



**TRIBUTE BY THE REGIONAL DIRECTOR FOR  
WCARO  
MR. MABINGUE NGOM**

**PROF. BABATUNDE OSOTIMEHIN  
ESSAY COMPETITION AWARDS CEREMONY  
WEDNESDAY, 07 NOVEMBER, 2018.**

I am delighted to be here today and to see so many young people present. I am particularly happy to be witnessing the Essay Awards ceremony, which is in memory of our very dear Professor Babatunde Osotimehin.

I had the privilege of working with Professor Babatunde Osotimehin, who was the Executive Director of UNFPA from 2011 to 2017. He was extremely passionate about adolescent, youth and maternal health issues. He advocated extensively for the investment in the girl-child, as a pathway to sustainable development. In recognition of his work towards the welfare of women, he was often referred to as an "Honorary Woman".

As UNFPA's Executive Director, he spearheaded efforts by the international community to advance the milestones established by governments at the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD). Of notable mention was the introduction of new reforms enhancing the effectiveness and efficiency of UNFPA, with a more robust vision for improving the lives of women, adolescents and youth globally.



Babatunde Osotimehin used every platform and opportunity to champion the rights of young people. He was a firm believer of involving the youth in major decisions which would affect their lives across the world. One such opportunity was at the 2016 International Youth Day in South Africa.

To quote him: *“Globally, large youth populations represent a historic opportunity to introduce progress and adopt innovative solutions to ignite this change. Essential to this is the realization of young people’s rights to participate in the political, economic and social life of their communities and countries, and to freely make informed choices regarding their bodies, sexuality and reproduction without discrimination, violence or coercion”*.

Prof. Osotimehin was also an ardent supporter of adopting local approaches in addressing inequalities in accessing family planning methods, curbing unintended pregnancies, and eliminating gender-based violence and harmful practices, such as Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and eliminating child marriage.

Although his passing left a void, which can never be filled, we cherish his memory and are honoured to have had our lives touched and enriched by his. I encourage you all, as young people, to emulate the examples of individuals, such as Professor Babatunde Osotimehin, to help make the world a better place.



I congratulate all the participants of the essay competition, especially the winners. I am told that majority of the essays on the topic “Childhood to Adulthood: The Importance of Comprehensive Sexuality Education for the Adolescent Girl’s healthy development in Ghana”, were excellently written. I thus commend those who submitted for their effort and stellar performance.

I personally want to thank Mrs. Esther Apewokin, Ms. Ama Serwah Nerquaye-Tetteh and Dr. Robert K. Mensah for volunteering their time and effort to serve as assessors for the essay competition.

Merci beaucoup!

Thank You