging than in the first, partly owing to faster economic growth. Yet in absolute terms the number of people in poverty is stagnating at the 2002 level so that, from less than 15 per cent in 1990, more than 50 per cent of the world's poor in 2013 were in Africa. Section 2.1 explores why Africa's economic growth is contributing so little to reducing poverty.

ARE WOMEN BENEFITING FROM AFRICA'S GROWTH?

Africa had notable successes across welfare dimensions in 2000–2015 despite challenging initial conditions. A higher proportion of children now attend primary school, the rates of child and maternal deaths have fallen and a greater share of people have access to improved sources of water and sanitation facilities. Yet progress varied among countries and among population groups within countries. Progress on gender equality has been particularly slow and inconsistent. Section 2.2 examines the gender bias in Africa's growth story.

IS WELFARE HIGHER IN URBAN THAN RURAL AREAS?

In almost every country in the world, average living standards in urban areas are superior to those in rural areas, regardless of national income levels. This gap also tends to be maintained during the development process, as countries transform from predominantly rural and agrarian economies to more urbanized economies with larger industrial and service sectors.

Section 2.3 adopts a spatial perspective and examines to what extent urbanization in Africa follows this trend.

The final section captures the key messages.

2.1 POVERTY REDUCTION IN AFRICA

Africa's progress in reducing poverty since 1990 is marked by two distinct phases. The poverty headcount ratio actually *increased* from 1990 to 2002, from 54.3 per cent to 55.6 per cent, but then declined by more than a quarter to 41 per cent in 2013. Still, poverty in Africa fell much more slowly in 1990–2013 than in other world regions (figure 2.1).

Poverty in Africa fell much more slowly in 1990–2013 than in other world regions.

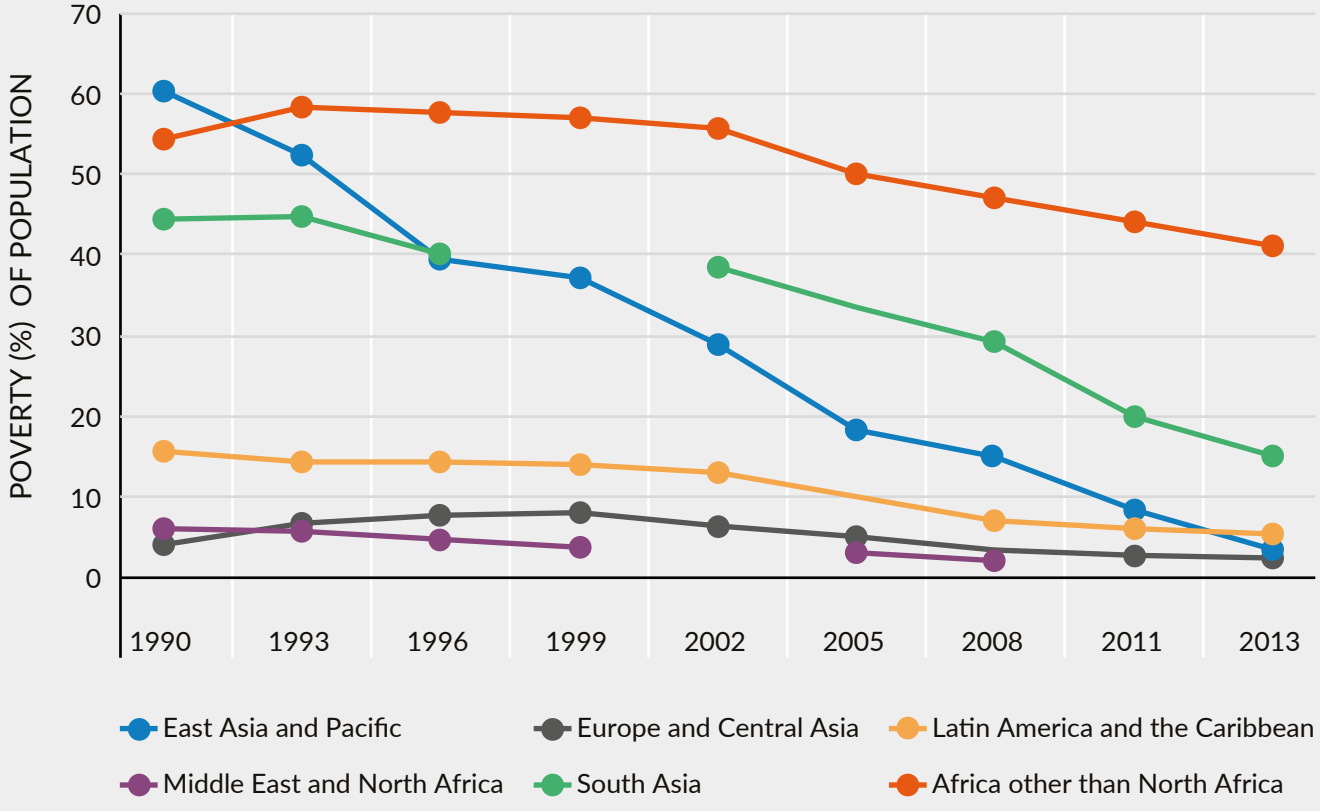
In 1996–2012 poverty declined in all subregions and faster in urban than rural areas, except in Southern Africa, which witnessed a marginally faster decline in rural poverty (figure 2.2).

The number of people in poverty in Africa other than North Africa increased by 42 per cent from 276 million in 1990 to 391 million in 2002. After 2002, however, economic growth had a positive, though slow, impact as the number of people in poverty remained almost constant at around 390 million. The shocking upshot of these figures is that, from less than 15 per cent in 1990, more than 50 per cent of the world's poor in 2013 were in Africa (World Bank, 2016c).

Why has economic growth had such a small impact on reducing poverty in Africa? The response can be broken down into four areas:

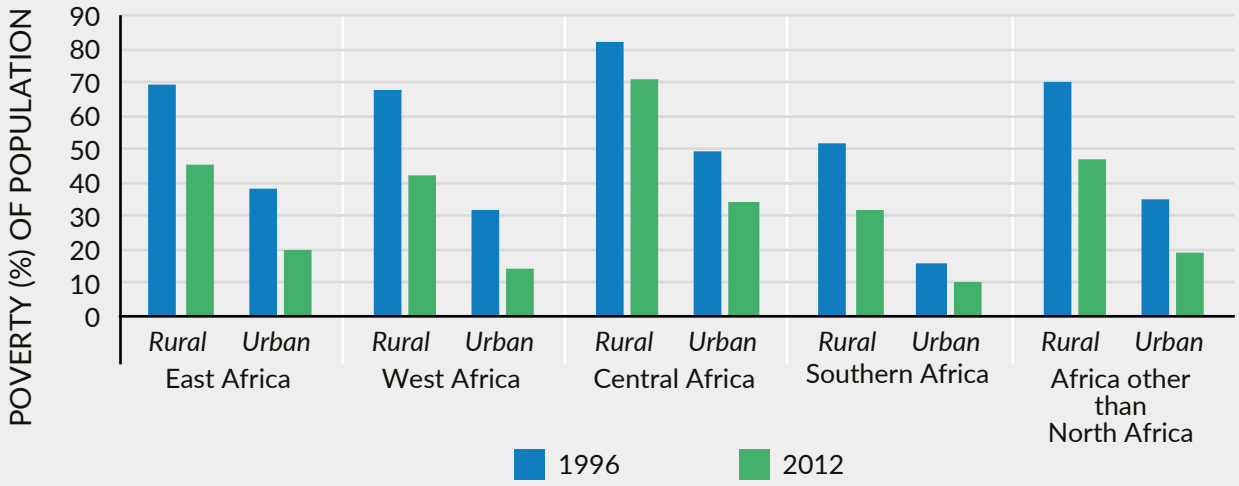
- Depth of poverty.
- High initial inequality.
- Mismatch between sectors of growth and of employment.
- Rapid population growth and delayed demographic transition.

FIGURE 2.1 **Poverty trends at $1.90 a day, 1990–2013 (2011 PPP)**



Source: World Development Indicators (2014).
Note: PPP = purchasing power parity.

FIGURE 2.2 Poverty by subregion in Africa other than North Africa, 1996 and 2012



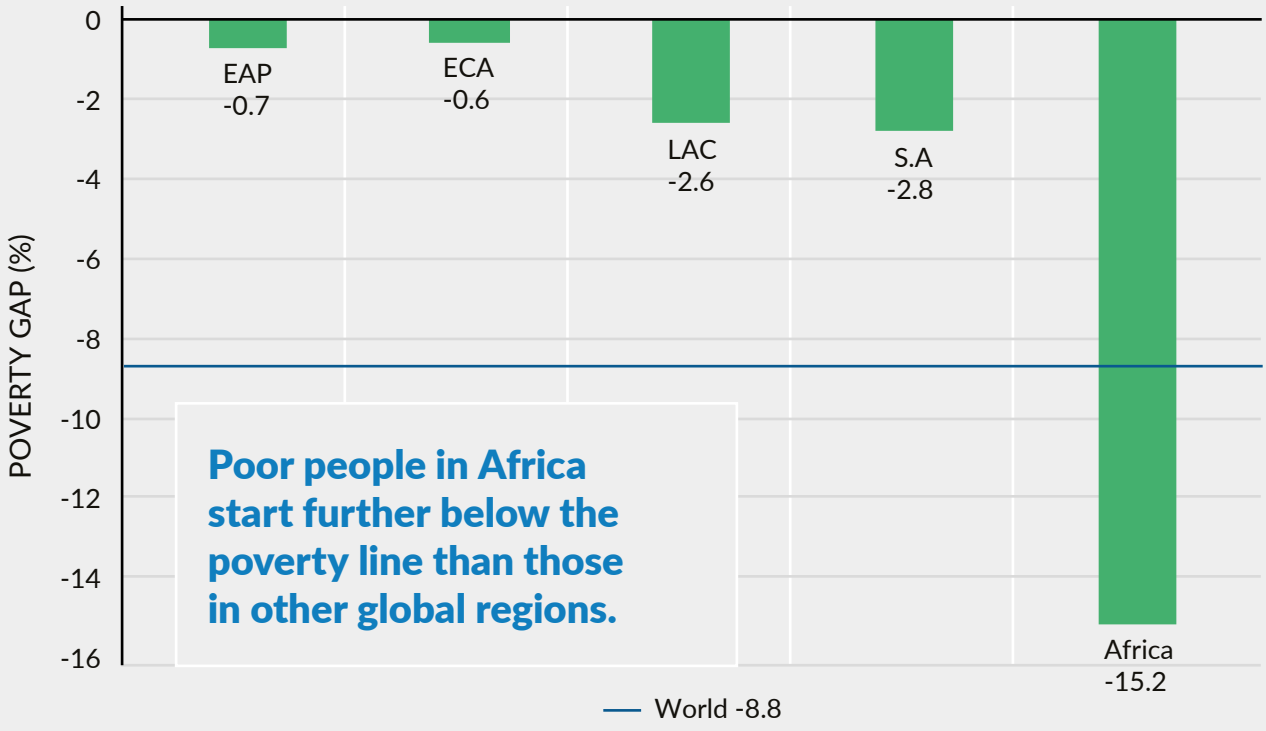
Source: Based on World Bank (2016b), Povcal Net Online Poverty Analysis Tool.

DEPTH OF POVERTY IN AFRICA

Poor people in Africa start further below the poverty line than those in other global regions. So even if their incomes are growing, that is rarely enough to push them over the poverty line threshold. The poverty gap provides a measure of how far below the poverty line the poor in a given country or region fall. This gap is expressed as a share of the poverty line and represents the average distance to the poverty line among all the poor. Africa's poverty gap is nearly twice the global gap—15.2 per cent versus 8.8 per cent (figure 2.3).

