



OPENING REMARKS
BY NIYI OJUOLAPE, UNFPA GHANA REPRESENTATIVE
AT THE
YOUTH-LED LAUNCH OF THE 2019 STATE OF WORLD POPULATION
(SWOP) REPORT
AT ECOBANK HEAD OFFICE, ACCRA
TUESDAY, 30 APRIL 2019

Protocol:

- The Executive Director of the National Population Council, **Dr. Leticia Adelaide Appiah**
- The Chief Executive Officer of the National Youth Authority, **Mr. Emmanuel Sin-Nyet Asigri**
- The Executive Director of the Planned Parenthood Association of Ghana (PPAG), **Ms. Abena Adubea Acheampong**
- Distinguished Invited Guests
- Our Distinguished Young People
- The Media
- Ladies and Gentlemen

Permit me to extend a warm welcome to all of you; and thank you for honouring our invitation to be part of the Youth-Led Launch of the 2019 State of the World Population (SWOP) report. The SWOP report is the flagship



publication of the United Nations Population Fund-UNFPA which outlines the agency's activities in solving population and development issues around the world. This year's unique edition, titled 'The Unfinished Business', highlights the life-saving work of UNFPA over 50 years of the Agency's existence and carefully articulates the importance of young people towards a prosperous future. Especially, for us here in Ghana, we believe that it is highly inevitable to have conversations about solving issues in the area of population and development without having a conversation on the role that young people have to play.

Fifty years ago the world's population was at 3.6 billion, with population growth rates at about 6 births per woman in least developed countries. Against this backdrop was the need for improvements in health care delivery and life expectancy, all of these influenced new global population trends which had direct implications on development resources. The UNFPA, which at the time was the United Nations' Fund for Population Activities, was founded in 1969 to support member countries with population management with regards to reproductive health issues for development, as a response to this population boom. Twenty-Five years down the line, the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), held in Cairo in 1994, laid out a Programme of Action (PoA) for achieving the population and development needs of 179 countries. This Programme of Action has been the blueprint that UNFPA has been working with since then. This year, as I mentioned earlier, is



special because UNFPA is celebrating 50 years of existence and 25 years of the ICPD Agenda.

One major area of our mandate as an organisation, is the empowerment of young people so that they can realise their full potential. In view of the UN Youth Strategy which calls on all UN agencies and organisations to *increase impact and expand global, regional and country-level action to address the needs, build the agency and advance the rights of young people in all their diversity*. UNFPA Ghana launched the Youth Leaders Fellowship Programme, in November last year. The fellowship is a 12-month capacity building programme for young graduates from Ghanaian universities to empower them for insertion into the global development system. So far, they have proven that young people have much to offer when they are given the opportunity for self-expression and innovation. These young people put together this wonderful event, and I believe they have exceeded expectations and deserve a resounding applause.

Today, young people will launch the State of the World Population report, a report that highlights the unfinished business of ensuring rights and choices for all. This launch is a call to all young people - who are a majority of Africa's population - to get engaged in the discourse on the ICPD agenda so that they can contribute meaningfully to the achievement of Agenda 2063 and Agenda 2030. I hope that after today, many of us will commit in our own small way to ensuring zero maternal deaths, zero unmet need for family planning and zero



gender-based violence and harmful practices realities for all young people in Ghana and beyond.

Again, I say thank you very much for honouring our invitation to be a part of this event and I wish you fruitful deliberations and of course a successful event.

Medaase!