

# **2021 NETWORK OF AFRICAN PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEES OF HEALTH (NEAPACOH) MEETING**

## **Sustained Programs for the Achievement of ICPD Goals and the SDGs: The Role of Parliamentarians**

October 28 - 29

### **KAMPALA CALL TO ACTION**

A meeting of the Network of African Parliamentary Committees of Health (NEAPACOH) was held on October 28 – 29, 2021. The meeting convened members of Parliamentary Committees responsible for health from 16 countries as well as representatives of development partners, Civil Society and other stakeholders engaged in general Public Health issues, Family Planning, Reproductive Health and Maternal and Child Health programmes. This meeting was preceded by a Pre-Conference on 27th October 2021 on the subjects of TB & Lung Health and Sexual and Reproductive Health Needs in Sub-Saharan Africa focusing on Preventing Unsafe Abortion.

The 2021 NEAPACOH meeting was organized to promote information exchange, facilitate policy dialogue and identify key areas of follow up action to accelerate the achievement of the unfinished agenda of the ICPD and SDGs during and post COVID-19 Pandemic on the continent. The theme of the meeting was “Sustained Programs for the Achievement of ICPD Goals and the SDGs: Role of Parliamentarians”

The meeting was hosted by Parliament of Uganda and Partners in Population and Development Africa Regional Office (PPD ARO) with support from the National Population Council (NPC) of Uganda, Population Action International (PAI), the African Institute for Development Policy (AFIDEP) and United Nations Sexual and Reproductive Health Agency (UNFPA).

Participants were drawn from the following countries; Benin, Burundi, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, South Sudan, Tanzania, The Gambia, Uganda, UK, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

***We, participants to the NEAPACOH meeting:***

**Recognized** that COVID-19 is one of the greatest challenges in modern history which has brought poverty and other far-reaching negative impacts on all spheres of society including health and well-being, and disruption to economic and social development of all countries, especially developing countries.

**Noted** with deep concern that family planning and reproductive, maternal, newborn, child and adolescent health are among the most seriously affected essential health services by the COVID-19 pandemic; and with heightened sexual and gender-based violence.

**Noted** that sexual reproductive health and rights and family planning remain critically important for the sustainable development of the African continent and hence it is essential to continue positioning them high on the continent's development agenda;

**Noted** that sharing of experiences and innovative practices in the context of horizontal South-South Cooperation is needed more than ever in the achievement of the ICPD Program of Action and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development during and post COVID-19 pandemic period.

**Further noted** that Innovative approaches need to be developed and applied at scale in order to strengthen the resilience of communities and preparedness of public systems to avert and address future crises like the COVID-19.

**Noted with concern** that Tuberculosis, post TB lung diseases, and other chronic lung diseases, remain critical health challenges and a major cause of socioeconomic and psychological stress across Africa. However, the health systems in the region, which have been stretched and undermined by the COVID-19 pandemic, are ill prepared to track and address all TB and lung health cases.

**Noted with concern** that over 6 million women in sub-Saharan Africa who have unintended pregnancies due to inability to access and use family planning resort to unsafe abortions, which lead to high disease burden and needless loss of life among girls and women. Although 21 countries in Sub-Saharan Africa have extended legal grounds for abortion between 2000 and 2019, the vast majority of women live in settings where it is not possible to access safe abortion services, and post-abortion care is also limited.

**Recognized** that in order to successfully implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and ICPD Plan of Action, the African continent should deepen South-South cooperation and support stakeholders, including civil society and the private sector to play a greater role in building effective multi-stakeholder partnerships to complement national development efforts

**Reiterated** the critical importance of the commitments made by governments and other development actors at ICPD and the Plan of Action adopted in Cairo, Egypt in 1994, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopted at the UN in September 2015, the Nairobi Summit on ICPD25 held in November 2019, and at several NEAPACOH meetings in the area of reproductive health, family planning, population and development;

**Recognized** the need for countries to deliberately step up efforts and interventions to respond to COVID-19 pandemic in the aspect of promoting sound coordination between population dynamics and socio-economic development, ensuring universal access to sexual and reproductive health and family planning services, reducing maternal and child mortality, promoting women empowerment and youth development, and accelerating poverty alleviation.

**Further recognized** the critical role of parliamentarians be it, representation, legislation, appropriation and oversight towards the achievement of national, regional and global development goals and targets, including the SDGs as well as the crucial role of research and evidence in the delivery of parliamentary core functions.

**Appreciated** the contributions of development partners, Civil Society Organizations, youths and faith based organizations, the private sector and other key stakeholders to support reproductive health, family planning, population and development programmes.

**We, the delegates of the 2021 NEAPACOH meeting therefore hereby adopt the Kampala Call to Action on October 29, 2021 based on sustainable development as the core principle and:**

1. **Commit** to accelerate the implementation of the ICPD PoA and the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development – the SDGs.
2. **Commit** to adopt and strengthen South-South Cooperation to facilitate the sharing of knowledge, lessons learned and good practices in the field of population and development.
3. **Commit** to accord highest priority to advocacy for integration of the ICPD PoA into the planning and budgeting processes across all the sectors.
4. **Commit** to develop and pass appropriate laws and policies that ensure universal access to health including wider sexual and reproductive health, family planning services, safe abortion and post abortion care to support the initiatives for achieving zero unmet need for family planning, zero preventable maternal deaths, and zero gender-based violence and harmful practices, such as child marriage and female genital mutilations.
5. **Commit** to advocate for increased budget allocation, strengthening of health systems, and widespread use of transformative health technologies to address persisting and emerging health challenges such as TB, chronic lung diseases, malaria, and other non-communicable diseases.

6. **Commit** to institute studies to ensure existing laws facilitate for achievements of SDGs, and where necessary advocate for relevant new laws.
7. **Commit** to advocate for increased financial resources, including domestic, bilateral and multilateral funding for programs that contribute to accelerated implementation of the ICPD PoA and achievement of the SDGs in our countries.
8. **Commit** to continue providing leadership and stewardship on policy, legislation and perform budgetary oversight for reproductive health and family planning. We further commit to promote and support mobilization and general awareness on reproductive health and family planning in the context of implementation of the ICPD agenda.
9. **Commit** to advocate for investments in young people with a focus on education especially for the girl-child, health, participation in decision making, skilling, job creation in view of harnessing the Demographic Dividend.
10. **Commit** to promote and uphold good governance and accountability in all matters of health.
11. **Commit** to strengthen NEAPACOH through undertaking resource mobilization activities to support the implementation of the NEAPACOH commitments and ensure sustainability of the Alliance.
12. **Call upon** Governments, UN agencies and international organizations, donors, the private sectors and other relevant stakeholders to commit more investments to accelerate the achievement of the unfinished agenda of the ICPD and SDGs on the continent.

**Convey** our sincere appreciation and gratitude to the Parliament of Uganda and Partners in Population and Development Africa Regional Office for the successful organization and hosting of the 2021 NEAPACOH meeting

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