

SPEAKING NOTES FOR HON. AMOS LUGOLOOBI AT THE

19th International Inter Ministerial Conference on South-South Cooperation in Population and Development “Realizing Nairobi Commitments in post COVID 19 era through SSTC”

14 Nov 2022, 09:00 – 12:00

The 1994 International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) held in Cairo articulated a bold vision about the relationships between population, development and individual well-being. Countries adopted a forward-looking, Programme of Action (PoA) that was remarkable in its recognition that reproductive health and rights, as well as women's empowerment and gender equality, are cornerstones of population and development programmes. The PoA continues to serve as a comprehensive guide to people-centered development progress.

Twenty five years later, at the Nairobi Summit (ICPD25) in 2019, the PoA reiterated the importance of rights and choices for all as critical for achieving sustainable development and inclusive economic growth. Uganda's country delegation led by His Excellency, the President, Yoweri Kaguta Museveni made the following commitments towards “Accelerating the Promise”

1. Promote universal access to all methods of family planning and reduce the unmet need for family planning from 28% to 10% by 2022. Re-affirm the commitments that were made at the Family Planning Summit in London (July 2017) to increase financial support towards reproductive health and family planning supplies and commodities to the last mile
2. Allocate annually at least 10% of maternal and child health resources to adolescent-friendly reproductive health services.
3. Eliminate obstacles that stand in the way of girls' empowerment including teenage pregnancy and child marriage, as well as all forms of gender-based violence. Embark on educational reforms aimed at ensuring that girls enroll and stay in school, as well as scale-up investments in technical and vocational education to create employable skills and competencies relevant to the labour market.
4. Operationalize the National Sexuality Education Policy Framework that was launched in 2018 to provide a formal national direction for

sexuality education within Uganda's schools; while upholding the positive cultural and religious values of the country

5. Ensure that different dimensions of the demographic dynamics and diversity are integrated into planning and budgeting frameworks at all levels.

What has been done?

Achieving the Programme of Action calls for a multi-sectoral approach, and as such the Commitments have been integrated in the third National Development Plan which is implemented through the Programme Based Approach.

There is an **SDG Coordination Framework and the SDG Roadmap**. Uganda also established a National Steering Committee to oversee implementation of the ICPD@25 Commitments. These forums have:

1. Provided a forum and direction to ensure responsiveness to key population and development priorities within the third National Development Plan.
2. Coordinated with the legislative bodies, relevant ministries and institutions at the national and subnational levels, development partners, civil society organizations and private sector to ensure that we mutually complement between the activities and strategies for wider-sectoral development concerning population and development.
3. Conducted policy dialogues and disseminated information related to population and development at both national and sub-national levels.
4. Provided the annual progress reports of the SDGs and implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action (ICPD-PoA).

South to south and Triangular Cooperation

The SSTC as a forum for exchange of new ideas, shared adaptable solutions, is a sure way to power solutions to some of the world's most persistent development challenges.

I am happy to report that Uganda is proudly applying SSTC principles to leverage the potential of harnessing the SDGs and the demographic dividend amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. There are increasing forged partnerships and collaborations within the region member states through the Africa Peer Review Mechanism and improved localization and

popularization of the SDGs. The youth are encouraged to innovate to harness the country potential, as well as strengthening technology and information systems in SDG Implementation.

There is progress in the health sector where there is noticeable resilience of the health systems to address and close up the gaps. The general economy has proved to be resilient to external shocks and this is reflected in the public resources mobilization and revenues, debt management, climate change, closing gender gaps in all aspects, strengthened security system as well as economic empowerment of the citizens.

The progress on SDGs is without challenges particularly on timely, quality and disaggregated data and statistics, which is critical in designing, planning and implementation of social, economic transformation programs. It's time for government to collaborate with the private sector and development partners to invest in data innovation systems that produce granular transactional data, that not only guarantees a risk mitigated business environment for the economy.

Considering that Sub-Saharan Africa is likely to face more pressing challenges for sustainable development, including social, economic, and environmental prospects, addressing the topic of population growth is still sensitive because it touches on deeply held social norms linked to cultural, religious, and gendered norms. This implies that the perspectives on population dynamics in relation to family planning and reproductive autonomy should be more acknowledged and sought at the international level. Building more champions to always speak about this sensitive topics while sharing experiences from countries that have succeeded through SSTC would be helpful.

I call on development partners and PPD to support countries from the South to collectively and coherently leverage technological advancement and support countries to document lessons and best practices widely. Population dynamics including harnessing the demographic dividend should be given more weight.