Economic reforms, without investing in family planning and education means Uganda will not meet its target of a per capita income of $9,500 by 2040. Investing in family planning and education will give the additional benefit of $3,000 to achieve a per capita income of $9,567, instead of $6,084, which is projected, if only economic reforms are pursued to achieve the Vision 2040 dream of transforming the Ugandan society into a modern, prosperous country in 30 years. The projections were arrived at using the DemDiv, a modelling tool developed by the Health Policy Project.

Current development efforts emphasise economic reforms, focussing on infrastructure for various sectors, including energy, transport, oil and gas. In the same vein, significant resources are being invested in promoting innovations and science and technology to steer development. However, in a July 2014 report by the National Planning Authority, titled Harnessing the Demographic Dividend and Accelerating Socioeconomic Transformation in Uganda, experts argue that this approach alone may not achieve the Vision 2040 dream target.

Uganda’s population is predicted to increase to 93 million in 2040, if no significant investments are made to improve health and education services to impact family planning uptake. Such a huge population would affect the attainment of the Vision 2040 target per capita income. The Vision 2040 target can only be achieved with a slowdown in population growth, from the current 3.2% to at least 2.4% per year, achieving a reduction to 71 million people, thereby increasing per capita GDP to $9,567. This is an increase in GDP by an additional 20.5% above the expected 2040 projections if the country were to only focus on just economic reforms. If nothing is done, Uganda will only achieve a per capita income of only $927 by 2040.

Family planning, education pay

By Catherine Mwesigwa Kizza

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