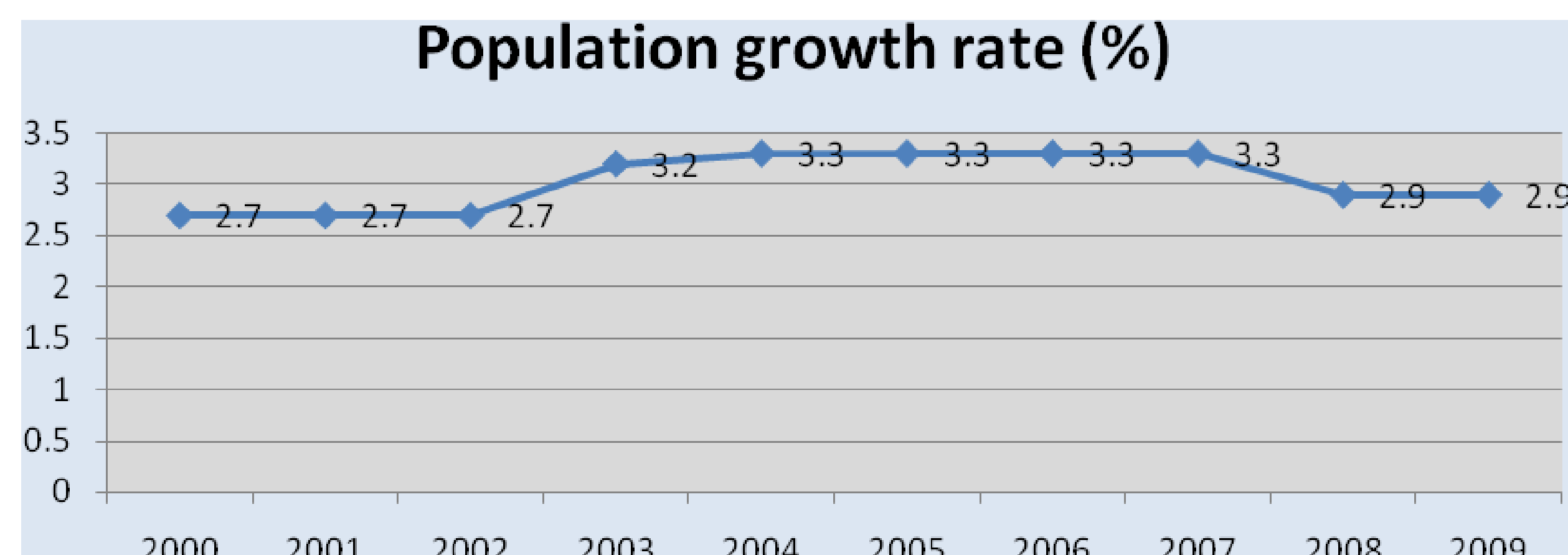


# Can Rwanda Achieve Vision 2020 with its Current Sky-Rocketing Population Growth?

## CONTEXT

Reducing population growth is a key Government target. Reducing poverty and providing decent employment for all will be a great challenge if the rate of growth of the population is not curbed. The Government recognizes that this is one of the main challenges it faces and in the light of this is putting forward a revised population policy which will go before Parliament shortly. The goal of the population policy is to improve the quality of life and standards of living for all Rwandans



## THE PROBLEM

- The current Rwandan population is estimated at 10.1 million people.
- Rwanda has the highest population densities in sub-Saharan Africa with 365 people per square kilometer compared to an average of 32 in sub-Saharan Africa.
- Rwanda has a rapidly growing population, high population density, high fertility rates, a high dependence ratio all of which have had a negative impact on Government initiatives to reduce poverty levels in the country.
- High population growth exerts pressure on land, the environment and infrastructure such as energy, water and sanitation and health facilities.
- Despite a dramatic increase in the number of married women of childbearing age using a modern form of contraception in recent years, the proportion is still only 27 per cent, well short of Government's target of 70 per cent by 2015.

## IMPLICATIONS

- Despite Government policy being to significantly reduce population growth the rate of growth has hardly changed in recent years.
- The Government's policy is clearly not showing an impact on the ground and we need to ask why and what can be done to tackle population growth.
- Reducing population growth is essential if the Government is to achieve its 2020 Vision.
- Without reducing the rate of growth in the population there is a strong possibility that key Government targets for poverty reduction, growth in decent employment, Education for All, reducing maternal and child mortality rates as well as environmental sustainability will not be achieved.
- There is also the high cost in terms of providing anti-natal care, maternity care, and health services for children and so on - resources that could be invested in programmes to reduce poverty, create employment and stimulate economic growth.

