



Keynote Remarks

International Inter-Ministerial Forum on South-South Cooperation and ICPD30

At the International Conference on Family Planning

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Excellencies, honorable ministers, distinguished participants, colleagues and friends,

My warm greetings from UNFPA to the participants of the 19th International Inter-Ministerial Conference on South-South Cooperation in Population and Development. This platform is one of the most prominent gatherings designed to strengthen the capacity of countries for the achievement of the Programme of Action of the ICPD and of the Agenda 2030 through South-South and Triangular Cooperation (SSTC). Today, on this important occasion, we are going to discuss how we can leverage SSTC to accelerate the achievement of the ICPD goals, in the face of new challenges, leading up to the 30th anniversary of the ICPD Programme of Action, a.k.a. ICPD30.

First of all, let me commend the 27 member-countries of the Partners in Population and Development (PPD) for their individual and collective leadership in advocating for the ICPD PoA within your government, in your country and in the global community over more than a quarter of a century since the ICPD in 1994. In that conference in Cairo, the 179 participating countries adopted a landmark agreement that for the first time

positioned sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights, gender equality and women empowerment at the center of population and development programmes.

Since then, the world has seen remarkable progress: there has been a 25% increase in the global contraceptive prevalence rate around the world, adolescent births have declined steeply, and the global maternal mortality ratio has fallen. But progress remains slow and uneven in some places. For example, globally, around 257 million women who want to avoid pregnancy are not using safe, modern methods of contraception. Among them, 172 million are using no method at all. The socio-economic impacts of COVID19, climate change, global economic instability and rising geopolitical tensions are reversing hard-won gains across the population and development landscape. The increasing polarization of views around core ICPD issues is undermining the legitimacy of SRHR, and making it increasingly difficult to reach consensus.

Excellencies,

As we collectively prepare for ICPD30, this is a moment that calls for action and solidarity. We should come together to find solutions to the challenges we face - from inequality, climate change, conflicts, the COVID-19 pandemic, to the roll-back of progress on women's rights in many countries. We can address these challenges together, mobilizing the power of SSTC in generating solidarity among the countries of the Global South. We are envisioning a process that will culminate with a global review of the implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action in the UN Commission on Population and Development and a special commemorative session in the General Assembly in 2024. And in the process leading up to ICPD30, we need to collect the voices from the Global South that reaffirm the criticality of the ICPD agenda for the future. UNFPA's strong and long-standing partnership with PPD is a powerful tool that will counter pushback and deliver on the promise of the ICPD. With pandemics and other crises being addressed by governments, we need to ensure that the ICPD goals are not being sidelined.

Excellencies,

It was during that same Cairo conference in 1994 that gave birth to the Partners in Population and Development. PPD dedicates itself to the proposition of leveraging SSTC for the achievement of ICPD PoA. I commend you for utilizing SSTC as an effective instrument in raising the capacity of your country's institutions and in supporting other countries' institutions in reaching their goals, including their goals in family planning.

As SSTC is indeed a growing movement among nations, it continues to grow on all fronts. At the United Nations, the Secretary General led an initiative that produced a systemwide SSTC strategy that aims to harmonize the UN practices and introduced SSTC interventions as a critical component in the country-led UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks (UNSDCF).

At UNFPA, we have made a number of key steps in promoting SSTC, one of them is that the UNFPA Strategic Plan 2022-2025 has deployed SSTC as one of the accelerators for achieving the three zeroes by 2030- **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 mutilation.**

Our persistent efforts to utilize SSTC for development are captured concisely through this African proverb, "If you want to go quickly, go alone. If you want to go far, go together." In our dealings within the community of nations, we need to form an expanding and mutually supportive system. This mutuality principle of SSTC reminds me of yet another proverb in my native Guinea, "A good deed is something one returns." This SSTC principle inspired me in my work when I was the Minister of Cooperation in the Republic of Guinea and continues to inspire me as I oversee SSTC in UNFPA.

We count on your continued commitment to leverage SSTC for creating a momentum of support leading to ICPD30. PPD and its member-countries have an invaluable role to

play leading to ICPD30 - from supporting national consultations to regional conferences. PPD and UNFPA should move forward together to drive global conversations, to reduce polarization, to mobilize stakeholders and to ignite excitement around the ICPD Agenda and its impact vis-a-vis the SDGs and the future of humanity. Alone we may not be heard, but all together we can produce a loud voice for women and girls worldwide.

Thank you.