

POLICY DISCUSSION AND LAUNCH of **the Book:**
Demographic Statistics: A Handbook Of Methods And Measures In Demography By Prof N.N.N. Nsowah-Nuamah, Deputy Government Statistician and Professor of Statistics at ISSER, University of Ghana

SPEECH by
Hon. Minister of Finance and Economic Planning,
Hon Kwadwo Baah-Wiredu

Mr. Chairman

The Chief Advisor to the President, Mrs Chenery-Hesse

Hon. Minister of Health

Development Partners

Members of the Media

Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

I am pleased to launch the book by Prof. Nsowah-Nuamah entitled:
Demographic Statistics: A Handbook of Methods And Measures in Demography.

2. This is because there are direct and indirect relationships between population changes and economic growth and this is what, as a Minister of Finance and Economic Planning, interests me most.

3. The nature of demographic changes is absolutely critical to economic development agenda of every nation and it manifests itself through a number of channels including: dependent population and high dependency burdens (Consumption rises thereby reducing savings).

4. In the standard neo-classical growth model, a decrease in the population growth rate yields a higher equilibrium output per worker, a transitory increase in the growth rate of output per worker, and no change in the rate of growth of output per worker once equilibrium is established.

5. The same results occur with a higher saving rate. Incorporating the life-cycle saving model in the neo-classical growth model introduces yet another connection between population changes and economic growth. If life-cycle saving is dominated by pension motives, slower population growth leads to an older population and lower aggregate savings. In contrast, if slower population growth reduces the burden of supporting children, it may lead to increased saving.

6. On the other hand, the impact of the demographic transition on the distribution of income has been found to occur through the dependency and acquisition effects of changes in fertility, among others. The dependency effect measures the contribution of the higher overall fertility of the poor on their consumption per capita. That is, it refers to the worsening of the income distribution if the extra births are concentrated in the poorer households (**Unfortunately in the case of Ghana, the extra births are concentrated in the poorer households**).

7. In Ghana, the high population growth rate averaging about 2.6 percent, compared to 0.6 percent among developed countries is the major concern and not the absolute number of people. In terms of absolute numbers, Ghana's population of about 22 million with land size of 87,853 sq. miles cannot be considered as over populated, compared with the United Kingdom's population

of 60 million, with about the same land area as Ghana- 93,283 sq. miles (World Population Data Sheet 2005).

8. A rapid population growth implies a higher dependency burden which compels the young population to work to supplement the family income. The effect is that aggregate savings is reduced; leading to low capital formation and low investment, low employment, low income, etc. Thus Ghana, like many developing countries, is caught in the vicious cycle of poverty. It is worth noting that this socio-economic phenomenon that has been outlined has created social pressures on the government to spend more on the welfare of the people in order to maintain a minimum standard of living.

9. It is therefore important to continue to be counting the people in order to determine how fast the population is increasing. Internationally, countries count the population every ten years. Most African states have started conducting the 2010 round of censuses. Nigeria has done that and Ghana is preparing toward conducting census in 2010. It is in this vein that this book has come at an appropriate time.

10. The book is designed primarily for students whose major interest lies in applying statistical methods to problems in demography. These include graduate students who need a rapid and fairly intensive overview of the subject. It also has in mind students who are specializing in demography and need a basic introduction to the discipline. It is directed at readers who are interested in the methods of calculation used by demographers. Finally it will be helpful for health workers and researchers in health who may require calculation and interpretation of health indicators.

11. It is user-friendly and readers may not need the help of any teacher to understand the content. No prior knowledge of demography and statistics is assumed. The approach is non-mathematical although some familiarity with the use of symbolic notation and elementary algebra is helpful in mastering the material presented. So far as mathematical and statistical prerequisites are concerned, this text is self-contained and self-explanatory.

12. From the comments by the various discussants, this book by Prof Nsowah-Nuamah is a landmark one since the ones by G.W Barclay in 1958 and G.M.K. Kpedekpo in 1982. I would want to congratulate him for this piece of work.

13. Mr. Chairman, I have seen from the brochure that he has written a number of books some of which he intends to launch, very soon. I want to reiterate his appeal for publishers. We should all help him to build statistical capacity in our future experts.

14. Now Mr. Chairman, it is my singular honour to declare the book entitled "A handbook of Methods and Measures in Demography" launched.

THANK YOU