## WHAT IS GOVERNMENT TRYING TO DO?

- Develop a National Population Policy
- Family planning,
- EDPRs target to achieve 70 percent use of contraceptives by 2012

## CHALLENGES OF FAMILY PLANNING

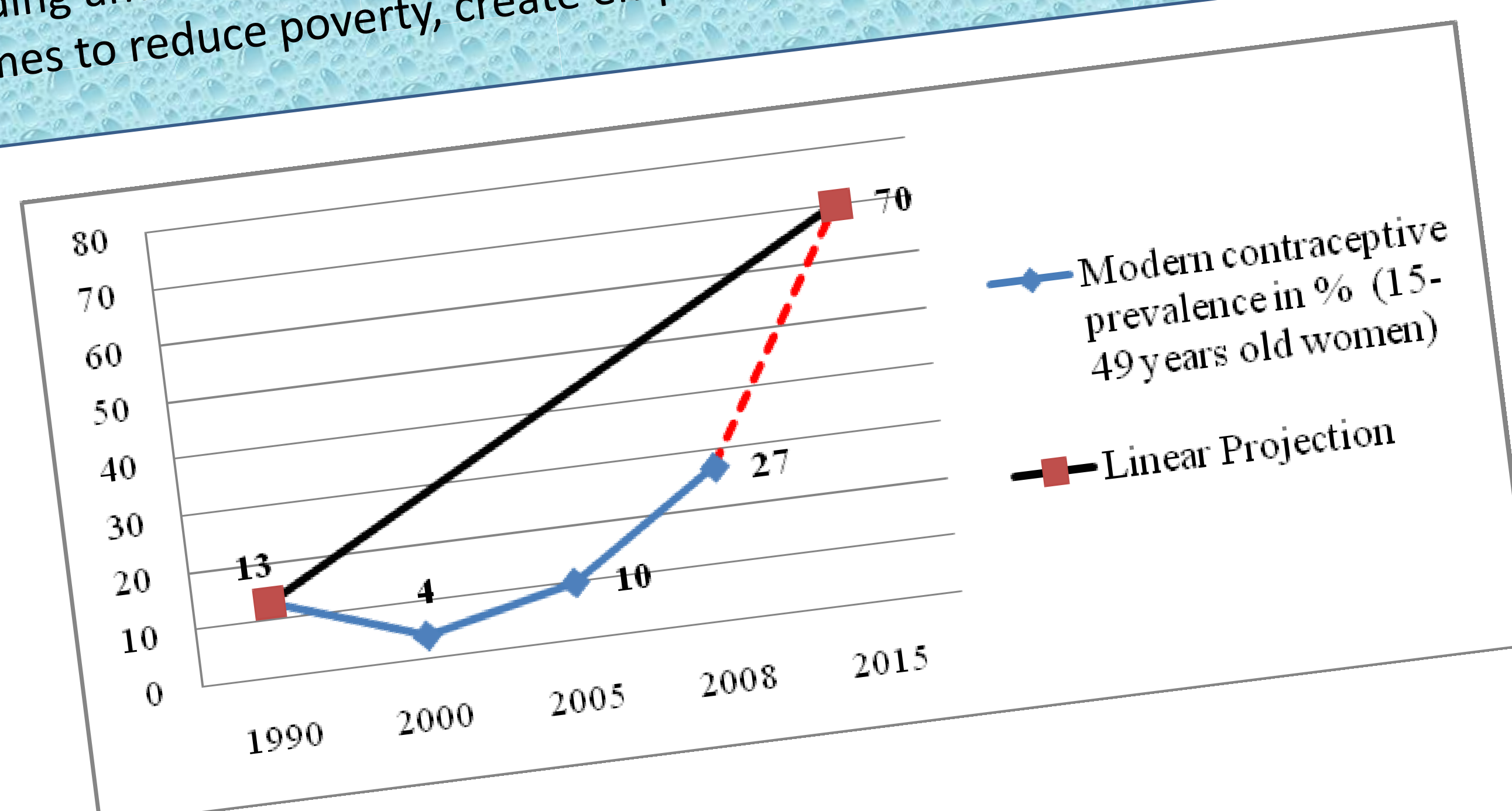
- ✓Lack of Government family planning coordinating office
- ✓Women's rights to control their own fertility
- ✓Reluctance of Catholic Church to support family planning
- ✓Cultural beliefs

## EXPECTED OUTCOMES FROM DF

Informed strategies to inform National Population Policy

## WHAT WE DID

Review of National Population Policy  
Reviewed literature on population control in other countries  
Reviewed research documents on population control



## WHAT SHOULD BE DONE?

- ✓There is a need for a deliberative Forum
- ✓As part of IPAR's mandate is to promote a culture of debate and dialogue on policy issues in Rwanda; we plan to hold a deliberative forum on **Population Growth in Rwanda**.
- ✓The Deliberative forum aims to bring all relevant stakeholders to the table to discuss strategies that can support Government in reducing population growth swiftly in Rwanda so the country can achieve realistic social-economic development.
- ✓A Deliberative Forum/workshop is a facilitated group discussion that provides participants with the opportunity to consider an issue in depth challenge each other's opinions and develop views to reach an informed point of view.

## COUNTRIES WITH SUCCESSFUL POPULATION CONTROL POLICIES

- ✓Iran offers family planning/contraception classes before marriage.
- ✓Bangladesh developed community based approach of sensitization since 1970s based on enrolling literate women in basic medicine and family planning. The trained elite women in the communities visited door-to-door distributing contraceptive pills and condoms and referring fellow women to visit clinics for contraception.
- ✓China the controversial one child policy in china reduced fertility to about 1.7 though at a human cost. The China's one child control policy advocates for late marriage, fewer children and spacing





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