

SPEECH

BY

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AT THE OFFICIAL CLOSING OF THE

**VIRTUAL MEETING OF NETWORK OF AFRICAN PARLIAMENTARY
COMMITTEES OF HEALTH (NEAPACOH)**

ON

OCTOBER 29, 2020

Hon. Oumarou Mamoudou, the Session Chairperson,
The Chairperson, NEAPACOH, Hon. Fako Moshoeshoe,
Distinguished Hon. Members of Parliament,
Representatives of Development Partners,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure for me yet again, to be here this afternoon, to speak to you at the closing of this regional meeting of Parliamentary Committees of Health in Africa-NEAPACOH. Firstly, let me take this opportunity to thank the organizers of this meeting and congratulate them for organizing and concluding such a successful meeting.

I would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate all the honorable members of Parliament who have been able to attend and participate in this meeting. Finding time out of your busy schedule to consistently be part of this meeting is a great honor to us and cannot be taken for granted. It is indeed a testimony of your commitment to the objectives of NEAPACOH, as you've always given this forum your utmost consideration. Thank you.

Allow me to thank all the stakeholders of NEAPACOH, especially UNFPA, AFIDEP, APHRC/IMCHA, and IPPF-ARO, who have continuously provided financial and

technical support for NEAPACOH. To my colleagues at PPD ARO, thank you yet again for spearheading this event with such fervor and enthusiasm that it deserves. I am certain that a number of you honorable members, were doubting if the NEAPACOH meeting would be convened this year. And here we're, it has all been possible, thanks to the technological advancements. It has been so exciting hearing from all of you and how you've worked hard to implement the 2019 commitments and the Kampala Call to action.

We have heard how challenging it has been, for our people to efficiently access SRH services especially during this roaring Covid 19 pandemic time. One honorable member has even shared how she was lucky and survived the pandemic. I take this opportunity to congratulate her upon the successful fight.

We all recognize you honorable members of parliament, and know that you hold special positions in society. As RH/FP Champions, every time you speak in Parliament, we feel our voice is being made more audible. Your voice is the voice of your constituencies, and is our voice as advocates and whenever we hear you, we always feel delighted. We do have trust in you as our representatives and we are convinced that our views and concerns would be heard, understood and taken care of seriously if they come from you. That is why we believe and are keenly devoted to working with parliamentarians as change agents and central players

to the full implementation of international and regional agreements on sexual and reproductive health and rights. Our countries have very good and clear policy frameworks which require political will and commitment to support the implementation of these otherwise good policies. Last year while at the Nairobi ICPD +25 summit, a number of our countries led by the top leadership of our respective countries, reechoed their commitment to the implementation of the ICPD PoA. I, therefore, see a lot of hope in parliamentarians to make this a reality.

This year's meeting has provided a platform for sharing progress made, challenges and lessons learned on achieving the RH/FP country commitments and the Kampala Call to Action amidst Covid 19 in the region. And we have heard how a number of us have fared, although we encountered some network challenges where some members were not able to complete their experiences. Hopefully, all these presentations have been sent to the organizers and they will be able to share them with the other members who have not been able to participate in this virtual meeting.

As I conclude, I applaud you all for the great enthusiasm exhibited and am certain that together, we can make it. Let's continue pursuing our commitments and the Kampala call to action and hope we shall have more milestones to share next year.

Thank you.