



**STATEMENT BY NIYI OJUOLAPE UNFPA REPRESENTATIVE
AT THE KNOWLEDGE SHARING FORUM
ON THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON POPULATION AND
DEVELOPMENT (ICPD) FOR MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT
ON 17 AUGUST 2019
AT BEST WESTERN PLUS ATLANTIC HOTEL, TAKORADI**

**Honourable Ministers,
Honourable Regional Minister,
Honourable Members of Parliament,
Friends from the Media,
All protocol observed.**

Dear Honourables,

You cannot imagine my joy to be with you today and be able to use **Yea; Yea,** and **Nooo!!** as key tools of your work. I believe these alone are enough to attract many a young person into this legislative caucus. Anyway, this is just on a light note.

In February 2016, I had the privilege to interact with Parliamentarians in Ghana when I accompanied the late UNFPA Executive Director, and UN Under Secretary General Prof. Babatunde Osotimehin during his working visit when he had the distinct honour to address Parliament. I also met some of you earlier this year at 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).

This meeting is actually a follow-up to the latter where we agreed to meet regularly and share knowledge on issues of population and development. At that collaborative meeting, we dialogued on issues around Universal Health Coverage, Health Financing, Population and Development. This was not different from the issues discussed in 2016, when the Former ED visited Ghana. Prof. Osotimehin reminded the Honourable members that, the SDGs had come to replace the MDGs and stressed the interconnectedness of the 17 goals and 169 targets. He emphasized that the concept of demographic dividend and Agenda 2063 which were then being discussed were the best for Africa in advancing its development.

In an assessment he made, African countries to date rely on natural resources in basic exports of minerals and precious stones, but in general natural products are unstable in terms of earnings for national development. He pointed out that there was currently a glut in the world market for oil. The price of oil had plunged from \$105 a barrel to \$35. Oil can therefore, no longer be relied upon for national development, he advised. I quote **“So the best prospects lie in Africa’s people”**, he concluded.

It is easily seen from history that most of the countries that have made progress within the last 40 or 50 years have done so by relying on greater investments in



their people. He therefore, announced that he expected parliament, the representatives of the people, and the most important institution and powerhouse of the democratic process to lead the way. According to him, his expectation in this regard starts with the Ghanaian parliament.

Most of what the former ED was talking about has roots from the consensus reached by 179 countries in September 1994, in Cairo, Egypt. A Programme of Action (PoA) adopted by acclamation to guide implementation of future population related programmes and activities in member states. 2019 marks the 25TH anniversary of the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) And coincidentally, UNFPA is also 50 years Old. These twin celebrations make the year a very significant one for UNFPA.

Soon, under the leadership of UNFPA, the UN agency responsible for ensuring the rights and choices of all, governments will gather again in Nairobi, Kenya to review the achievements and challenges in the implementation of the PoA that highlighted the importance of sexual and reproductive health, women's empowerment and gender equality in achieving sustainable development, which was adopted in 1994.

UNFPA Ghana, in preparation of, and alignment with global events towards the Nairobi meeting, has developed a roadmap, taking advantage of UN commemorative days and strategic events to highlight the ICPD celebration, and the road to Nairobi. These events include; the launch of the 2019 State of the



World Population (SWOP) report, celebration of the *International Day of the Midwife* and the *International Day for Elimination of Obstetric Fistula*, official launch of the ICPD celebrations, and celebration of World Population Day, which were held between April and July 2019.

The UNFPA Ghana Country Office is implementing a Joint Programme with UNICEF to empower adolescent girls through improved access to gender-responsive Comprehensive Sexuality Education, (CSE) and quality SRH services in Ghana. A core pillar of this programme is to engage policy makers at varied levels to advocate for, and facilitate a paradigm shift for promoting investments in adolescent girls. UNFPA recognizes the legislative arm of government or Members of Parliament as 'agents of change', with social and moral capital to advance the ICPD agenda in Ghana, including issues affecting adolescent girls. Therefore, in line with the events to build momentum for the Nairobi Summit, the Country Office plans to organize a knowledge sharing meeting on core thematic areas regarding the ICPD agenda for members of Ghana's parliament.

This knowledge sharing meeting will be defined around the key thematic areas of the ICPD Programme of Action to highlight gains made in the realization of sexual and reproductive rights in Ghana. The meeting will adopt a gender-sensitive, rights-based, interactive and participatory learning and sharing model applicable for high ranking officials within the Ghanaian context.



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We also intend to make the interaction as exciting as your parliamentary sessions sometimes are. Thus varied methodologies including presentations, field visits, brainstorming and 'marketplace' platforms on ICPD will be applied in the meeting.

You are all welcome. Please join us to identify the critical ***Unfinished Businesses*** as part of Ghana's commitments to the next phase of the ICPD and to join the '**I March Campaign**' as part of the preparations towards the Nairobi Summit.

Thank you.