Twenty of the 48 countries with data—45 per cent of the continent's population—have a poverty gap ratio higher than the African average (figure 2.4). Nine of them—Madagascar, Democratic Republic of Congo

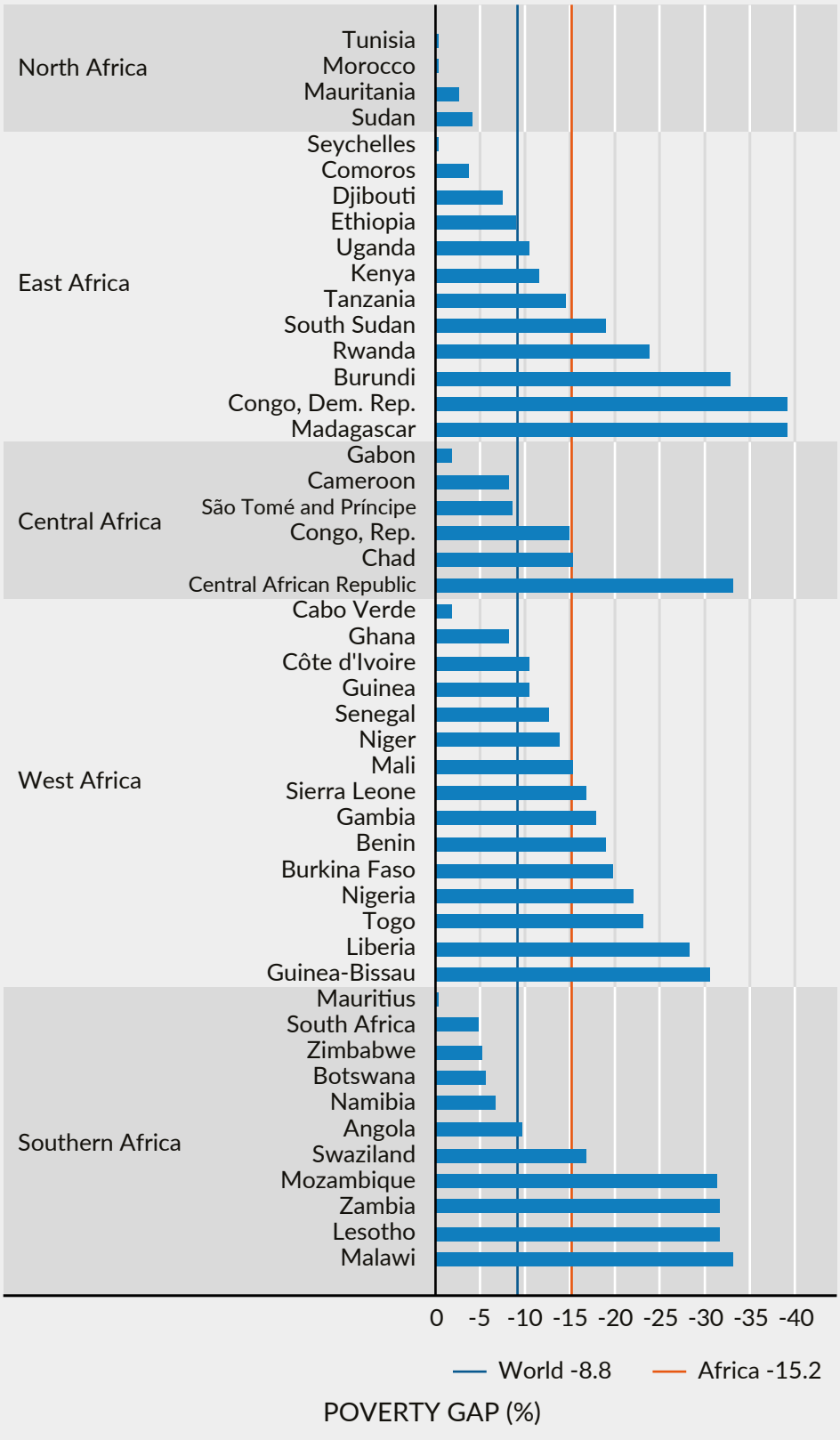
FIGURE 2.3 Poverty gap (depth of poverty) by region (%), 2013



Source: Based on 2013 data using PovcalNet, World Bank.
Note: EAP—East Asia and Pacific; ECA—Eastern Europe and Central Asia; LAC—Latin America and the Caribbean; SA—South Asia. Middle East and North Africa (MENA) is not shown as the depth of poverty is very low.

FIGURE 2.4 Poverty gap in Africa, 2013

Africa's poverty gap is nearly twice the global gap—15.2 per cent versus 8.8 per cent.

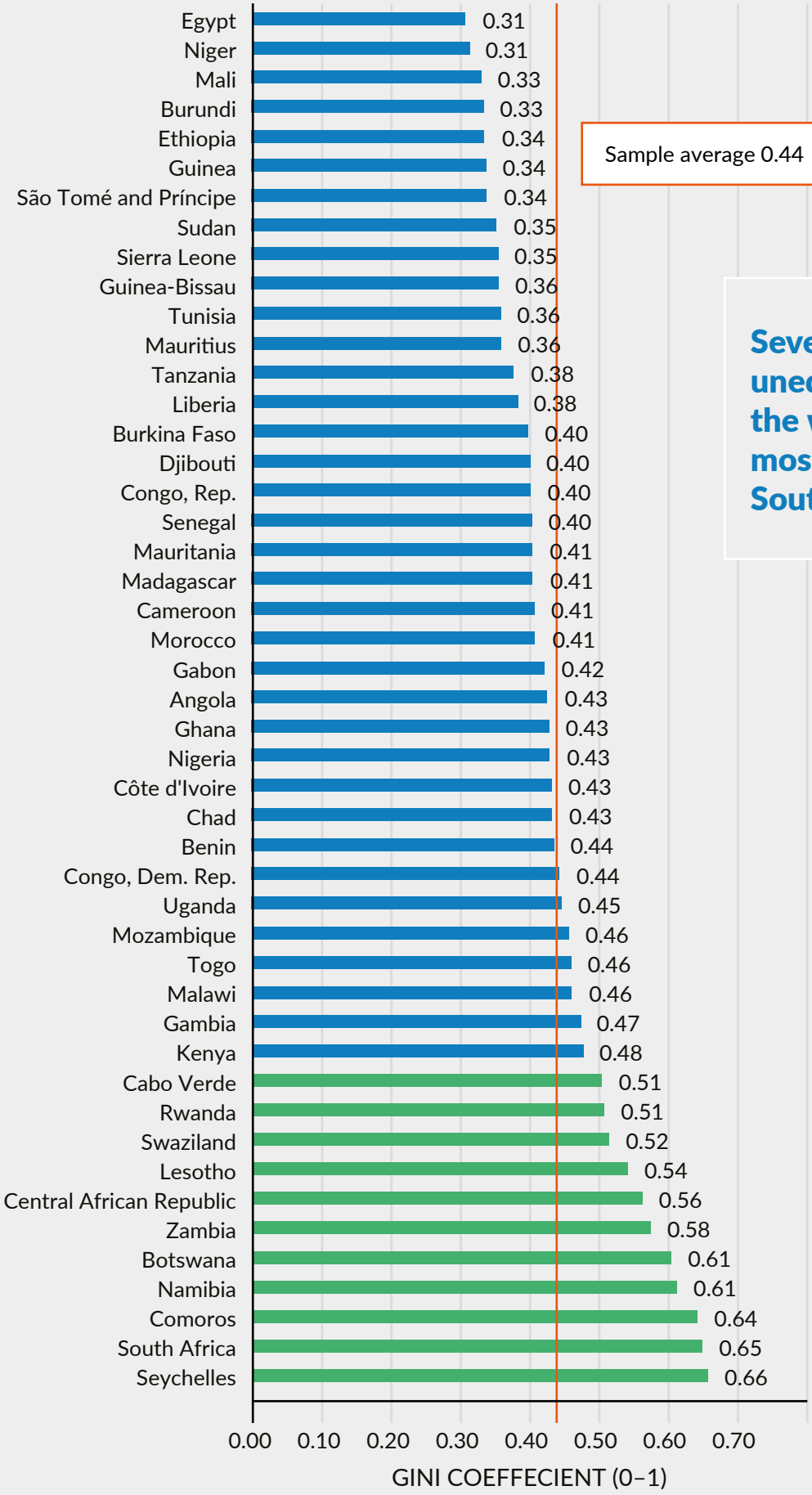


Source: World Bank (2016b).
Note: Data for 48 countries.

(DRC), Malawi, Central African Republic, Burundi, Lesotho, Zambia, Mozambique and Guinea-Bissau—have a depth of poverty that is more than twice the African average.

The average consumption of the poor in Africa other than North Africa is $1.16 a day (2011 PPP), which is $0.74 below the international poverty line (Beegle et al., 2016) and indicates why poverty has declined only slowly and underlines the challenge of achieving the Sustainable Development Goal target of eliminating poverty on the continent by 2030.

FIGURE 2.5 **Inequality in Africa: Gini coefficient, various years**



Seven of the 10 most unequal countries in the world are in Africa, most of which are in Southern Africa.

Source: Based on data from the African Centre for Statistics.

Note: Seychelles uses an income-based household survey.

HIGH INITIAL INEQUALITY

The period of sustained growth in most countries in Africa has boosted per capita incomes, reduced poverty and led to steady progress in education, health and living standards. But the pace of progress is slow, hampered by high levels of income inequality within countries. Economic growth delivers less poverty reduction when initial inequality is high because the absolute increases in income associated with rising average incomes are smaller for the bottom quintiles (Chandy, 2015).

Three features characterize the inequality landscape in Africa:

HIGH AVERAGE INEQUALITY

The unweighted average Gini coefficient in Africa is 0.44, which is the second highest after the Gini in Latin America (around 0.50), and nearly 12 per cent higher than the coefficient for the rest of the developing world, at 0.39. Seven of the 10 most unequal countries in the world are in Africa (AfDB, OECD and UNDP, 2016). The average within-country inequality masks wide-ranging variation from 0.31 in Egypt and Niger to 0.65 in South Africa and 0.66 in Seychelles (figure 2.5).

EXTREME INEQUALITY

South Africa, Namibia and Botswana are among the most unequal countries in the world, with the Gini exceeding 0.60 in 2013. Around 10 per cent of the African population live in highly unequal countries with the Gini in excess of 0.50 (shown in green in figure 2.5). A further 50 per cent live in countries with the Gini in the range of 0.40 to 0.50. In short, close to 60 per cent of the African population live in countries with very high to high levels of inequality.

BIFURCATION IN INEQUALITY TRENDS

While the average Gini in Africa has declined steadily since the early 1990s, countries show substantial variation, and are almost evenly split

TABLE 2.1 Inequality trends in 29 countries in Africa, 1993–2011

SUBREGION	INEQUALITY			
	DECLINED	INCREASED	INCREASED BEFORE DECLINING	DECLINED BUT IS RISING NOW
North Africa			Mauritania	
East Africa	Ethiopia Madagascar	Kenya Uganda	Rwanda	Tanzania
Central Africa	Cameroon			Central African Republic
West Africa	Burkina Faso Gambia Guinea Guinea-Bissau Mali Niger Senegal Sierra Leone	Côte d'Ivoire Ghana		Nigeria
Southern Africa	Lesotho Swaziland	Botswana Mauritius South Africa	Angola Mozambique	Malawi Zambia

Source: Based on information in Cornia (2016).
[a] A 2014 study indicated a widening in inequality in Ethiopia, as measured by the Gini coefficient, from 0.298 in 2005 to 0.336 in 2011 (Alemayehu and Addis, 2014).
[b] Côte d'Ivoire has reduced inequality since 2011 (World Bank, 2016b).

across rising and falling inequality in recent years. Cornia (2016) shows that within-country inequality can widen or narrow, and a good understanding of such bifurcation is essential to design suitable policies to raise the region's low poverty reduction elasticity of growth.

Inequality trends vary by subregion. In West Africa inequality fell steadily in nine out of 12 (mostly agrarian) economies, while a modest decline was recorded in some East African countries. In contrast, Southern and Central Africa show a rise after around 2003. Thus, after the early 2000s, there was a regional divergence in inequality trends, as most low-inequality countries experienced a decline and the high-inequality ones a rise or stagnation at high levels (Cornia, 2016). Six of the 10 countries with the highest Gini in Africa (see figure 2.5) are in Southern Africa, and in two of these (Botswana and South Africa) inequality increased in the period 1993–2011 (table 2.1). In Zambia, inequality declined during the 1990s, but has increased in 2001-2011.

Although Africa has had robust growth since 2000, its impact on poverty and inequality has been modest.

A highly unequal income distribution often reflects a polarized economy, where economic growth has a narrow base with weak connections to the rest of the economy (ILO, 2016b). Growth in labour-intensive sectors such as agriculture or manufacturing is typically more poverty reducing than growth in capital-intensive sectors such as mining (Ravallion and Datt, 1996; Khan, 1999; Ravallion, Chen and Sangraula, 2007; Loayza and Raddatz, 2010). As is well known, Africa's growth has been fuelled by commodity prices, which has intensified commodity dependence and social inequalities. Africa's reliance on commodities constrain poverty reduction through reducing aggregate income, creating a more unequal income distribution favouring commodity owners (Luke and Sommer, n.d.).

MISMATCH BETWEEN SECTORS OF GROWTH AND OF EMPLOYMENT

African agriculture is still an important contributor to GDP, particularly in West, East and Central Africa, where it contributes 29 per cent, 36 per cent, and 40 per cent of GDP, respectively (table 2.2). Although there has been a gradual shift in the traditional agricultural sector's contribution to GDP in Africa, it has not gone towards manufacturing as in the classic pattern of economic development seen in other regions. And even as agriculture's contribution to GDP fell in 1990–2012 across the continent,[1] the sector still accounted for nearly half of the labour force at the end of the period (table 2.3). Services absorbed more than a third of the workforce, and was the largest contributor to GDP in all subregions (except Central Africa). Industry, which comprises manufacturing, mining and construction, contributed 28–36 per cent of GDP in all subregions in 2012,[2] though it employed only about 9 per cent of the female and 16 per cent of the male workforce.

In most countries mining and utilities saw a rising share in GDP over 1990–2012. The resource-rich economies of Burkina Faso, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea and Zambia witnessed some of the largest shifts of economic activity towards these two subsectors. Over the same period, Angola, Ghana, Mozambique and Nigeria saw large declines in them. But these economies started off from an initially very high base, with very large shares of mining in GDP—in Angola and Nigeria, mining and utilities combined contribute up to 53 per cent and 44 per cent of GDP, respectively (Bhorat, Naidoo and Pillay, 2016).

With this mismatch between the growth sectors and employment creation, Africa's transition out of the primary sector into largely informal and low-productivity tertiary activities has not led to the desired structural transformation. Labour has often moved from low-productivity agriculture to equally low-productivity urban, informal activity.

