

2017

**REPORT ON THE
WORLD
POPULATION DAY
AND FAMILY
PLANNING (FP)
2020 GHANA
SATELLITE EVENT**

11TH JULY, 2017

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1.0 Introduction

World Population Day 2017 (WPD) has been celebrated annually since 1989. The day is observed internationally on 11th July to focus attention and increase awareness on various population issues such as family planning, gender equality, poverty, maternal health, human rights, environment and its impact on development. Significantly, this year, 2017 marks the fifth year of progress and achievements since the launch of FP2020 in 2012. The UK Government and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, in partnership with UNFPA, National governments, donors, civil society, the private sector, the research and development community, and others from across the world came together at the London Summit on Family Planning to support the right of women and girls to decide, freely and for themselves, whether, when and how many children they can have.

As part of the celebration of the fifth anniversary of FP2020, a Ghanaian delegation comprising Mrs. Tina Mensah, Honourable Deputy Minister of Health, Dr. Afisah Zakaria, Chief Director, Health Ministry and Dr. Patrick Aboagye, Director, Family Health Division, Ghana Health Service participated in FP2020 Summit in London on 11th July 2017. The Second Lady of the Republic of Ghana, Mrs. Samira Bawumia was invited to be part of the event in her capacity as the Adolescent Health Champion for the Country. Various events were undertaken both at the summit and around the world to highlight progress toward expanding access to family planning to chart a path forward for accelerating progress. As part of the wider Family Planning Summit celebrations, Ghana Health Service and National Population Council and other in-country partners with support from DFID/UKAID held a satellite event that coincided with the 2017 World Population Day Celebration in the country.

The global theme for the 2017 World Population Day celebration was **“Family Planning, Empowering People, Developing Nations”** and the local theme adopted for the celebration in Ghana was **“Family Planning, Healthy People for Sustainable National Development”**. This provided the platform for the National Population Council and its partners to critically assess the reproductive health needs of Ghanaians and create awareness that investments into family planning is a socio- economic imperative.

2.0 Community Outreach Activities

On Saturday 8th July 2017, the National Population Council in partnership with the Ghana Health Service, Ghana Education Service, Planned Parenthood Association of Ghana, Marie Stoppes International, Ghana, Media practitioners and other stakeholders, organised a community outreach programme at the Jamestown, which is a section of the old part of the capital city to create awareness on the benefits of family planning and also to provide services to the community. The outreach activities included a football match at Mantse Agbonaa between the Population Eleven and Media Eleven made up of staff of partners agencies in the population sector and the media respectively. Present at the event were Dr. Leticia Appiah, Executive Director of the NPC, Mr. Nii Lante Vanderpuije Honourable Member of Parliament for the Odododiodoo Constituency which includes Jametown, Mrs Esi Inkoom, Director Ghana Education Service/ School Health Education Programme among others.

In her address to kick start the programme, the Dr. Leticia Appiah, highlighted the important role family planning plays in the country's socio-economic development. She encouraged couples and individuals in the community to plan their families since the sizes of their families have a direct bearing on their quality of life and wellbeing.



The Guest of Honour, Mr. Nii Lante Vanderpuije, Hon. Member of Parliament for the Odododiodoo Constituency in the Greater Accra Region addressing the gathering.

Mr. Nii Lante Vanderpuije in his address bemoaned the many and frequent births in the constituency and pledged his support to the National Population Council and partners community outreach activities to redress the situation. Teams from Planned Parenthood Association of Ghana, Marie Stopes International Ghana, Ghana Health Service and Ghana Education Service mounted an exhibition of products, information and services and were on-hand to interact with members of the community to provide information and services.



A member of the outreach team interacting with some young people at Jamestown.



The Population Eleven team and some members of the Media Eleven on the football field at Mantse Agbonaa

3.0 Celebration of 2017 World Population Day and FP2020 Ghana Satellite Event

The World Population Day/ FP2020 Ghana Satellite event was held at the College of Physicians and Surgeons in Accra on the 11th July 2017. The programme was attended by over hundred invited guests from the public and private sectors, NGOs/CSOs, development partners and the media such as, the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection (MGCSP), National Youth Authority, (NYA) Ghana Statistical Service, (GSS), Ministry of Employment and Labour Relations, PPAG, Ghana Health Service, Marie Stopes International, UNFPA, DFID, Coalition of NGO's in Health, and USAID. Some eminent persons in the population sector also attended the event. They included Dr. Joana Nerquaye Tetteh, Former Executive Director PPAG, Prof. Clara Fayorsey, University of Ghana, Dr. Henrietta Odoi-Agyarko, Former Director, FHD/GHS and Mr. Quist Therson, former member, Ghana Population Council.

