



**STATEMENT BY NIYI OJUOLAPE UNFPA REPRESENTATIVE
AT THE PARLIAMENTARY DIALOGUE WITH THE
DIASPORA**

**Theme: Year of Return - Achieving the
Demographic Dividend: The Role of Parliamentarians**

- **Honourable Ministers,**
- **Honourable Regional Minister,**
- **Honourable Members of Parliament,**
- **Friends from The Media,**
- **All Protocols Observed.**

Dear Honourable,

I have had the privilege over the last two years as country rep to interact with Ghanaian Parliamentarians at events such as the Ghana Parliamentary Consultation that was organized by the African Parliamentary Forum on Population and Development (FPA), the European Parliamentary Forum on Population and Development (EPF) and United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) & more recently in our interactions in the march towards and at the ICPD25 conference in Nairobi, Kenya just last month.

And I am very happy to stand here today with you as Ghanaian parliamentarians to welcome members of parliament from the diaspora here to Ghana as part of



the year of the return. The year of the return has been a yearlong initiative promoted by the Government of Ghana as a commemoration of the 400 years since the first enslaved Africans touched down in Jamestown, Virginia in the United States; The year of return has been linked the initiative with the 400 Years of African-American History Commission Act that was passed in US Congress in 2017.

As parliamentarians you know the importance of initiatives such as the year of return and we use such opportunities to highlight sustainable development initiatives and UNFPA is proud to host you here this week to discuss issues related to population and development having the necessary stakeholders, both home and from the diaspora in conversations about Population and Development and the ICPD, as these are important in the journey to improve the socioeconomic prospects of Ghana and by extension the diaspora for the benefit of the work of the UNFPA.

As policy makers, I am sure you know that sustainable development cannot be achieved without assuring that all women and men, and girls and boys, enjoy the dignity and human rights to expand their capabilities, secure their reproductive health and rights, find decent work, and contribute to economic growth. Developing policies and investments to secure that future requires that governments know the size, sex, location and age structure of their present and future populations.



Countries with the greatest demographic opportunity for development are those entering a period in which the working-age population has good health, quality education, decent employment and a lower proportion of young dependents. Smaller numbers of children per household generally lead to larger investments per child, more freedom for women to enter the formal workforce and more household savings for old age. When this happens, the national economic payoff can be substantial. This is a "demographic dividend."

As we engage over the next couple of days on the demographic dividend and what it means for us both here in Ghana and within the diaspora I encourage you to meaningfully consider what you as parliamentarians and policy influencers can do to continue to champion the mandate areas of UNFPA whilst working to achieving the SDG Goals as well as moving towards a further commitment to collective action on these issues.

Thank you.