Agriculture is central to most African economies, as should be policies to promote the sector's growth, increase its global competitiveness and serve as a mechanism for reducing the incidence of working poverty. Increased income generation through agriculture is also a key avenue for reducing overall income inequality in Africa (Bhorat, Naidoo and

TABLE 2.2 Sectoral breakdown of economic activity in Africa, 1990–2012

REGIONS	SECTOR	1990	2000	2010	2011	2012	1990–2000 CHANGE	2000–2012 CHANGE
North Africa	Agriculture (% of GDP)	21.46	18.81	14.18	14.33	14.95	-2.65	-3.87
	Industry[a] (% of GDP)	31.83	34.40	35.59	35.65	35.69	2.58	1.29
	of which: Manufacturing (% of GDP)	15.17	14.28	13.87	13.93	12.89	-0.89	-1.38
	Services (% of GDP)	46.71	46.78	50.24	50.02	49.36	0.07	2.58
West Africa	Agriculture (% of GDP)	34.97	34.47	31.27	29.54	28.83	-0.50	-5.64
	Industry[a] (% of GDP)	21.82	23.41	22.37	24.47	29.18	1.59	5.77
	of which: Manufacturing (% of GDP)	9.56	8.91	6.00	5.87	5.99	-0.65	-2.92
	Services (% of GDP)	43.21	42.12	47.26	47.12	43.08	-1.10	0.96
East Africa	Agriculture (% of GDP)	39.91	32.74	32.63	32.92	35.95	-7.17	3.21
	Industry[a] (% of GDP)	16.60	16.58	18.45	18.65	17.06	-0.02	0.49
	of which: Manufacturing (% of GDP)	8.82	7.81	8.41	8.26	7.84	-1.01	0.03
	Services (% of GDP)	43.49	50.68	48.92	48.43	46.99	7.19	-3.69
Central Africa	Agriculture (% of GDP)	30.83	25.01	32.32	32.13	39.73	-5.83	14.72
	Industry[a] (% of GDP)	27.26	38.49	36.71	37.90	27.59	11.23	-10.90
	of which: Manufacturing (% of GDP)	10.97	7.05	4.06	4.13	4.35	-3.91	-2.71
	Services (% of GDP)	41.91	36.51	30.97	29.97	32.68	-5.40	-3.83
Southern Africa	Agriculture (% of GDP)	18.44	14.68	12.15	11.78	9.15	-3.76	-5.54
	Industry[a] (% of GDP)	34.68	33.21	32.84	32.98	31.73	-1.47	-1.49
	of which: Manufacturing (% of GDP)	17.92	15.39	14.78	14.16	11.44	-2.53	-3.95
	Services (% of GDP)	46.88	52.40	55.01	55.24	59.13	5.52	6.72

Source: Bhorat, Naidoo and Pillay (2016).
[a] Industry corresponds to International Standard Industrial Classification (ISIC) divisions 10–45 and includes manufacturing (ISIC divisions 15–37). It comprises value added in mining, manufacturing (also reported as a separate subgroup), construction, electricity, water and gas.

TABLE 2.3 Sectoral distribution of employed persons, 2004–2012 (%)

SUBREGION	WOMEN			MEN		
	AGRICULTURE	INDUSTRY	SERVICES	AGRICULTURE	INDUSTRY	SERVICES
Central Africa	65.9	7.7	26.0	58.4	10.2	30.2
Eastern Africa	78.1	4.2	17.4	73.5	7.0	19.0
North Africa	40.4	12.9	46.6	24.5	28.3	47.0
Southern Africa	34.9	9.0	45.7	29.0	24.3	42.9
West Africa	43.4	9.9	44.8	51.7	12.2	34.0
Africa	52.5	8.7	36.1	47.4	16.4	34.6

Source: Based on data from ILO (2016a).
The sum of employed persons by gender might not add up to 100 percent because this table ignores sectors not adequately defined in the original KILM database.

Pillay, 2016). At the same time, making the informal sector more sustainable for employment, creating linkages to the formal sector and providing an enabling business environment for the informal sector to thrive is essential for more equitable growth. Expanding the small waged employment base must be a key strategy to reduce inequality in most countries.

RAPID POPULATION GROWTH AND DELAYED DEMOGRAPHIC TRANSITION

RAPID POPULATION GROWTH

Africa's population grew at an average 2.6 per cent a year in 1990–2015, more than twice the world average (UNECA and UNFPA, 2016). In the same period Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean achieved rapid declines in annual population growth. Not only was Africa's annual population growth rate the world's highest, it remained in the range of 2.4–2.6 per cent since 1990 (figure 2.6)—increasing marginally if anything, from 2.44 to 2.55 per cent.

Projected changes in population can be decomposed into fertility, mortality, migration and momentum effects.[3] In Africa the fertility component accounts for around three-quarters of the increase to 2050 (UNDESA, 2013).

Africa's population grew at an average 2.6 per cent a year in 1990–2015, more than twice the world average.

SLOW FERTILITY DECLINE

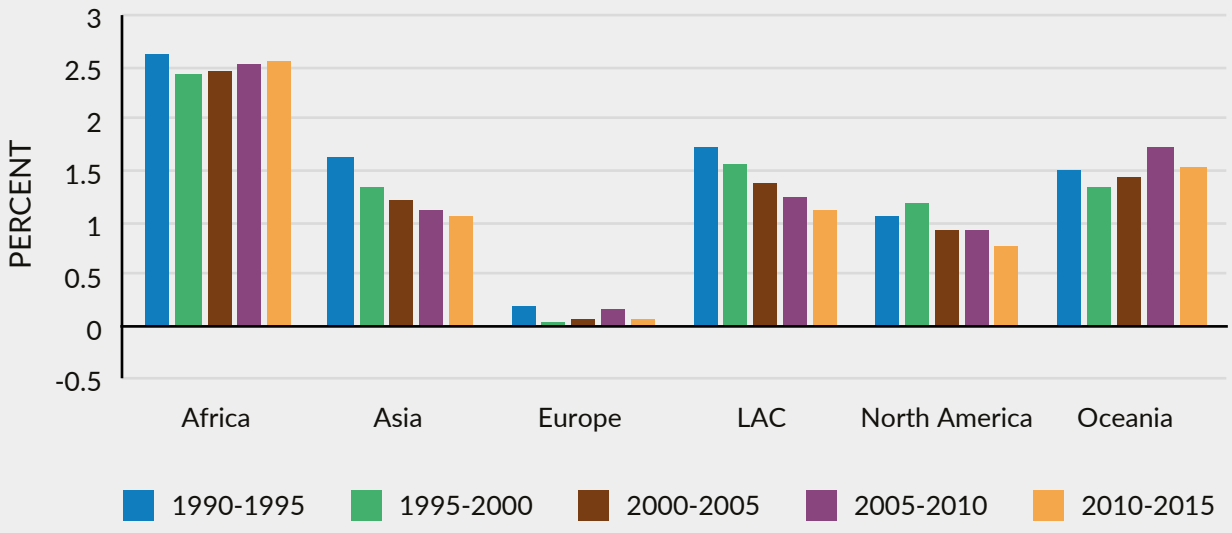
Africa's fertility rates are falling (table 2.4), but not quickly, and the gaps between Africa and the rest of the world are wide, and projected to remain so.

Of the 21 high-fertility countries in the world with a total fertility rate (TFR) in excess of five children per woman, 19 are in Africa. These countries account for around two-thirds of the region's population. The region is forecast to account for 14 of the 15 countries with the highest fertility rates in the world in 2025–2030 (ODI, 2016).

Improved public health cut the under-five mortality rate by more than half from 149 deaths per 1,000 live births in 1990 to 70 in 2014. Increased child survival usually influences fertility rates, though with a time lag.[4] But a disturbing trend is the very delayed decline in Africa's TFR, of only about 1.5 births in 25 years (see table 2.4), which is at variance with the gains in reducing child mortality during the period.

Household wealth makes a difference to the TFR, which is higher for the poor than the rich (table 2.5) in all African countries with data.

FIGURE 2.6 Average annual rate of population change, 1990–2015



Source: UNDESA (2015b).

TABLE 2.4 Change in total fertility rate, 1990–2014

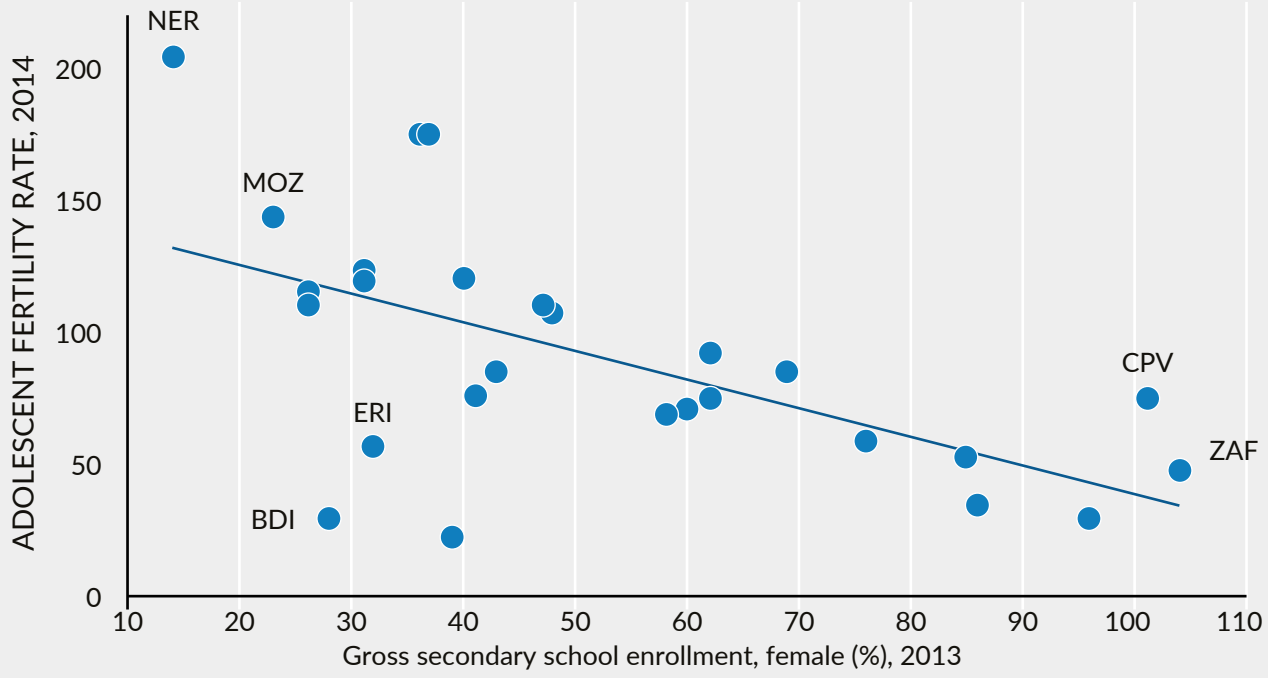
SUBREGION	AVERAGE NUMBER OF BIRTHS PER WOMAN		ABSOLUTE DECLINE IN AVERAGE NUMBER OF BIRTHS PER WOMAN, 1990–2014	AVERAGE % DECLINE, 1990–2014
	1990	2014		
North Africa	4.87	3.2	1.67	34.3
East Africa	6.46	4.69	1.97	27.4
Central Africa	5.99	4.77	1.22	20.4
West Africa	6.53	5.05	1.48	22.7
Southern Africa	5.33	3.86	1.47	27.6
Africa	5.98	4.44	1.54	25.8

Source: Based on data from UNDESA (2015b).

In most regions, at low fertility (typically in richer countries), the difference between the bottom and the top quintiles tends to be small (in the order of 0.5 to 1 live birth), but at higher fertility (usually in poor countries), the difference widens.

Africa had the world's highest adolescent fertility rate (births per 1,000 women aged 15–19) in 2010–2015, at 98, followed by Latin America and the Caribbean, at 67. It also has the world's lowest female secondary gross enrolment ratio. The two are linked: keeping girls in school delays marriage and childbearing, and teenage women attending secondary school are less likely to become mothers. For 27 countries in Africa with comparable data, the adolescent fertility rate drops sharply in countries where more girls attend secondary school (figure 2.7). The causality can also run the other way, and teenage women are less likely to attend secondary school when they become mothers.

FIGURE 2.7 The adolescent fertility rate drops when female secondary school enrolment expands



Source: Based on data from UN DESA (2015) and UNESCO (2016).
Note: Births per 1,000 women aged 15–19 years.
* BDI=Burundi, CPV=Cabo Verde, ERI=Eriteria, MOZ=Mozambique, NER=Niger and ZAF=South Africa.

TABLE 2.5 Total fertility rate per 1,000 live births, by quintile

		POOREST QUINTILE	RICHEST QUINTILE	SUBREGIONAL AVERAGE (POOREST QUINTILE)	SUBREGIONAL AVERAGE (RICHEST QUINTILE)
North Africa	Algeria	3.1	2.3	4.4	2.8
	Mauritania	5.7	3.1		
East Africa	Burundi	6.2	5.7	6.9	3.7
	Comoros	6.7	3.4		
	Congo, Dem. Rep.	7.6	4.9		
	Ethiopia	6.0	2.8		
	Kenya	7.0	2.9		
	Madagascar	6.8	2.7		
	Tanzania	7.0	3.2		
	Uganda	7.9	4.0		
Central Africa	Cameroon	7.0	3.3	6.7	4.1
	Chad	6.8	6.0		
	Central African Republic	7.0	4.6		
	Congo, Rep.	7.0	3.8		
	Gabon	6.6	2.9		
	São Tomé and Príncipe	5.6	3.9		
West Africa	Benin	6.1	3.9	6.7	3.7
	Burkina Faso	7.1	3.7		
	Côte d'Ivoire	6.7	3.2		
	Gambia	6.7	3.8		
	Ghana	6.0	2.9		
	Guinea	6.5	3.4		
	Guinea-Bissau	6.4	2.8		
	Liberia	6.6	2.8		
	Mali	6.7	4.7		
	Niger	8.2	6.1		
	Nigeria	7.0	3.9		
	Senegal	7.3	3.4		
	Sierra Leone	6.1	3.0		
	Togo	6.3	3.5		
Southern Africa	Malawi	6.4	3.3	6.1	2.9
	Mozambique	7.2	3.7		
	Namibia	5.5	2.3		
	Swaziland	4.8	2.7		
	Zambia	7.1	3.0		
	Zimbabwe	5.3	2.6		
Average (unweighted)				6.5	3.6

Source: DHS data for latest years: http://www.statcompiler.com/en/.

