

**STATEMENT BY NIYI OJUOLAPE
ACTING UN RESIDENT COORDINATOR AND
UNFPA REPRESENTATIVE, GHANA
ON THE OCCASION OF INTERNATIONAL YOUTH DAY
IN MAMPONG - AKUAPEM, EASTERN REGION, 14TH AUGUST 2019**

- **The Vice President, H.E. Alhaji Mahamudu Bawumia,**
- **Minister of Education – Hon Dr. Matthew Opoku Prempeh,**
- **Minister of Youth and Sports – Hon. Isaac Kwame Asiamah,**
- **Executive Director - NYA, Hon. Emmanuel Sin-yet Asigri,**
- **Our Distinguished Young People,**
- **Our Partners in Development,**
- **The Media;**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen,**
- **All Protocol Observed.**

Once again we are gathered to celebrate the International Youth Day that is observed on August 12 each year to recognize efforts of young people around the world in enhancing global society. The aim of the day is also to promote ways to engage them in becoming more actively involved in making positive contributions to their communities.

My team and I from the United Nations Population Fund in Ghana are really grateful for this celebration being high on the agenda of the Executive of the Republic of Ghana.

His Excellency,

The theme for this year's celebration is worth discussing as a national issue and the right approach has been chosen. To dialogue with the youth on issues of transforming education is the best thing a leader can do since they are the most affected and the fact that education needs to be holistic to make it more relevant, equitable and inclusive for all youth, including efforts by youth themselves.

Rooted in Goal 4 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development which is to *“ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all”* – International Youth Day 2019 is to examine how Governments, young people and youth-led and youth-focused organizations, as well as other stakeholders, are transforming education and how these efforts are contributing to the achievement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. For UNFPA at the Global Level, and led by the Executive Director, we reaffirmed our commitment to helping young people realize their full potential in life, by unveiling a new youth strategy, entitled: My *Body, My Life, My World!* on such an important day (International Youth Day). This strategy places the needs of young people, their aspirations and ideals at the core of our work to support achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and the ICPD agenda by 2030.

The My Body, My Life, My World! strategy is grounded in what we have learned about young people from young people in decades of programming with and for them. Co-created with thousands of youth activists and advocates around the globe, it is aligned with Youth 2030, the broader United Nations efforts to protect the health and rights of young people and empower them to shape their own futures and participate in the development of their countries.

Hon Ministers,

Equipped with the right information and preparation, the world's young people have the potential to lead positive change in the world. That potential can only be realized if they are healthy, educated and have control over their bodies and lives. We at UNFPA are working together with governments, civil society and development partners and, above all, with young people themselves to ensure that they have the knowledge and power to make informed choices and to participate as active citizens.

At the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development, governments agreed to meet the special needs of adolescents and youth, especially young women, for access to education, health, counselling and high-quality reproductive health services. This promise was kept for some, but not for all.

From their communities to their capital cities, young people everywhere are demanding their rights, as was affirmed 25 years ago at the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in Cairo. In the decades since, we at UNFPA have accompanied countless young people on the journey from adolescence to adulthood.

His Excellency,

We need to engage young people at any given opportunity so as to ensure that we have the future we want. On this day; International Youth Day 2019, we call on governments everywhere and the government of Ghana to keep the promises they made to women and young people 25 years ago in Cairo. Together we will reaffirm our commitment when we gather in Nairobi Kenya in November. Join us on the march to Nairobi! Together, we can finally make rights and choices a reality for all young people. **My Body, My Life, My World! is a Brand-New Rallying Cry for the SDG Generation.**

Thank you.