**Call for papers**

**Theme: *“Adolescent and Youth sexual and Reproductive Health in Central African region*”**

**Special Edition of African Population Studies (APS) journal: APS Vol 32, no. 2, 2018**

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Africa’s young people are the primary vehicle for realizing the demographic dividend and the principal engine for fostering development at all levels (Agenda 2063 Framework Document: The Africa We Want, Population Reference Bureau, 2017). In the mid-2017, adolescents and young adults (aged 10-24) represented 27% of the population worldwide. However, adolescents and young adults aged (15-24) faced major sexual and reproductive health challenges, including early pregnancy, childbearing and HIV/AIDS. Youth aged 15-24 account for an estimated 45% of new HIV infections worldwide, and about 16 million girls aged 15-19 give birth every year. Complications during pregnancy and childbirth are the second cause of death for 15-19 year-old girls globally. Babies born to adolescent mothers face a substantially higher risk of dying than those born to women aged 20 to 24. Every year, some 3 million girls aged 15 to 19 undergo unsafe abortions. Since the mid-1990s the number of least developed countries that recognize adolescent sexual and reproductive health as a major concern have grown from 48% in 1996 to 88% in 2013.

In 1990, the Convention on the Rights of the Child declared that children (0-18 years) had the right to information and services to survive, and to grow and develop to their full potential. In 1994, the International Conference on Population and Development’s Programme of Action called for the Sexual and Reproductive Health of Adolescents (10-19 years) and young people (10-24 years) to be met. In January 2016, the African Union stated, “full realization of the sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) of adolescents and youth (ages 10 to 24) can facilitate gains in their health, well-being, and educational attainment”. Long-term investments in the health of adolescents and youth, including their sexual and reproductive health, can help accelerate economic growth when combined with the appropriate investments in education and economic planning. Investing in the health of adolescents and youth is key to enhancing the quality of future generations of the African work force. Reproductive choices that adolescents and youth make about when they marry, when they begin sexual activity, and how many children they will have affect a country’s birth rate. Without investments that reduce the unmet need for family planning, the working-age, productive, and nondependent share of the population will not grow relative to the total population, and a country’s average national savings and hours worked will not increase.

What is the state of investment in adolescent and youth reproductive health in central African region in terms of policy and programmes? What are the lessons learned from different countries in the region? What are the outcomes and impacts of these policies and programmes? Central African sub-region includes the following countries: Angola, Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Chad, the Republic of the Congo, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, and São Tomé and Principe. With about 163 millions people (in mid-2017) among whom 31 millions of people aged 15-24, central African region has the highest adolescent fertility rate (AFR) worldwide. They have an adolescent fertility of 142 births per 1,000 women aged 15-19 compared to the world average of 52 births per 1,000 adolescents. The above indicator is alarming and could delay the achievement of the demographic dividend as well as the delay to achieve the sustainable development goals. Despite enormous natural resources in these countries, the population of central African region is among the poorest of the world. Furthermore, majority of the countries continue to face political, economics and humanitarian crisis.

Over the past several decades countries in the Central African region have developed policies and programmes to prevent pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) among adolescents. Key high impact practices to improve adolescents and youth reproductive health include: youth-friendly services; comprehensive sexuality education; community engagement to foster healthy norms; and mass media interventions. However, there is a lack of research-based evidence reporting progress toward implementation of policies and programmes as well as their effect on youth sexual and reproductive life.

Against this backdrop, the Union for African population studies (UAPS) and the Population and Health Research Institute (PHERI) propose to publish a special issue of the African Population Studies (APS) journal (APS Vol 32, no. 2, 2018) on “Investing in Adolescent and Youth sexual and Reproductive Health (AYSRH) in central African region. The issue is organized around the following sub-themes, but is not restricted to these: (1) Policy, programmes and interventions; (2) Data and methods challenges; (3) Integration between Education and AYSRH promotion; (4) Factors associated with AYSRH; (5) Influence of AYSRH on the sustainable development goals. This will allow identifying patterns, similarities and differences in the region, and recommending local, regional and country-specific as well as effective policies for improving the overall welfare of youth.

Manuscripts (in French or English) should follow the style of the African Population Studies journal and submit to **pheri.info@gmail.com** and copy jacques.emina@gmail.com. The email should mention the following reference: «**APS Vol 32, no. 2, 2018 »**. Submission deadline is February 28, 2018.

**Population and Health Research Institute** (PHERI) is an international firm, specialized in data collection, storage, analysis, reporting and dissemination for evidence-based planning and decision-making. The institution mission is to be a catalytic center of innovation and excellence in research, evaluation and capacity building. Its objectives include: (1) conduct rigorous and actionable research and evaluations; (2) Build capacity of specialists in research and evaluation; (3) Build and maintain strong and locally owned data repository, management and processing systems; and (3) Promote evidence-based policy dialogue and diffusion of key research findings. PHERI and African Population and Health Research Center (APHRC) are currently conducting a research on “Assessing the Implementation and Effectiveness of Sexuality Education Programs in Schools in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo” in collaboration with financial support from the Lucie and David Packard Foundation. The institution is based in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo.

**Union for African Population Studies (UAPS)**

The Union for African Population Studies (UAPS) is a Pan-African non-profit scientific organization. Established through the initiative of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) by the Third General Conference of African Demographers, Statisticians and Planners held in Addis Ababa in March 1984, in order to promote the scientific study of population in Africa.