



**STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF NIYI OJUOLAPE, UNFPA COUNTRY
REPRESENTATIVE ON THE 16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM CONSENT
WORKSHOP AT THE E-ANANSE LIBRARY, LEGON
ON WEDNESDAY, 04 DECEMBER, 2019**

Protocol Observed:

- Distinguished Invited Guests
- Representatives of Youth Groups
- Young People Present
- Our Partners in Development
- The Media,
- Ladies and Gentlemen

Good morning ladies and gentlemen, you are all welcome to today's event, the *"Let's Talk Consent Workshop"*. Permit me to extend the warm felicitations from Niyi Ojuolape who would have loved to be here himself with you; young people and thank you for honoring our invitation. This consent workshop is one of the many activities earmarked by the country office with partners to commemorate 16 days of activism against sexual and gender-based violence and harmful practices.

The 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence, is a global advocacy movement to challenge violence against women and girls. This years' commemoration is especially significant to us as we celebrate major achievements towards advancing the rights of women and girls since the

Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the International Conference of Population and Development (ICPD) Programme of Action and passage of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

This year's global theme "**Orange the World - Generation Equality Stands against Rape**" calls on the Government, CSOs, Private Sector and individuals like yourselves to learn more and take a stand against the pervasive rape culture that surrounds us.

Violence against women and girls constitutes one of the most prevalent human rights violations in the world and knows no social, economic or national boundaries.

At UNFPA where we work to ensure the potential of every young person is fulfilled, we realize that your rights to make informed choices about your own bodies, your own lives and the world you live in is a matter of justice and a driver of a lifetime of returns. Allow me to outline three points that make young people central to eliminating gender-based violence worldwide;

First, young people make up about 60% of the world's population and by creating spaces for you to meaningfully engage you will turn the wheel of change.

Second, emerging evidence suggests that patterns of violence and victimization develop in early adolescence and become difficult to reverse later in life.

Finally, statistics show that one in four girls (24.7%) is sexually abused before the age of 18 as against one in six boys. Rape is also more likely to happen to younger women than older women while victims of child marriage and female genital mutilation are young girls.

Due to the above reasons we at UNFPA in collaboration with our partners conceptualized this workshop to focus on respect and human dignity in sexual relationships, as expressed through asking and recognizing consent or non-consent.

Rape is rooted in a complex set of patriarchal beliefs, power, and control that continue to create a social environment in which sexual violence is pervasive and normalized. Survivors of and activists against rape and sexual assault in recent times have embarked on campaigns such as, #MeToo, #TimesUp #SexForGrades to unite their voices and throw more light on sexual violence.

Ladies and gentlemen, we thank Drama Queens and DAFI, organizations that are directly at the forefront of eliminating all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres. We recognize the critical role you play to help achieve this objective which is a prominent



focus of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and for that we say Ayekoo.

Today, on the launch of the 16 Days of Activism against Sexual and Gender-Based Violence, we stand in solidarity with survivors of sexual assault and express our sincerest appreciation to all work tirelessly to respond to and prevent violence against the vulnerable especially women and girls whose issues have for a long time been ignored.

Thank you for your attention.