



## **OPENING REMARKS**

**NIYI OJUOLAPE, UNFPA GHANA REPRESENTATIVE,  
AT THE NATIONAL DIALOGUE ON SEXUAL VIOLENCE AGAINST  
GIRLS AND BOYS**

**AT LA PALM ROYAL BEACH HOTEL, ACCRA**

**TUESDAY, 16 APRIL 2019**

Naa Chairman,

Honorable Minister,

Distinguished Paramount Chiefs,

Colleagues from Ghana Health Service,

Distinguished Representatives of NGOs / CSOs / FBOs Community and

Other Cherished Stakeholders,

Friends from the Media,

Ladies and Gentlemen.

I am extremely happy to be part of this programme and to provide a few words on behalf of UNFPA in Ghana.

I am very happy to be part of this national multi-stakeholder dialogue to discuss strategies for addressing sexual violence and assault among young women, especially adolescent girls. We are at UNFPA are very much happy by this effort by Plan International Ghana and Youth Advocates Ghana (YAG) to bring key national institutions and CSOs not just to deliberate on



the issues of sexual violence but to provide an opportunity to share information and experiences with a view to enhancing partnership and networking to combat sexual violence against young women and children.

Like all partners gathered here, UNFPA in Ghana is very much concerned about the incidence of sexual and gender based violence affecting children and young women and believe there is need for us to improve on prevention efforts as well as effective management of cases to mitigate long term effects on the victims. This is one of the key reasons UNFPA is partnering with the Office of the second lady under the umbrella of CoPASH, the Coalition of People Against Sexual and Gender Based Violence and Harmful Practices.

The UN has stressed many times that violence against girls constitutes one of the most prevalent human rights violations in the world. It knows no social, economic or national boundaries. It undermines the health, dignity, security and autonomy of its victims, yet it remains shrouded in a culture of silence. Victims of violence often suffer sexual and reproductive health consequences, including forced and unwanted pregnancies, unsafe abortions, sexually transmitted infections including HIV, and even death.

The UNFPA and other UN agencies, like most partners recognized that, despite the existence of several legal frameworks and institutions, children and adolescent girls continue suffer violence in all its forms. We therefore need to urgently move to the next level and invest more time and resources



to prevent Violence against children and women. Preventing and responding to violence against young people require that we intensify our efforts systematically to address risk and protective factors at all four interrelated levels - individual, relationship, community and society.

UNFPA in partnership with government and civil society will continuously work to eliminate SGBV against girls, young people and women and promote reproductive health and rights. One of our global transformational goals seeks to bring to 'zero' all forms of gender based violence and harmful practices such as child marriage and female genital mutilation. It is our shared responsibility and investment to protect and empower young people, especially adolescent girls.

Thank you for your attention and I wish you a fruitful dialogue.