IMPACT OF POPULATION ON ECONOMIC GROWTH

Per capita GDP growth provides a more realistic picture of Africa's economic position than the aggregate figure (figure 2.8). When 2.6 per cent (table 2.6) is lopped off aggregate growth for population growth, annual per capita growth in the last quarter century comes in at just 1.1 per cent, which is far from enough to reduce poverty quickly. The table also helps to explain, with contracting per capita GDP in the 1990s, why the poverty headcount ratio actually increased in that decade.

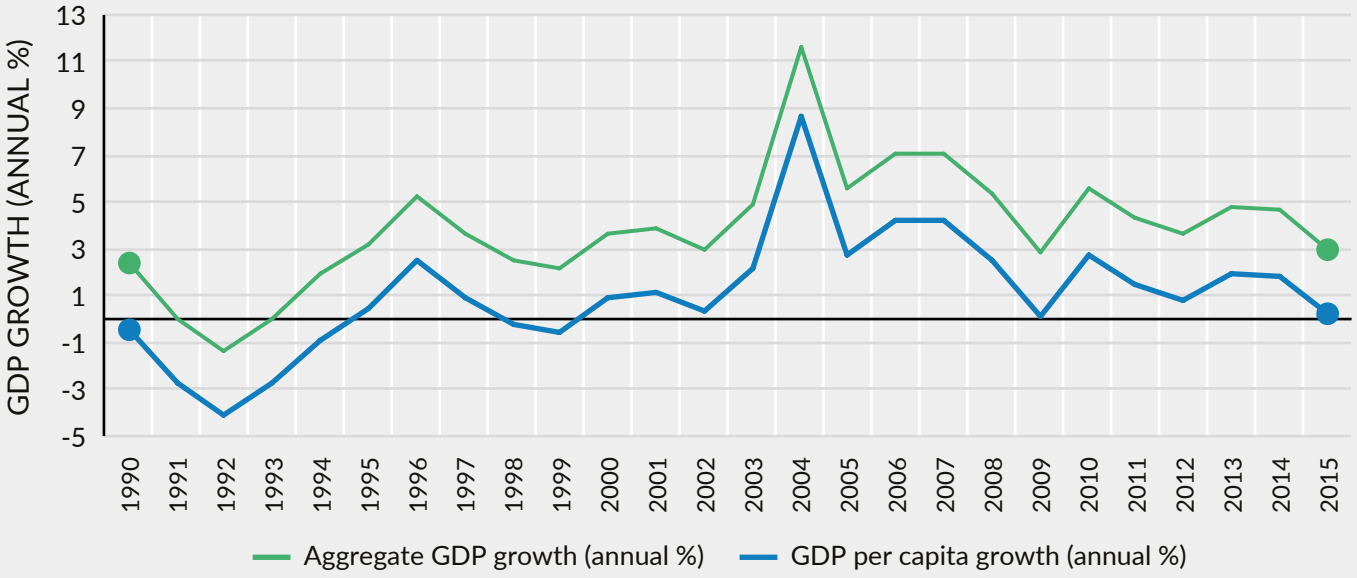
KEY CONCLUSIONS

In spite of strong growth witnessed in most countries in Africa since the early 2000s, poverty reduction has been slow and the number of people in poverty on the continent has stayed almost constant since 2002. A high poverty gap ratio, high initial inequality and slow growth in agriculture, where the bulk of the poor find a living, have all contributed to damping the poverty-reducing impact of economic growth.

A high poverty gap ratio, high initial inequality and slow growth in agriculture, where the bulk of the poor find a living, have all contributed to damping the poverty-reducing impact of economic growth.

And, despite the impressive progress in enhancing child survival, the decline in fertility has stalled, particularly in 14 countries that account for half the continent's population. The slow overall decline in fertility may delay the demographic transition in Africa that is necessary for the demographic dividend. In particular, and as now discussed, the slow decline in fertility and high adolescent fertility rates limit women's opportunities to acquire human capital and become full economic participants.

FIGURE 2.8 Aggregate and per capita annual GDP growth in Africa other than North Africa, 1990–2015



Source: Based on data from World Development Indicators (2016).

TABLE 2.6 Difference between annual average aggregate and per capita GDP growth rates in Africa other than North Africa, 1990–2015 (%)

	AGGREGATE GDP GROWTH	PER CAPITA GDP GROWTH	DIFFERENCE	ANNUAL POPULATION GROWTH RATE, 1980–2011
1990–2000	2.46	-0.12	2.58	2.6
2001–2010	5.28	2.70	2.58	
2011–2015	3.03	0.44	2.59	
1990–2015	3.66	1.07	2.59	

Source: Based on data from UNCTAD (2016). Population growth rate from UNECA (2015).

2.2 WOMEN IN AFRICA'S GROWTH

Reducing gender disparities and enhancing women's access to economic opportunities can generate broad productivity gains and improve other development outcomes, including prospects for the next generation. Gender inequality in the labour market causes lost benefits to individuals, households and society. This has huge economic implications, with annual economic losses due to gender gaps in the labour force estimated at $60 billion for Africa other than North Africa (Bandara, 2015).

Gender gains in Africa since 2000 have been uneven across countries and subregions, and gender inequality remains a key development challenge.

Higher participation in the labour force and greater earnings by women can result in higher expenditure on school enrolment for children, including girls, potentially triggering a virtuous circle of social and economic growth (IMF, 2013). Women's work, paid and unpaid, is often the single most important poverty-reducing factor in many countries (Heintz, 2006).

But gender gains in Africa since 2000 have been uneven across countries and subregions, and gender inequality remains a key development challenge.

WOMEN'S ACCESS TO EDUCATION AND HEALTH

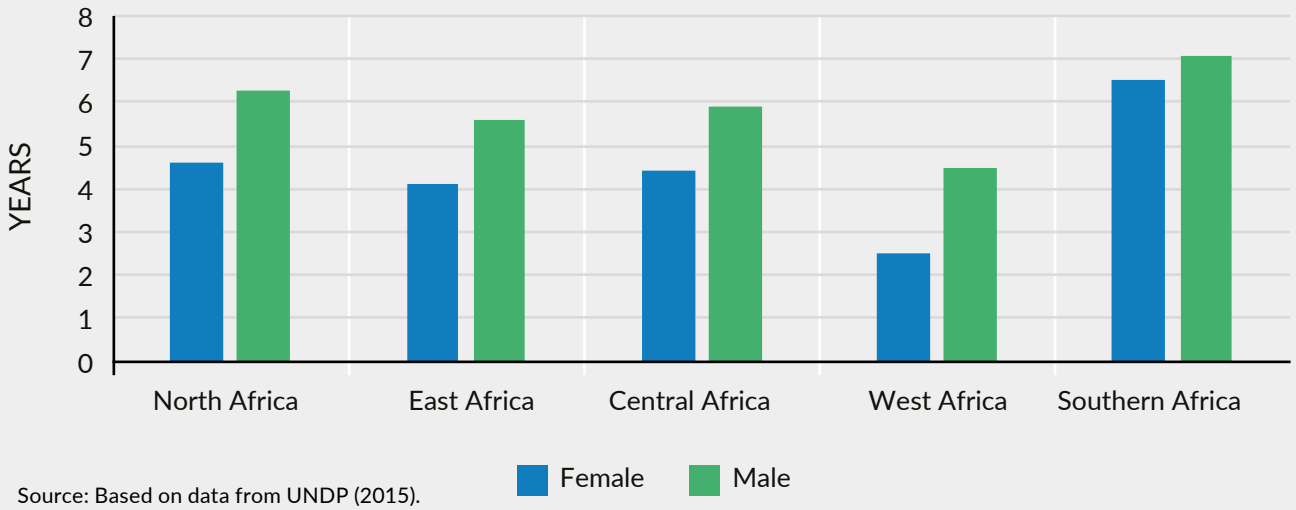
EDUCATION

Access to education contributes to the increased participation of women in the labour force. Women gain access to the labour market and to multiple job opportunities as they become better educated and skilled.

Women in Africa receive on average 4.3 mean years of schooling, against men who get 5.7 years, for an Africa-wide gender gap of 1.4 years. Subregionally, West Africa is the worst off with girls having 2.5 mean years of schooling, or two years less than boys (figure 2.9). In Algeria, DRC, Equatorial Guinea, Liberia and Togo, the gender disparity on this metric is 3–3.3 years. In Niger girls average less than one year of schooling, which tallies with the fact that in DRC, Niger and Mali, more than half the girls aged 15–19 are married (AfDB, 2015).

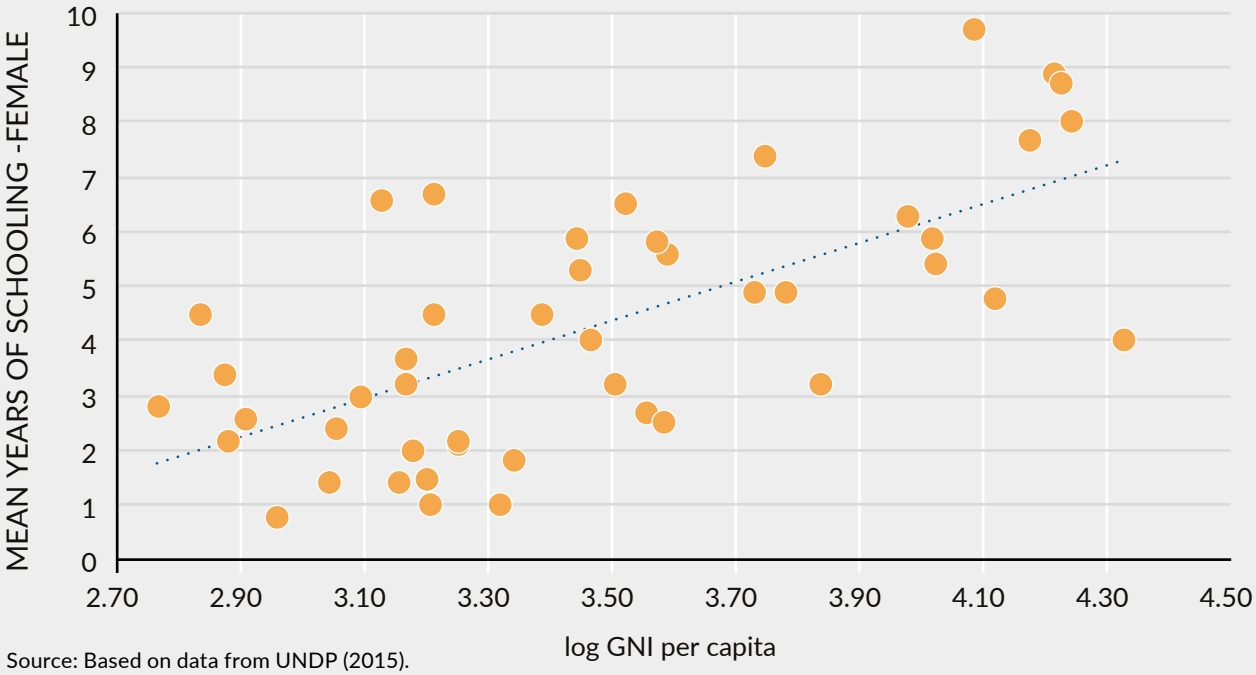
Per capita gross national income (GNI) and women's education are positively associated (figure 2.10). Women in higher-income countries, such as Botswana, Gabon and South Africa, have 9–10 years of schooling—higher than the average for East Asia and for Latin America and the Caribbean, and close to the average in Europe and Central Asia (UNDP, 2015). Six countries[5]—three of them in Southern Africa—have a reverse gender gap in mean years

FIGURE 2.9 Gender gap in mean years of schooling by subregion, 2014



Source: Based on data from UNDP (2015).

FIGURE 2.10 **Years of education received by women increase with per capita GNI**



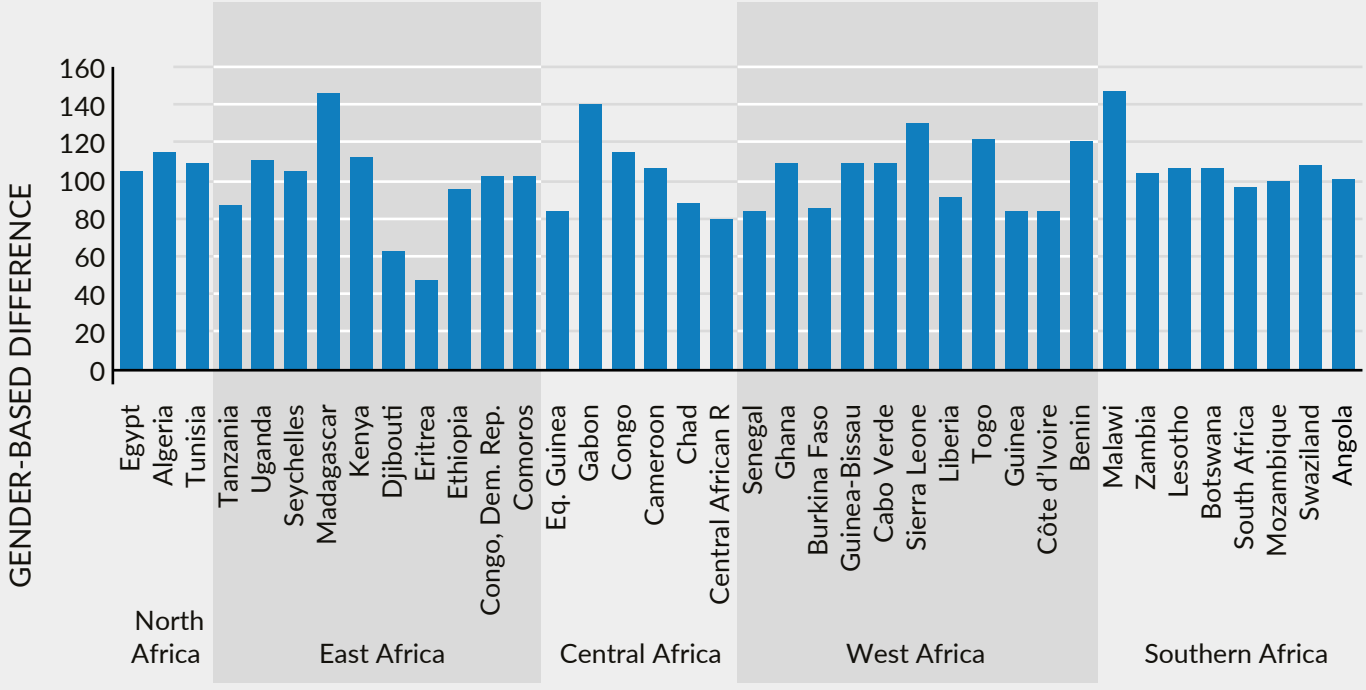
Source: Based on data from UNDP (2015).

of schooling, that is, women have more years of schooling than men.