Prof. George Gyan- Baffour, Minister for Planning chaired the function. In his initial remarks, he acknowledged population issues and population dynamics as the two (2) major variables critical to his job as Minister for Planning. He added that in development planning, it is important to know the population, in the building of infrastructure such as schools and healthcare centres to facilitate prioritisation and effective service delivery. He intimated that when the population is growing at a faster rate than the economy, it affects the per capita income of the nation, leading to less investment, this is why it is relevant to know what the population size is and the rate at which it is growing. He urged the stakeholders and partners present to plan with the people in mind and added that sustainable family planning programs and services was a way of empowering people to ensure the country's development.

3.1 Welcome Address

The Executive Director of NPC, Dr. Leticia Appiah delivered the welcome address at the launch, she welcomed all the dignitaries and invited guests and stated that their presence at the launch testifies the importance of Family planning to national development. She talked about the high rate of child birth especially in the three (3) Northern Regions of the country which was currently impacting national development negatively and stressed that the provision of family planning services to women and girls was one sure way of managing the high birth rates recorded presently.

She also made an important point during her welcome address, referring to the UN annual World Happiness report and stated that in 2017, Norway was adjudged the happiest country out of 155 countries using indicators such as: freedom to make life decisions, social support, and life expectancy at birth. Interestingly, Norway the happiest country according to the index has a dependency ratio of 52.2 and a contraceptive prevalence rate of 82% while the least happy country Central African Republic records a dependency ratio of 75.16 and a contraceptive prevalence rate of 12.1%. With this she hinted that happiness could be dependent on the dependency ratios and contraceptive rates of a country and charged the audience to put Ghana on its quest for happiness by increasing its CPR which is currently at 26.7% and reducing the dependency ratio, currently at 73.

Dr. Leticia Appiah concluded by saying that it was important to encourage individuals to have the number of children their finances could comfortably cater for through the use of contraceptive. Access to family planning had economic dividends for families aside the reduction in fertility, she said, adding that “deliveries should not be too soon, too many, too frequent and too close.

3.2 Statement from Partners

Partners delivered statements on behalf of their institutions:

3.2.1 UNFPA

Ms Erika Goldson, Deputy Representative, UNFPA, said that the World Population Day was set aside for countries to focus on the importance of population and reproductive health issues. She said access to safe, voluntarily family planning was a human right and was central to gender equality and women’s empowerment, adding that family planning was key to reducing poverty. There is the need to expand access to family planning to about 120 million women in the world by 2020 because family planning impacts overall development. Adding that UNFPA is poised to let women exercise their right by supporting family planning services, making it affordable and accessible to all. She admits that currently family planning services are limited and many women and girls are denied access because they cannot negotiate safe sex with their partners. In addition, the rights of women and girls to decide freely where, when and how many children to have is often disregarded. She concluded by saying that Family Planning amongst adolescent girls should be encouraged as it helps them pursue more years of schooling.

3.2.2 UK DFID

The Deputy Country Director of UKAID/ DFID, Ms Lynne Henderson, stated that family planning is transformational and a good investment in the health and wellbeing of a people and contributes to national development. She added that it is important for all partners to gather together to strengthen the foundations of the health sector towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. She again mentioned the high rate of maternal mortality rate

(MMR) in Ghana and said, access to family planning is crucial to achieve progress in MMR. She urged the Government of Ghana to take the forefront in financing for health commodities because it is significant for the country's development. She added that , unplanned pregnancies rob young girls of opportunities, and this is largely due to limited access to commodities and information. Ghana was represented at the summit by the Second Lady, Mrs Samira Bawumia, and the Deputy Minister of Health, Mrs Tina Mensah, and were expected to make commitments towards championing family planning in Ghana.

3.2.3 USAID

A representative of the Population and Nutrition Department of the USAID made a statement on behalf of his organisation. In his submission he stated that many women want to have access to safe reproductive health information and commodities but their needs are not readily met. He further stated that voluntary family planning is a great health investment that would lead to safer, healthier families. He urged the Government of Ghana to support development partners, NGO's and CSO's to ensure Ghanaian women have access to Family Planning.

3.2.4 Coalition OF NGOs in Health

In his address, the National Vice Chairman of the Ghana Coalition of NGOs in Health (GCNH), Mr Bright Amisah Nyarko, first of all commended the NPC for its leadership role in pushing the population agenda using a multi-stakeholder approach. He added that family planning utilization is still low among persons 15-49 years and although some gains have been made since 2000, Ghana still remains far behind set targets. He said it is worrying that only 34% of Ghana's demand for family planning is met. He further recommended that parliament enact a legislation on family planning, NPC and other agencies should scale up family planning advocacy and services, and government should incorporate family planning into the National Health Insurance Scheme and encouraged faith based organizations, traditional and religious leaders to support and champion the cause of family planning in their communities.

