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Highlighting Africa's unique CAMH needs emerging from its rich and diverse peoples, contexts and cultures

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According to the United Nations, there are 54 recognised countries in Africa, although the African Union recognises 55, the difference resulting from disputed territories. Africa is the world's second largest and second most populous continent. Out of the world's 7.6 billion population, 17% (1.3 billion) live in Africa. Africa has a rapidly growing, youthful population with growth rates of 2-3% each year and of the anticipated growth in global population of 2.2 billion between now and 2050, 1.3 billion will be added in Africa. The population of this diverse continent will continue to increase as the large numbers of children and adolescents reach adulthood. As a result, Africa will play a major role in shaping the size and distribution of the world's population for decades to come. Out of all the countries in the world, Nigeria's population, currently the 7th largest in the world, is growing the most rapidly and Nigeria is projected to become the third most populous country by 2050. About 41% of Africa's population is under the age of 15 while 60% are younger than 24 years. By far Africa has the largest proportion of children under 15 (41%), with Latin America and the Caribbean a distant second at 25% and Asia at 24%. In addition to the large, youthful, rapidly growing population, Africa is the world's most diverse continent with over 3000 different and distinct ethnic groups and over 2000 languages.

This presentation throws light on the unique current and projected child and adolescent mental health (CAMH) needs of Africa's diverse youthful population. Identifying these needs are a key to the provision of CAMH interventions and services so that the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which include the promotion of the mental health and wellbeing of Africa's youthful population, can be met.