The positive association between per capita GNI and women's education makes sense: education is both a (normal) consumer good, more of which is demanded at higher income levels, and a productive asset that results in higher income.

Africa's gender gaps in primary education have been largely closed, with the ratio of female to male primary enrolment rates reaching 92 per cent, though with wide national variations (figure 2.11). In Eritrea fewer than half (47.1 per cent) of the girls were enrolled in primary school in 2010–2015 (AEO, 2016). Angola and South Sudan educate fewer than 70 girls per 100 boys in primary school.

FIGURE 2.11 **Gender-based difference in gross enrolment ratio (primary), 2010–2015**



Source: AfDB (2016); UNESCO (2016).

TABLE 2.7 Change in gender gap in primary completion rates, 1999 and 2014 (M:F)

	NORTH AFRICA	EAST AFRICA	CENTRAL AFRICA	WEST AFRICA	SOUTHERN AFRICA
1999	1.11	1.19	1.33	1.59	1.04
2014	1.01	1.07	1.18	1.09	1.05

Source: Based on data from UNESCO (2016).

The gender gap in primary completion rates narrowed in 1999–2014 in all subregions (table 2.7), except in Southern Africa where it increased marginally. West Africa and Central Africa recorded the sharpest declines. Still, 18 per cent more boys completed primary education in Central Africa than girls in 2014.

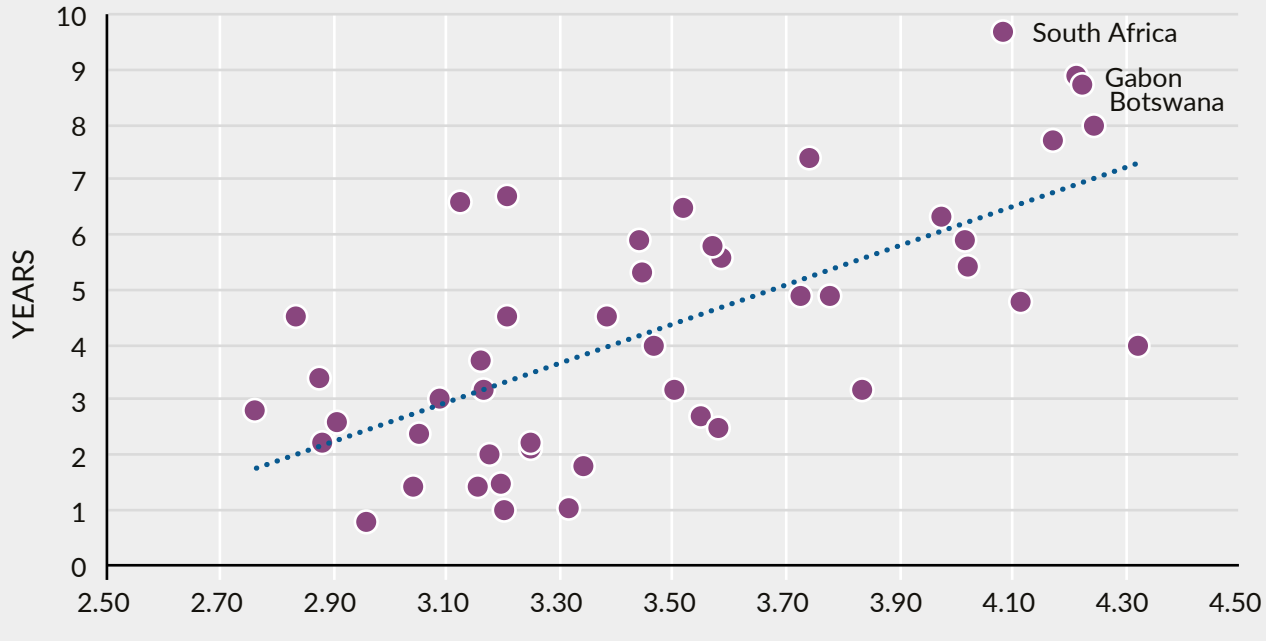
Overall, 51.1 per cent of women and men are enrolled in secondary education, though the ratio of female-to-male enrolment averages 92 per cent. Again there are wide variations among countries, and so while the female gross enrolment ratio in secondary education exceeds 100 per cent in Algeria and South Africa, only 12 and 16 per cent of women access secondary education in the Central African Republic and Niger, respectively.

Gender gaps in education have been declining but literacy rates for women continue to lag behind those of men. Africa other than North Africa records the lowest youth literacy rates worldwide, and boys are more likely to be able to read and write than girls. The female to male literacy ratio for Africa is only 80, far below the world average of more than 90 (AfDB, OECD and UNDP, 2016). The gap in youth literacy rates between girls (75.3 per cent) and boys (81.5 per cent) is, globally, the widest in Africa (AfDB, OECD and UNDP, 2016). The performance of the region reflects serious disparities in access to high-quality basic education and literacy opportunities.

While the educational attainment of boys and girls from households in the richest quintiles is very similar, gender inequalities intensify among the poor. On average there is a more than 25 percentage point difference in primary school age children out of school between the poorest and richest quintiles, again with wide variations across countries—Nigeria has a 66 percentage point difference, whereas an equal proportion of children are out of school in Mauritania and Togo.

Poor girls face a significant schooling disadvantage in most countries in Africa, a disadvantage that is higher at lower incomes—the gender gap in the

FIGURE 2.12 Women generally have longer life expectancy in richer countries



Source: Based on data from UNDP (2015).

median grade attained for 15–19 year olds is 3 or more for the bottom quintile, which narrows or even vanishes at the top quintile, as in Benin, DRC, Gambia and Togo (World Bank, 2012).

HEALTH

An important measure of women's status is life expectancy at birth. Drawing on cross-country data, figure 2.12 shows that women's life expectancy patterns are similar to those of women's education: life expectancy rises with income. But this result should be interpreted with caution as the data are very "noisy"—women in Equatorial Guinea (with a per capita GNI of $21,056) and DRC ($680) have similar life expectancies.

A parallel analysis finds that female life expectancy improves relative to male life expectancy as incomes rise; female life expectancy on average is about three years longer than male life expectancy, though again with wide variations. In Mauritius women's life expectancy is more than seven years longer than men's. In Libya and Rwanda the female life expectancy is higher than the male by 5.7 and 5.9 years, respectively (UNDP, 2015).

Two countries—Mali and Swaziland—have higher male than female life expectancy, which suggests lack of access to suitable health care by women. Mali is in West Africa, which is also the subregion with the lowest average mean years of schooling for women and, until recently, had the largest gender gap in primary completion rates (see table 2.7).

There is an Africa-wide gender gap as women receive on average 4.3 mean years of schooling, against men who get 5.7 years.

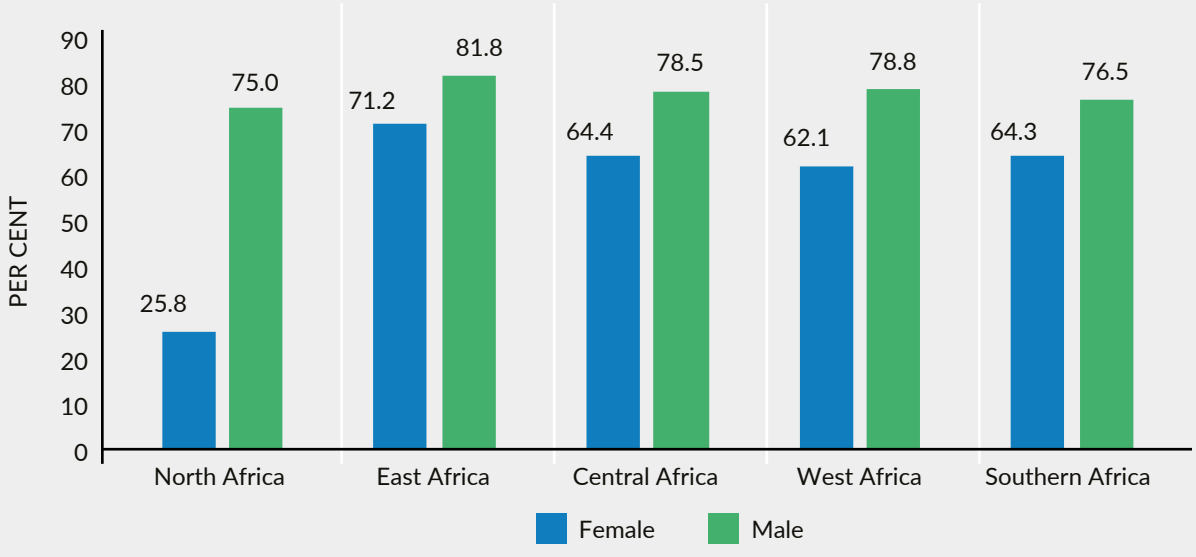
These points together suggest that women in West Africa are particularly disadvantaged. And unlike countries where the gender life expectancy gap rises with income, there is little difference in that gap in African countries as income rises.

WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN THE LABOUR FORCE

Women's participation in the labour market varies greatly across countries worldwide, reflecting differences in economic development, social norms, education levels, fertility rates and access to child care and other support services. The relationship between the female labour force participation rate (FLFPR) and these factors is complex but critical because the FLFPR is a driver of growth, and indicates a country's potential to grow more rapidly (Verick, 2014).

In Africa, too, the FLFPR varies considerably (from 15.2 per cent in Algeria to 88.1 per cent in Tanzania) and far more than men's (from 60.5 per cent in South Africa to 92.2 per cent in Equatorial Guinea).

FIGURE 2.13 Gender gap in average labour force participation rate



Source: Based on data from UNDP (2015).

The gender gap also differs strongly by subregion, with the highest gap in North Africa, at nearly 50 percentage points. The gap is in the 11–16 percentage point range in the other subregions (figure 2.13).

The stylized argument exploring the relationship between economic development and the FLFPR is that, at lower levels of per capita income, women work out of necessity, mainly in subsistence agriculture or home-based production, and so the FLFPR is high. As a country develops, economic activity shifts from agriculture to industry, household incomes increase, and women withdraw from the market in favour of household work and child care.

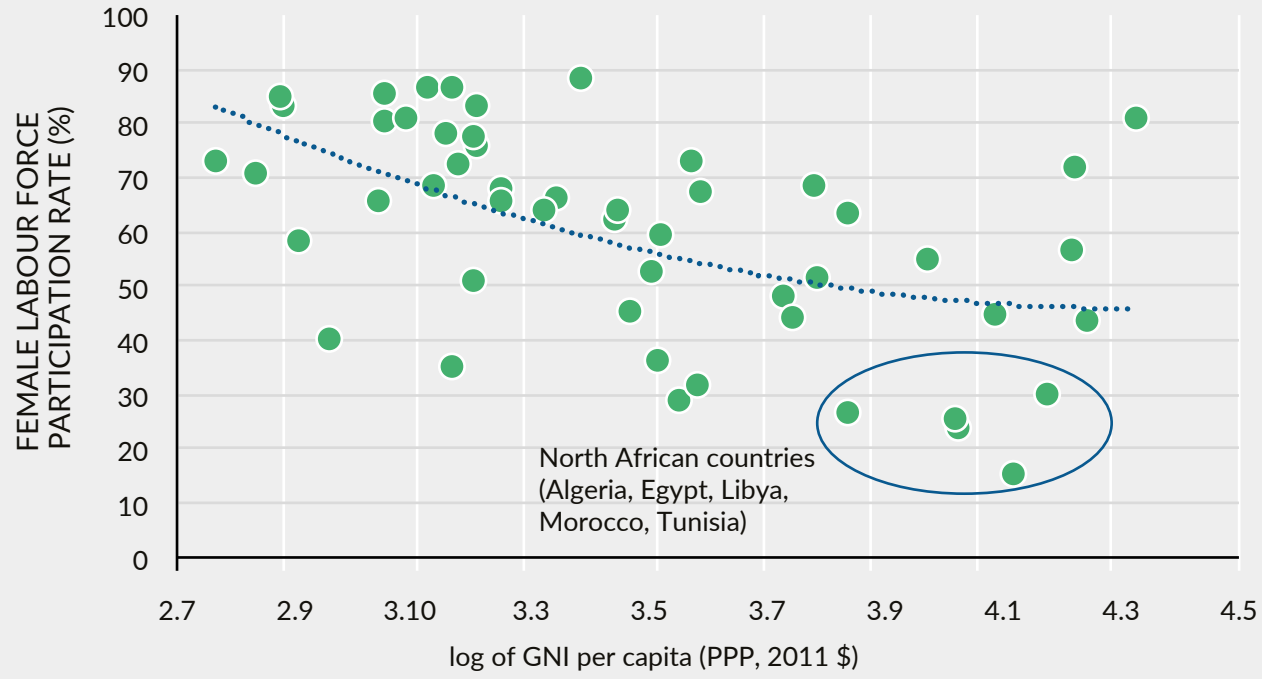
North Africa has the highest gender gap in average participation in the labour market.

