COVID-19 threatens the prospects for the demographic dividend in Africa

- Undermining human capital through disruptions in the education sector leading to loss of learning and increased drop-outs
- Widening socio-economic inequalities further disadvantaging females, youth, poor and rural communities
- Short-term effects through disruptions in health services and particularly Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights
- Long-term social and economic impacts due to slow down in economic growth and the accompanying loss of jobs and income

Key priorities to safeguard the demographic dividend

1. Adequate funding and full resumption of Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) services as part of essential health services (including family planning, adolescent and reproductive health services and youth friendly services).
2. Effective interventions to reinforce adherence to law measures to halt Sexual and Gender-based Violence.
3. Robust return-to-school strategies to ensure all students safely resume learning and that girls and other disadvantaged groups do not drop out of school.
4. Invest in re-igniting the informal and gig economies through incentives that will cushion the youth, women, and the poor who have been adversely affected by COVID-19.
5. Enhance implementing evidence-informed social protection measures such as cash transfers, social grants, food subsidies and free medical care.
7. Invest in data and measurement innovations and adaptations to inform both the short-term and long-term responses to COVID-19 and similar future occurrences.
8. Multi-sectoral regional collaboration and inter-governmental partnerships to respond to COVID-19, including sharing best practices and developing an evidence and knowledge hub to address population dynamics and COVID-19.