3.3 Presentation

Prof Atobiri from the School of Public Health (Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, KNUST) made a presentation on the Performance Monitoring Accountability 2020 Ghana survey. The PMA2020 Ghana survey is conducted by the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology and the University for Development Studies (UDS) with support from the Ghana Health Service, Ghana Statistical Service and Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health and funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. The survey was designed to monitor progress towards the FP2020 commitments through monitoring the use of, and access to contraceptives. In his presentation he said the survey was conducted between August and November, 2016 with a nationally representative sample of 100 Enumeration Areas and a target of 42 households randomly selected in each EA selected by the Ghana Statistical Service. The Sample size (unweighted) of 3,992 households, 3,663 females ages 15-49 and 2,150 married women 15-49, 154 service delivery points, 111 public and 43 private delivery points.

The survey employs innovative mobile technology, supports low-cost, rapid turnaround surveys, generates annual (or semi-annual) indicators, is expandable to other health and development indicators, provides consistency with DHS measures, introduces new indicators of quality, choice, access, creates a community feedback loop to prompt program improvement, strengthens local capacity and network of partner universities/research

institutions. Some of the selected indicators are fertility indicators, modern contraceptive prevalence rate (mCPR), current modern method mix among contraceptive users, unmet need for limiting and spacing in the past 12 months, reasons for non-use of contraceptives and others.

He stated that the results of the survey indicate that Contraceptive Prevalence Rate (CPR) for married women (15-49) has increased as at 2016. GDHS 2014 indicated that 22.2% for CPR but PMA2016 result had increased to 25.8%. According to GDHS 2014, unmet need (Married 15-49) was 29.9%, PMA2016 indicated an increase to 31.7%. In concluding his presentation, he was concerned that fertility appears to be going down but it is not matched by a corresponding increase in CPR, Unmet need for Family Planning still remains high, in addition Sanitation indicators in the country give cause for concern.

3.4 Keynote Address

Professor Agyemang Badu Akosa, Commissioner, National Development Planning Commission (NDPC), delivered the keynote address. He said that population factors are crucial to development planning of a country. When a population grows rapidly, social services need to expand to accommodate the growing numbers. Investments in making family planning available will yield economic and other gains for the country. Available information indicates that family planning empowers women and boosts the financial condition of the family leading to fewer children with quality care. This necessitated the theme for the celebration of this year's World Population Day to focus on Family Planning, Healthy People for a Sustainable National Development. Prof. Akosa indicated that Ghana owes it to itself to ensure sustainable national development and this cannot be achieved without addressing challenges in Malnutrition, Immunization, Early Childhood Education and Family Planning. The Government of Ghana through all approved channels must be made to know that without solutions to these four issues the country's development will be stunted. He said regular meetings between the National Population Council, Queen-mothers, Ghana Health Service, Ghana Education Service, Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection and the National Development Planning Commission and other stakeholders must be instituted to deliberate on these issues.

He said that Ghana had long prioritised family planning as a key strategy for addressing the country's health, social and economic issues and had made some gains. For instance, he said the use of modern contraceptive methods had increased fourfold from five per cent to 22 per cent while the use of any other method had increased from 13 per cent to 27 per cent in the past 26 years. Nonetheless, Prof. Akosa said family planning had been confronted with misconceptions and myths which had discouraged its patronage and uptake among Ghanaians. He further noted the challenges affecting the implementation of family planning programmes included minimal commitment from government and heavy dependence on donor support for family planning.

Prof. Akosa however said, there was need to intensify advocacy efforts to increase and sustain government ownership and investment in family planning as a cost-effective socio-economic development intervention. Lastly, he recommended a legislative instrument to support the policy on family planning, saying: "Policy makers must consider family planning as an essential ingredient for sustainable development which cannot be ignored." He thanked the organisers of this year's World Population Day/FP2020 celebration and all those who contributed to ensure its success. He finally declared the 2017 World Population Day/ FP 2020 celebration duly launched.

3.5 Closing Remark

Mr. Mensah Abrompah, Technical Adviser to the Minister for Planning delivered the closing remarks on behalf of the Chairman. In his submission he asserted that the Government of Ghana is an important player in the Family Planning agenda and support from government cannot be overemphasized. He asked that family planning programming in Ghana should be looked at holistically, if there was the need to revise policies, call for a stronger legislative instrument or commitments for more resources from the budget to pursue Family Planning in a sustainable manner, then all relevant stakeholders should come together to address these issues.

In conclusion, he stated that Family Planning should be stressed at the family level, families should be sensitized on the benefits of having small family sizes and the need for families to plan and match their resources to the number of children they have or intend to have. He added that family planning would ensure that our women are also healthier. He thanked all stakeholders for their support in making the event a success.