In still higher-income countries, the FLFPR rebounds as better education, lower fertility rates, access to labour-saving household technology and market-based household services enable women to take advantage of new jobs in the service sector that are more family friendly and accessible (Duflo, 2012; Tsani et al., 2012; World Bank, 2011). This U-shaped relationship has been found to remain stable over time and to hold when one controls for country characteristics (IMF, 2013).

In Africa, however, regressing the FLFPR over log of per capita GNI gives an attenuated U-shape, suggesting an incomplete transition of women from agricultural and manual labour to jobs in the service sector at higher income levels. Strong socio-cultural norms in most North African countries keep the FLFPR low: 15–31 per cent of working age females are in the labour force, against an average of 69 per cent in the rest of Africa.

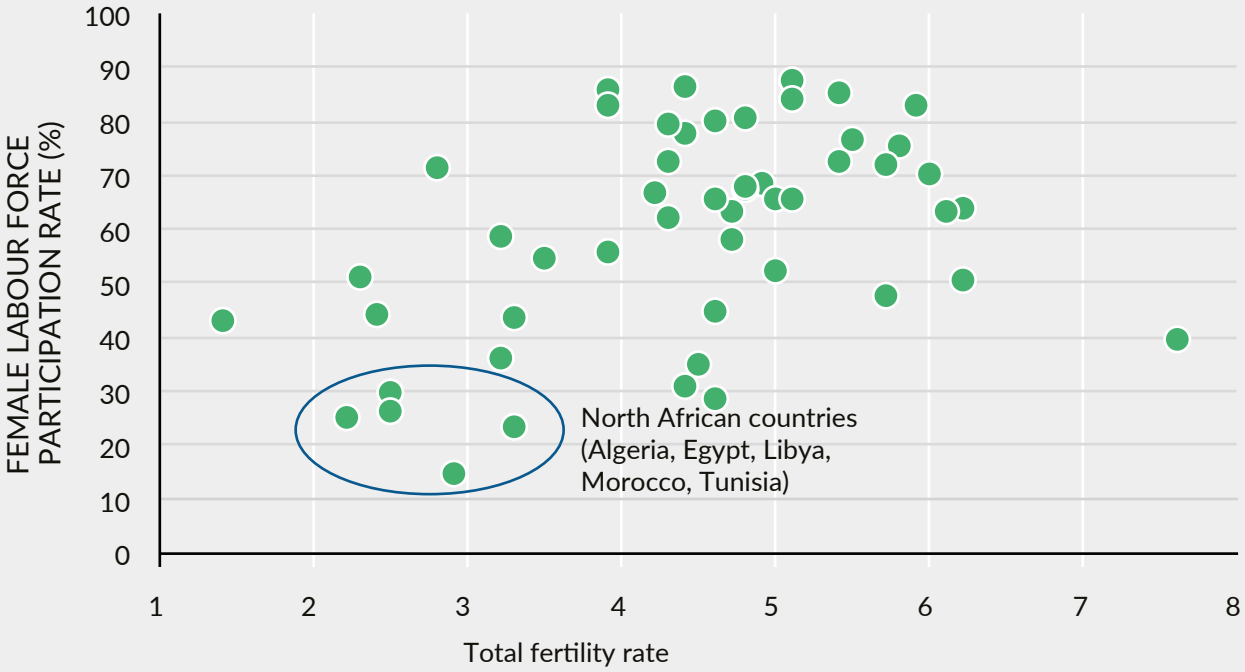
There is some indication of the completion of the U-shape with an increasing FLFPR in African countries with higher incomes (the data points on the right side of figure 2.14). But because of the few data points it is difficult to conclude that (i) the withdrawal of women from the labour market in middle-income countries (as observed from the slight dip in the curve in the middle) is not only for the socio-cultural reasons mentioned above; or that (ii) the incipient rebound observed on the right side is a result of increased women's education and reduced fertility. Much more intensive country-level research is necessary to confirm the nature of the link between the FLFPR and income.

FIGURE 2.14 Female labour force participation rate and per capita GNI, Africa



Source: Based on data from UNDP (2015).

FIGURE 2.15 Female labour force participation and total fertility rate



Source: Based on data from UNDP (2015).

A rising FLFPR in other regions has been linked to the completion of the fertility transition. In Africa, however, because fertility is declining very slowly or has virtually stalled in 14 countries with half of Africa's population, women have a high FLFPR at high fertility rates, though there is no clear association (figure 2.15). Average fertility is 4.44, and is 6.5 among the poorest quintile.

Women in Africa are not only entering the labour force in much greater numbers, they are also remaining in the labour force throughout their child-bearing and child-rearing years. They are no longer a reserve or secondary labour force. In the past, and particularly in developed countries, a "double peak" pattern was prevalent—most women entered the labour force in their twenties, left after a few years to bear and raise children and re-entered the labour force towards the end of their child-bearing years (Lim, 2002).

In Africa the FLFPR is high in all age groups and stays so until the end of women's productive years. This is possible only as women combine family responsibilities with labour market engagement in the informal economy, including own-account work.

A significant trend is the growing self-employment among women (and men), especially among those who do not have secure paid jobs. For example, the proportion of self-employed among non-agricultural women workers doubled in most subregions in Africa (excluding Southern Africa) from 44 per cent in 1970 to 90 per cent in 1990 (United Nations, 2000). Among the self-employed, women are much more likely than men to be own-account workers rather than employers, and to be in the informal rather than the formal economy.

In some countries women are still concentrated in the category of unpaid family work (the share of contributing family workers among economically active women is over 56 per cent in Kenya and 23 per cent in Egypt). For these women, unpaid family work would involve both economic activities and care work looking after children (ILO, 2001).

Women's domestic responsibilities and lack of access to important assets, such as credit, land and skills, constrain their abilities to engage in productive

Women in Africa are not only entering the labour force in much greater numbers, they are also remaining in the labour force throughout their child-bearing and child-rearing years.

high-quality employment, even when they are part of the labour force.

KEY CONCLUSIONS

Two key conclusions emerge:

- Improved child survival rates and women's education, income and their participation in the labour force seem to have had little effect on fertility rates in Africa.
- There is a strong association between high fertility rates in Africa and women's informal and own-account employment.

Women have benefited from Africa's growth, though slowly. The big push for universal education over the last 20 years has helped to get nearly all children to school and come close to gender parity at the primary education level. But considerable gaps remain across subregions in access to secondary and higher education. Expectedly, fertility rates for poor women are higher than for the rich.

The big push for universal education over the last 20 years has helped to get nearly all children to school and come close to gender parity at the primary education level. But considerable gaps remain across subregions in access to secondary and higher education.

Women in Africa combine high fertility with high labour force participation. This is possible only because of their engagement in the informal economy where low levels of education combine with poor conditions of work and low remuneration to limit their opportunities for obtaining a fair return on their labour. Progress in fertility, gains in education and the shift of women to productive work are not only related but also mutually reinforcing.

2.3 RURAL–URBAN INEQUALITIES

Countries urbanize as they develop, and their economies restructure from agriculture into manufacturing and services. This structural transformation includes sectoral and occupational diversification as people seek more remunerative work outside agriculture and in urban areas.

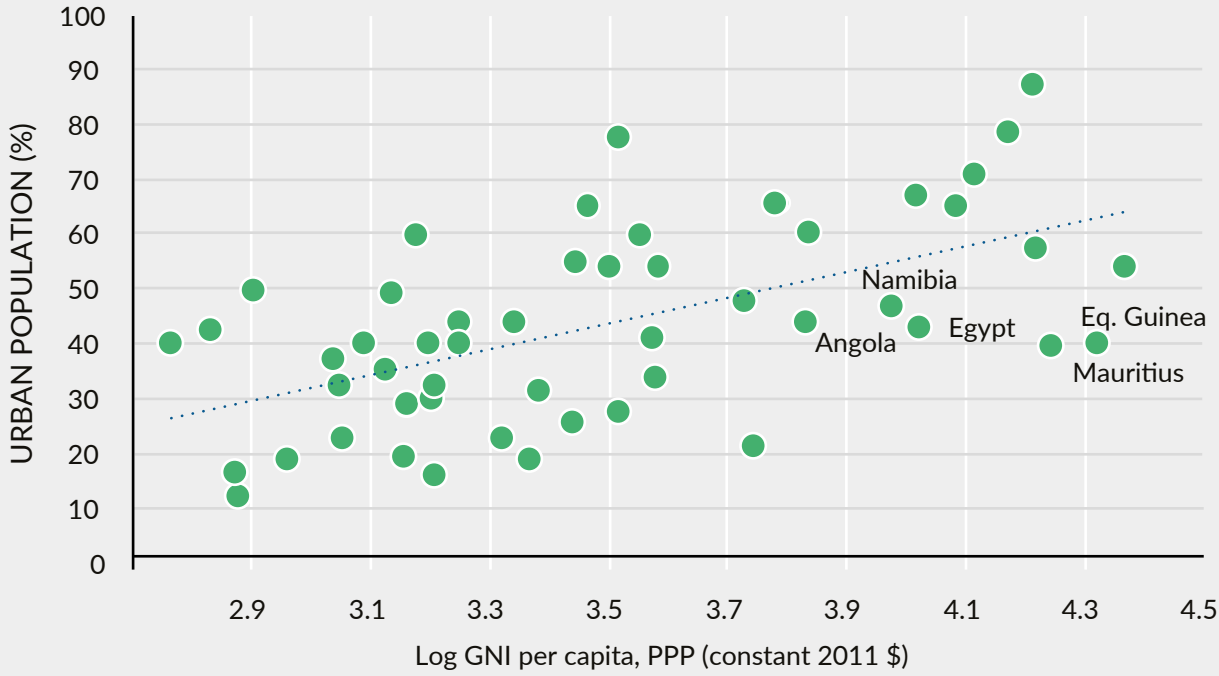
How these processes interact shows great diversity. In some countries the structural transformation goes along with rapid agglomeration in megacities (as for example in the Republic of Korea and the Philippines), while in others, people diversify out of agriculture into the rural non-farm economy and secondary towns—for example, Taiwan (China) and Thailand (Christiaensen, 2008; Otsuka, 2007). And just as varying processes of economic growth and structural transformation may yield quite different distributional and poverty outcomes, so disparate patterns of rural–urban transformation may be associated with different rates of economic growth, especially poverty reduction (Christiaensen, De Weerdt and Todo, 2013).

AFRICA'S HETEROGENEOUS URBANIZATION

The same positive correlation between per capita GNI and the share of population living in urban areas (extent of urbanization) exists in Africa as elsewhere in the world (figure 2.16). Countries in Africa exhibit widely different urbanization trends: of the 15 with income levels above $6,000 per capita (2011 PPP), only five (Angola, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Mauritius and Namibia) cross this mark before reaching 50 per cent of the extent of urbanization (quadrant 1 in figure 2.17). They have an average per capita GNI of $13,056 and an average urban population of 43 per cent.

In contrast, seven countries have achieved high extents of urbanization (averaging 62 per cent) at relatively low income levels (an average per capita GNI of $3,688; quadrant III, figure 2.17). There is wide variation in the group of 17 countries that

FIGURE 2.16 Extent of urbanization and per capita GNI in Africa, 2014



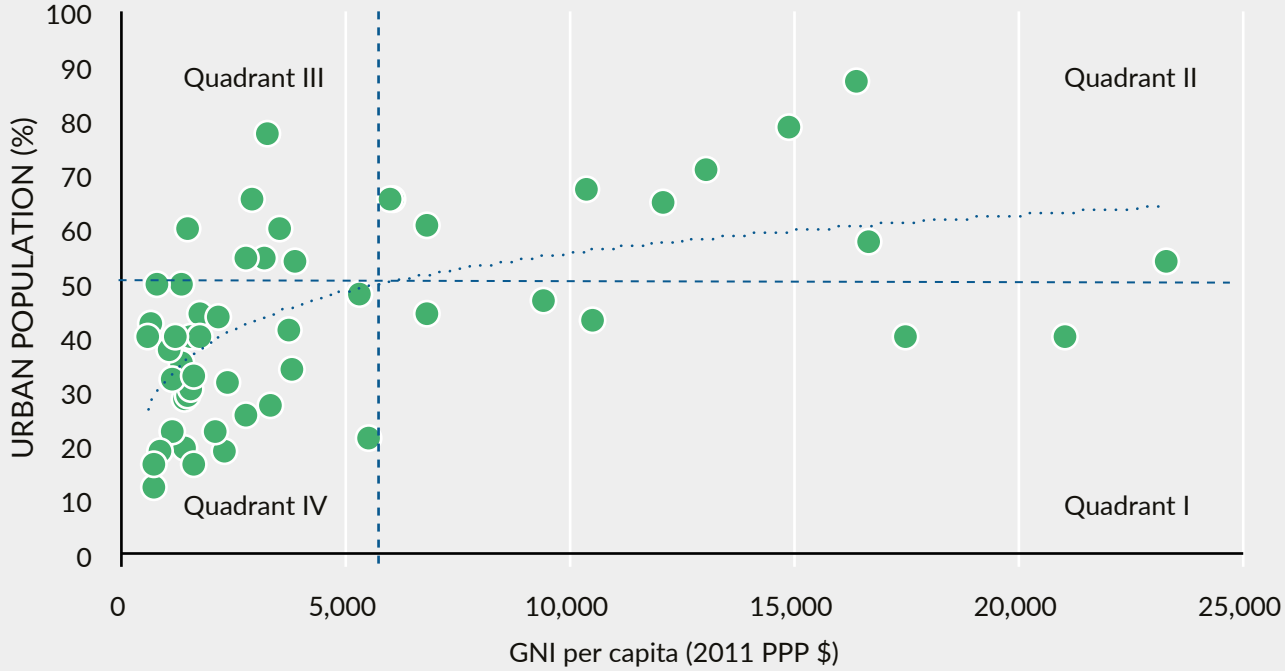
Source: Based on data from UNDP (2015).

have more than half their populations in urban areas (quadrants II and III): their per capita incomes range from $1,507 (Gambia) to $23,300 (Seychelles).

The bulk of the countries (31) are in quadrant IV, with an average per capita income of $1,920 and average extent of urbanization of 32 per cent. Of these, 14 countries are less than 30 per cent urbanized.

Table 2.8 classifies countries in five categories to better reveal the type and pace of urbanization in Africa. The least urbanized countries are growing the fastest (figure 2.18). The annual rate of growth of the urban population in countries that are more

FIGURE 2.17 Extent of urbanization and per capita GNI in Africa, 2014



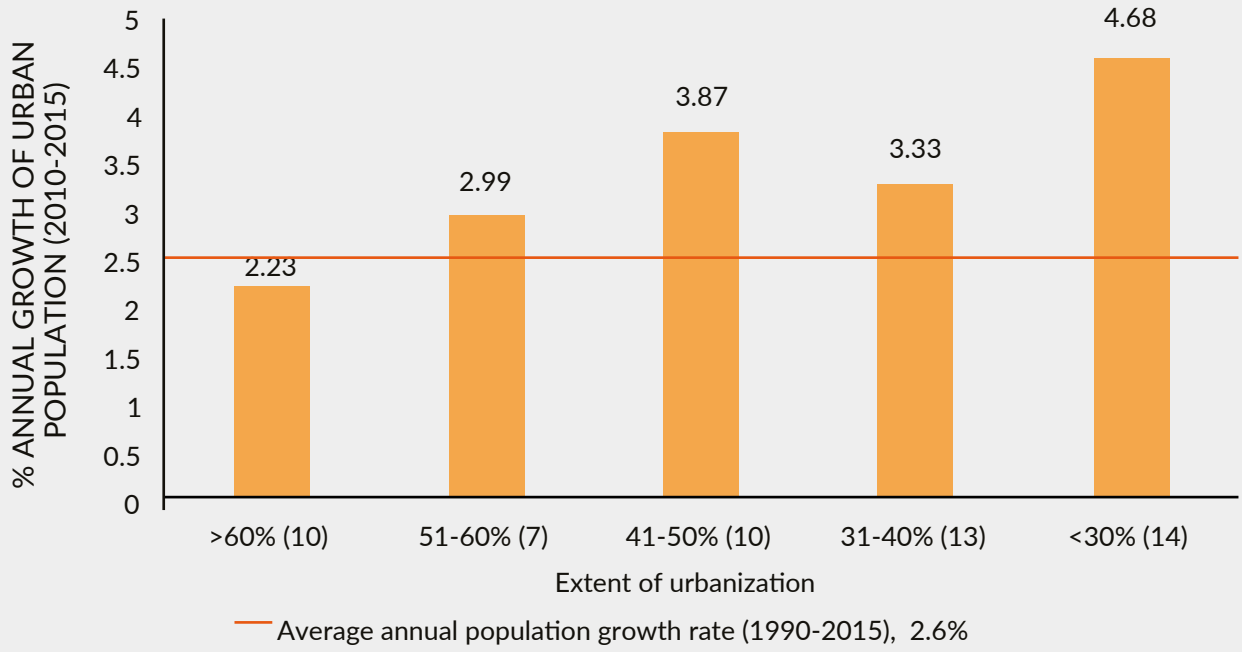
Source: Based on data from UNDP (2015).

TABLE 2.8 African countries categorized by extent of urbanization, 2014

CATEGORY	URBAN POPULATION AS % OF TOTAL POPULATION	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES	COUNTRIES*		AVERAGE PER CAPITA GNI (2011 PPP $)
			RESOURCE-RICH	NON-RESOURCE-RICH	
I	>60	10	Algeria, Libya (NA); Djibouti (EA); Rep. of Congo, Gabon (CA); South Africa (SA)	Morocco, Tunisia (NA); Cabo Verde (WA); São Tomé and Príncipe (CA)	9,201
II	51–60	7	Mauritania (NA); Côte d'Ivoire (WA); Ghana (WA); Cameroon (CA); Botswana (SA)	Seychelles (EA); Gambia (WA)	7,834
III	41–50	10	DRC (EA); Benin, Liberia, Nigeria (WA); Angola, Namibia, Zambia (SA)	Egypt (NA); Guinea-Bissau, Senegal (WA)	4,263
IV	31–40	13	Sudan (NA); Madagascar, Tanzania (EA); Guinea, Mali, Sierra Leone, Togo (WA); Central African Republic, Equatorial Guinea (CA); Mozambique, Zimbabwe (SA)	Somalia (EA); Mauritius (SA)	4,590
V	<30	14	Eritrea, Rwanda, South Sudan, (EA); Burkina Faso, Niger (WA); Chad (CA); Lesotho (SA)	Burundi, Comoros, Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda (EA); Malawi, Swaziland (SA)	1,937
		54	36	18	5,031

Source: Data on urban population as a percentage of total population and average per capita GNI from UNDP (2015); country classification from UNECA (using the criteria specified below).
Note: * Resource-rich countries are those that that have 20% or more of exports of either oil or minerals.
**CA-Central Africa, EA-East Africa, NA-North Africa, SA-South Africa and WA-West Africa

FIGURE 2.18 The rate of urbanization in Africa is high when the extent of urbanization is low



Source: Based on data from UNDESA (2015b).
Note: Figures in parentheses are the number of countries in each category.

than 60 per cent urbanized (category I countries) is 2.23 per cent, which is less than half the rate in countries less than 30 per cent urbanized (category V countries).

Although fertility rates are generally lower in urban than rural areas, assuming equal population growth rates in urban and rural areas, figure 2.18 shows that there is very little rural–urban migration in category I countries, and all urban growth is due to the natural increase in population. The contribution of rural–urban migration to growth of the urban population increases in countries in categories II–V and is the highest in the least urbanized (category V).

The least urbanized countries are growing the fastest.

The data in figure 2.18 suggest that, on average, 13 per cent of the annual growth of the urban population in category II countries, 33 per cent in category III countries, 22 per cent in category IV countries and 44 per cent in category V countries can be attributed to rural–urban migration. This is understandable because of spatial inequalities that exist at different levels of urbanization (and discussed next). All the same, further research is required for a more nuanced understanding of urbanization by extent and rate.

WELFARE DIFFERENCES ACROSS THE RURAL–URBAN DIVIDE

In almost every country in the world, average living standards in urban areas are higher than those in rural areas. This pattern is observed whether welfare is measured by average income, consumption, poverty indices, infant mortality, health, access to services or numerous other variables.

In Africa the size of urban–rural welfare gaps varies a great deal across countries, with less urbanization increasing the gap. For most countries mean consumption in urban areas is two to three times as large as in rural areas, ranging from 1.2 in Tanzania and Madagascar (category IV) to over 2.8 in Uganda and 3.5 in Burkina Faso (category V). Africa shows a strong positive cross-sectional correlation between the urban–rural consumption ratio and per capita GDP (World Bank, n.d.).

TABLE 2.9 Rural–urban differentials in wages and poverty in selected countries in Africa

	URBAN–RURAL WAGE RATIO		POVERTY HEADCOUNT RATIO AT THE POVERTY LINE	
	FORMAL	INFORMAL	RURAL	URBAN
Cameroon	1.36	1.26	55.0	12.2
Chad	1.45	1.06	58.6	24.6
Ethiopia	2.05	2.22	39.3	35.1
Gabon	1.08	2.71	44.6	29.8
Kenya	1.92	2.74	49.1	33.7
Mozambique	1.67	1.07	56.9	49.6
Niger	0.86	0.84	63.9	36.7
Nigeria	1.36	1.49	63.8	43.1
Tanzania	1.59	1.26	37.4	21.8
Togo	2.22	2.81	74.3	36.8
Uganda	2.03	2.34	27.2	9.1
Zambia	1.64	3.12	76.8	26.7

Source: Based on data from De Brauw, Mueller and Lee (2014).
Note: The wage ratios and the poverty headcount ratios are for different years in 2000–2009.

De Brauw, Mueller and Lee (2014) use the World Bank's International Income Distribution Database to estimate the ratio of urban to rural wages in the formal and informal sectors for selected African countries (table 2.9). In all cases except Niger urban wages exceed rural wages in both sectors. Formal sector wages appear to be generally higher on average than informal sector wages in urban areas, though the informal sector differential is actually higher in some cases. Six countries with urban informal wages more than double rural informal wages offer a high return to moving from the rural to the urban informal sector.[6]

As average wages may mask heterogeneity in returns to labour, table 2.9 also compares the poverty headcount ratio in rural and urban areas for the same set of countries. Matching the evidence on the ratio of urban to rural wages in the formal and informal sectors, poverty rates are consistently lower in urban areas.

A longstanding literature has highlighted the positive role of rural non-farm activities in poverty reduction, with rural towns, which mediate the flow of inputs, goods and services between rural hinterlands and large urban centres, seen as the most effective generators of non-farm employment for the poor (for example, Haggblade, Hazell and Reardon, 2007; Lanjouw and Murgai, 2009). Christiansen, De Weerdt and Todo (2013) find support for the notion that rural diversification and secondary town development are usually associated with inclusive growth patterns and rapid poverty reduction through generation of non-farm employment for the poor. Growth-promoting interventions that enable poor people to access this growth and basic infrastructure services more directly are thus also more likely to lift more of them out of poverty than when the benefits of growth have to spatially trickle down from the larger cities.

In Africa the size of urban–rural welfare gaps varies a great deal across countries, with less urbanization increasing the gap. For most countries mean consumption in urban areas is two to three times as large as in rural areas.

Joint evaluation of the trade-offs between these two counteracting forces (higher/lower average income growth and more unequal/equal income distribution) suggests that migration out of agriculture into the rural economy and secondary towns is substantially more poverty reducing than a rapid increase of large cities (Christiansen, De Weerdt and Todo, 2013).

Urban–rural differences in other social indicators are in figure 2.19. While urban–rural parity holds in birth registration in countries more than 60 per cent urbanized (category I), the difference is two times in category V countries. A similar disparity is seen in the proportion of births attended by skilled birth attendants.

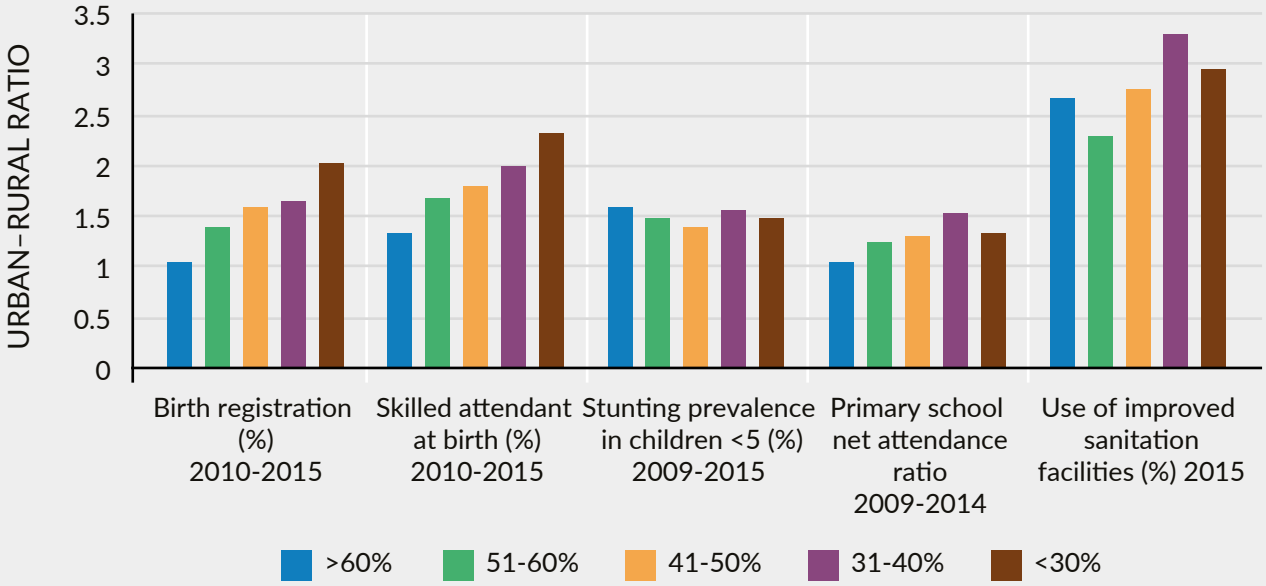
Yet urbanization seems to make little difference in the urban–rural variation in stunting, and the ratio moves within a very small range around 1.5 in all countries. In fact, the largest differences are seen in some of the most urbanized countries (in strong contrast to the mean consumption and poverty differences discussed earlier). There are several possible explanations. One is that basic non-food living expenses are much higher in more urbanized countries, leaving a smaller share of poor households' budgets for food needs. Another is that the more urbanized countries have greater problems with congestion and inadequacy of public health and sanitation in poor areas, contributing to urban undernutrition and morbidity.

Highly urbanized (category I) countries are close to urban–rural parity in primary school net attendance ratios. Varying little by extent of urbanization, they reflect success in meeting the Millennium Development Goal target of universal primary education in most countries. (Still, the averages mask differences among countries.)

There is widespread lack of urban–rural parity in use of improved sanitation facilities by category. The high urban–rural ratio in category I countries is driven mainly by Djibouti, where 60 per cent of urban dwellers have access to improved sanitation, but only 5 per cent in rural areas have similar access.

The urban–rural discrepancy on this indicator usually diminishes with urbanization. But there is little urban–rural convergence in access to improved drinking water sources even in highly urbanized countries (figure 2.20). Access to improved drinking

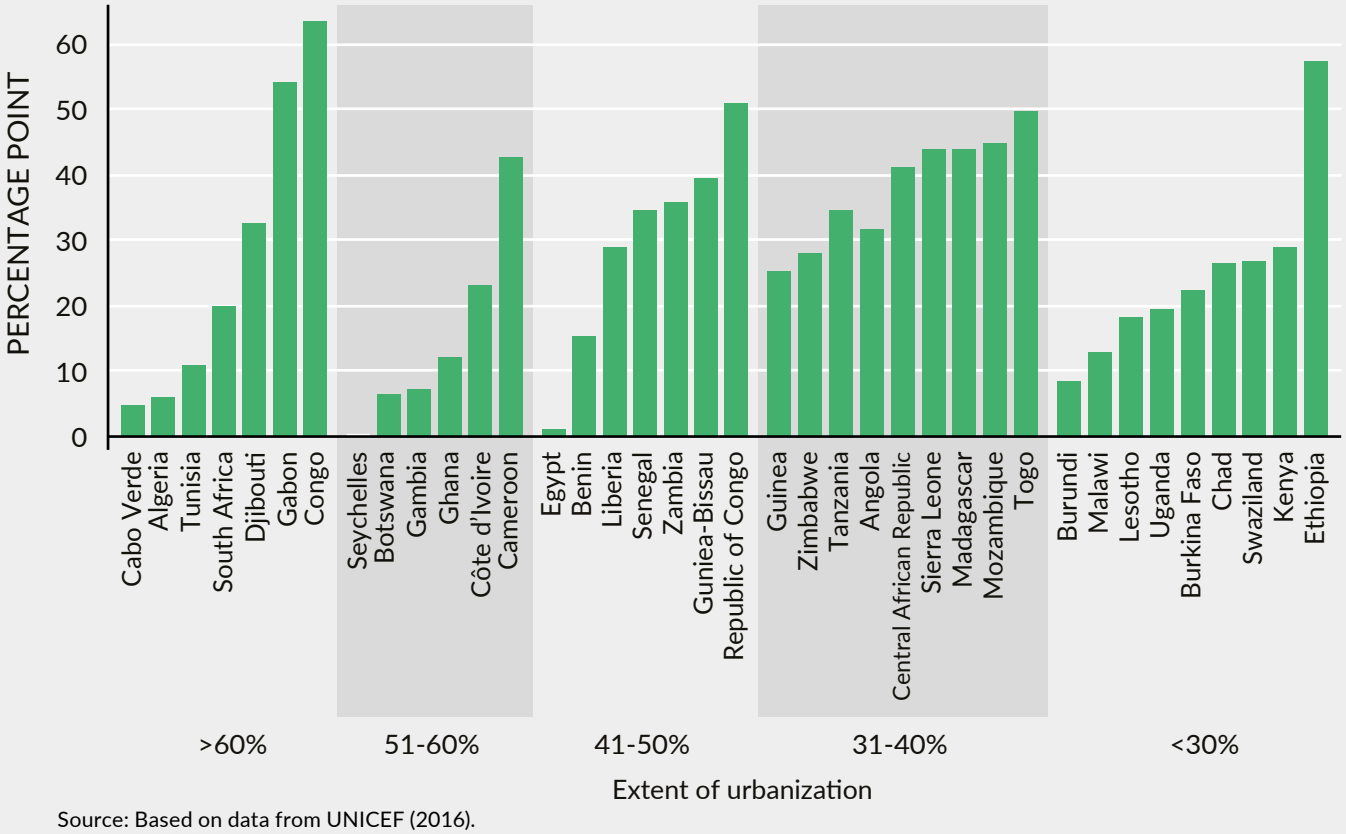
FIGURE 2.19 **Urban–rural differences in selected indicators by extent of urbanization**



Source: Based on data from UNICEF (2016).

water in towns and cities among category V countries is around 9–29 percentage points higher than in rural areas. Ethiopia is an outlier with a 57 percentage point difference. But in the more urbanized category I countries, such as Cabo Verde, Algeria, Tunisia and South Africa, the disparity in access is 5–20 percentage points—but Gabon and the Republic of Congo, also highly urbanized, have a 50–60 percentage point difference. This goes against the global trends where countries with high

FIGURE 2.20 **Urban–rural differences in access to improved drinking water**



Source: Based on data from UNICEF (2016).

urbanization exhibit almost no difference between urban and rural areas in access to basic services.

The growing concentration of people in cities will also have implications for health outcomes in Africa. With high population densities, cities account for a large and growing proportion of people living with HIV, tuberculosis (TB) and other diseases. For instance, there is evidence that the risk and vulnerability to HIV and TB infection is often higher in urban areas (UN Habitat and UNAIDS, 2015). At the same time, as centers of economic growth, education, innovation, social change and their own resources and regulatory powers to reach large numbers of people (Nairobi City County, 2016), cities are uniquely positioned to forge inclusive and participatory responses to HIV, TB and other diseases and take transformative action to ensure that services are delivered to all its citizens.

RURAL–URBAN MIGRATION

As evident from the preceding discussion, many African countries are in the first phase of urbanization and, unsurprisingly, have large urban–rural disparities in access to basic services. Consequently, people are "pulled" by social and economic opportunities or "pushed" by environmental deterioration, so that migration is an important component of urban population growth in Africa. Moving to cities is also often rural agricultural workers' primary method to diversify income (Banerjee and Duflo, 2006). Indeed, it can be a very productive move, even for temporary migrants (Bryan, Chowdhury and Mobarak, 2011).

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Cities are uniquely positioned to forge inclusive and participatory responses to health challenges and take transformative action to ensure that services are delivered to all its citizens.

Although African cities have grown quickly over the past 50 years, rural–urban migration has played a relatively small role in recent growth (Kessides, 2007; Potts, 2012), and in such African countries as Côte d'Ivoire, is even negative (Beauchemin, 2011). Similarly, based on the conservative assumption that rural and urban population growth is equivalent, De Brauw, Mueller and Lee (2014) find that the population weighted rural–urban migration rate was 1.07 per cent a year between 1990 and 2000 in Africa, with substantial heterogeneity at country level. Although several countries have rural–urban migration rates of around 1 per cent, a few have very slow or negative rural–urban migration rates, while some experienced rates of over 2 per cent annually in the 1990s.[7] It is likely that the rural–urban migration rate in most African countries after 2000 was in the same broad range, though data scarcity precludes confirmation.

International migration has received more attention in recent debates on migration in Africa, yet internal migration (migration within countries) is far higher in numbers of people and perhaps even in the volume of remittances and these funds' poverty reduction potential (UNDP, 2009). However, the capacity of urban towns is limited to plan for urban growth and accommodate the internal migrants by providing employment and access to land and basic amenities. People who leave the countryside to find better lives in the city often have no choice but to settle in shanty towns and slums, where they lack access to decent housing, sanitation, health care and education—in effect trading rural for urban poverty. Consequently, migration has shifted the locus of global poverty to the cities, a process recognized as the "urbanization of poverty" (UN-Habitat, 2003).

Yet rural–urban migration in particular is seen as creating pressure on the urban infrastructure, environment and employment, and there is an underlying assumption among policymakers that the phenomenon is linked to rising levels of urban poverty. This perception misleads, however, because

urbanization can have positive impacts on the cost of infrastructure, the environment and employment, if guided by the right policy framework (as discussed in detail in the following chapters). Migration and urbanization and the links to poverty are complex, highly context-specific social processes. There are numerous multi-directional and multi-dimensional linkages between migration, urbanization and poverty; each can act to drive or prevent the others, and each can influence the outcomes of the others.

Migration can be a reaction to severe poverty, or a chosen livelihood strategy to improve household wealth. For example, in Ghana during the economic slump from the 1970s to the 1980s, migration became the basic survival strategy for families (Kwankye and Anarfi, 2011). In recent times the independent migration of girls and women has become common as households have begun to see the benefits of remittances from female members working as domestic workers, as head porters (*kayayei*) or in markets (Awumbila, Owusu and Teye, 2014).

International migration has received more attention in recent debates on migration in Africa, yet internal migration (migration within countries) is far higher in numbers of people and perhaps even in the volume of remittances.

Large differences in income and living standards between places, as well as the general perception that migrant households are better off than non-migrant households, act as incentives for people to move (Clemens and Pritchett, 2008; Sabates-Wheeler, Sabates and Castaldo, 2005). Studies on urbanization indicate that, in internal migration in Africa, key pull factors are income, employment and other opportunities for personal success and development in the more developed urban centres, all of which are severely curtailed in rural areas (Black et al., 2006; Kwankye et al., 2009). Even when cities' formal employment declines, they offer a wealth of opportunities in their huge, informal labour markets (Songsore, 2003).

Management of the rural–urban transition in a way that preserves growth and promotes equity is one of the major challenges facing policymakers in most African countries.

Rural–urban migration is an inherent component of the development process and necessary for narrowing the productivity gap between agriculture and other sectors.[8] Management of the rural–urban transition in a way that preserves growth and promotes equity is one of the major challenges facing policymakers in most African countries. Investments that help to create quality employment in urban areas, especially in secondary cities and smaller towns, are critical for absorbing rural migrants and urban populations expanding from natural demographic growth. Investing in the development of rural–urban economic links, including value chains processing agricultural products and other natural resources, will help to ensure that urban development goes hand in hand with rural development. (Again, these topics are discussed at length in the following chapters.)

KEY CONCLUSIONS

There is a wide difference in welfare across the rural–urban divide, with wage rates higher and poverty lower in urban than rural areas. Rural–urban parity is seen in many (not all) social indicators in highly urbanized countries. In the 1990s the rural–urban migration rate in Africa was estimated to be slightly more than 1 per cent a year, though good, reliable and recent data are patchy.

Most of the urbanization discourse focuses on the national rate of urbanization, obscuring key analytical features and often narrowing the policy debate to issues concerning large cities. However, recognition is growing that the distinction between secondary towns and large cities is central for analysis and policy, and that the composition of urbanization is at least as important as its aggregate rate for economic growth and the equitable distribution of its benefits. Cities also have a major role in combating AIDS and other high-burden diseases.

2.4 CONCLUSIONS AND KEY MESSAGES

The poor in Africa live much further below the extreme poverty threshold than those in other regions, with an average consumption of about 60 per cent of the international poverty line. This points to the challenges in achieving the Sustainable Development Goal target of eliminating poverty on the continent by 2030.

Even though inequality has declined in many African countries since 2000, average within-country inequality levels are high and hamper the poverty-reducing effect of economic growth.

Nearly 50 per cent of Africa's labour force works in agriculture, a sector that reduced its share in total GDP in almost all African subregions in 1990–2012. Low agricultural productivity depresses demand and wages, and slows poverty reduction.

At 2.6 per cent a year, Africa has the fastest rate of population growth in the world. In 10 countries it exceeds 3 per cent a year. The slow decline in fertility rates (slower than child mortality rates) and its virtual stalling in the 14 countries with half the continent's population delay the demographic transition and checks the opportunity to unlock the demographic dividend.

Despite gains, gender inequality remains a key development challenge in Africa. Gender gaps in primary education have largely closed, but with wide variations across subregions. Poor girls face a significant schooling disadvantage in most countries, which is worse at lower incomes.[9]

African women combine family responsibilities with labour market engagement in the informal economy, including own-account work, where low levels of education, poor conditions of work and low remuneration limit their opportunities for obtaining a fair return on their labour.

Increased child survival rates and women's education, income and their participation in the labour force, seem to have little impact on fertility. Policymakers should combine long-term development programs, such as provision of social infrastructure and improving the status of women, with short-term interventions, such as meeting the unmet need for family planning and its awareness creation.

Africa's urbanization reflects considerable variation, as countries at different income levels have urbanized at different rates. Unlike global trends urban–rural differences in welfare and living standards in Africa do not seem to narrow with increasing urbanization. Rural–urban migration is a rational response to access social and economic opportunities.

Many urban municipal authorities lack the capacity to plan for urban growth and accommodate the migrants who end up settling in shanty towns and slums, which can stimulate transmission of AIDS, TB, and other diseases. Such migrants often swap rural poverty for its urban variant. Investment in basic urban services and in capacity building of subnational governments, especially in secondary cities, to manage urban growth should therefore be a high policy priority for inclusive growth.

The policy response to urbanization needs to cover the entire rural–urban continuum, including secondary cities, reflecting the growing recognition that the distinction between secondary towns and large cities is central for analysis and policy, and the composition of urbanization is at least as important as its aggregate rate for inclusive growth and distribution.

Most of the urbanization discourse focuses on the national rate of urbanization, obscuring key analytical features and often narrowing the policy debate to issues concerning large cities.

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ENDNOTES

1 Except in East and Central Africa in 2000–2012.

2 Except in East Africa where its share of GDP is 17 per cent.

3 Momentum effects are conditioned by population age structure at the starting point of a projection. In countries undergoing a demographic transition with a young age profile, the population will continue to grow because births by a large group of women in the reproductive age cohort will exceed mortality.

4 According to the theory of demographic transition, it takes some time for people to adjust their fertility behaviour.

5 Gabon, Lesotho, Libya, Madagascar, Namibia and Swaziland.

6 Ethiopia, Gabon, Kenya, Togo, Uganda and Zambia.

7 This excludes the serious disturbances that led to population movements during the 1990s, and massive resettlements as wars ended in Mozambique, Rwanda, Somalia and Sudan.

8 Rural–urban migration can play a major role in fostering growth and poverty reduction by reallocating resources more efficiently—geographically and sectorally—across the economy. China offers a spectacular example of its transforming role, where an estimated 16 per cent of GDP growth in 1987–2005 came from such migration (World Bank, 2007).

9 Particularly more important is gender parity in secondary education, which has huge implications for expediting the demographic (fertility) transition as well as in banking the potential demographic dividend.