



WORLD POPULATION DAY 2026 MESSAGE

By

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Theme: "Investing in People, Strengthening South-South and Triangular Cooperation, and Mobilizing Innovative Financing for Sustainable Development"

Your Excellency, the Vice President of the Republic of The Gambia;
Your Excellencies, Honourable Ministers of Health and Distinguished Members of the Board and Executive Committee of Partners in Population and Development;
Your Excellencies, Honourable Ministers, Heads of Government Delegations, and Representatives of our Twenty-Eight (28) Member States;
The Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA);
Heads of United Nations Agencies, Representatives of Development Partners, Regional and International Organizations, Members of the Diplomatic Corps, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen.

It is with profound honour and a deep sense of responsibility that I address you today on the occasion of **World Population Day 2026**, on behalf of **Partners in Population and Development (PPD)**, the world's premier intergovernmental organization dedicated to advancing **South-South and Triangular Cooperation** in population, sexual and reproductive health, and sustainable development.

Today, **PPD's twenty-eight (28) Member States collectively account for more than sixty percent (60%) of the world's population.** More than three out of every five people on earth live within our Member States. This extraordinary demographic footprint places PPD at the very centre of global efforts to promote human development, improve health outcomes, advance gender equality, and accelerate the achievement of the **2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.** The decisions taken by our Member States have profound implications not only

for our own citizens but also for the future prosperity, peace, and sustainability of our shared world.

On this important occasion, I extend my warmest greetings and sincere appreciation to the Governments and peoples of our Member States, our distinguished Board and Executive Committee, our valued development partners, the United Nations system, regional organizations, civil society, academia, the private sector, and all stakeholders whose unwavering commitment continues to advance the ideals of the **International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD)** and the Sustainable Development Goals.

I pay special tribute to the distinguished Members of the **PPD Board and Executive Committee**, composed principally of **Honourable Ministers of Health** from our Member States, together with **His Excellency the Vice President of the Republic of The Gambia**, whose visionary leadership, political commitment, and strategic guidance continue to strengthen PPD as the leading global platform for South-South and Triangular Cooperation in population and development.

Population: The Foundation of Sustainable Development

The world today is home to more than **8.2 billion people**, with nearly **1.9 billion young people between the ages of 10 and 24**, representing the largest generation of youth in human history. At the same time, many countries are experiencing rapid urbanization, declining fertility, ageing populations, increased migration, widening inequalities, humanitarian crises, and the growing impacts of climate change.

These demographic transitions present both unprecedented opportunities and significant challenges. Population is not merely about numbers. Population is about people—their health, education, dignity, productivity, aspirations, and opportunities. Human capital remains the greatest wealth of every nation.

Collectively, **PPD's twenty-eight Member States represent more than sixty percent of humanity**. This extraordinary demographic strength gives our Organization not only considerable global influence but also a profound responsibility to shape international policy dialogue on population, health, gender equality, youth empowerment, and sustainable development. Our collective actions will significantly influence the successful implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and the future wellbeing of billions of people.

Thirty Years After Cairo: Reaffirming the ICPD Vision

More than three decades after the landmark International Conference on Population and Development held in Cairo, the Programme of Action remains one of the most transformative global development frameworks ever adopted.

The ICPD fundamentally changed global thinking by recognizing that sustainable development cannot be achieved without placing people particularly women, girls, adolescents, and young people at the centre of development.

Today, those principles remain as relevant as ever.

Universal access to quality sexual and reproductive health services, voluntary family planning, safe motherhood, adolescent health, gender equality, and the protection of reproductive rights

are not merely health interventions; they are investments in human dignity, economic growth, social justice, and sustainable development.

South-South and Triangular Cooperation: The PPD Advantage

Since its establishment, Partners in Population and Development has remained the world's foremost intergovernmental platform promoting **South-South and Triangular Cooperation** in sexual and reproductive health, population, and sustainable development.

Our Member States possess an unparalleled wealth of experience, innovation, technical expertise, and practical solutions developed under conditions similar to those faced across the Global South.

The diversity of our membership spanning Asia, Africa, Latin America, and the Middle East provides a unique platform for exchanging knowledge, technologies, innovations, policy experiences, and best practices. Through South-South Cooperation, countries learn directly from one another, sharing successful health policies, digital innovations, reproductive health programmes, institutional reforms, and community-based solutions.

Through Triangular Cooperation, these efforts are further strengthened by strategic partnerships with developed countries, United Nations agencies, multilateral development banks, philanthropic foundations, regional organizations, and the private sector.

PPD remains fully committed to expanding these partnerships to accelerate progress towards universal access to sexual and reproductive health and rights and to leave no one behind.

Financing Population and Development: A Global Imperative

As we celebrate World Population Day, we must also confront an undeniable reality. The greatest challenge facing the international community today is not the absence of knowledge or effective interventions. It is the widening gap between our collective ambitions and the financial resources required to achieve them.

The United Nations estimates that developing countries now face an **annual financing gap of approximately US\$4 trillion** to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. This gap has widened considerably as a result of global economic uncertainty, rising debt burdens, climate change, geopolitical tensions, humanitarian emergencies, and declining levels of Official Development Assistance. These pressures have significantly constrained investments in health, education, social protection, and population programmes.

The implications for sexual and reproductive health are particularly concerning. Every day, nearly **800 women lose their lives from preventable causes related to pregnancy and childbirth**. Millions of women continue to experience an unmet need for modern contraception, while millions of adolescents lack access to comprehensive sexuality education and quality reproductive health services. These preventable losses continue to undermine economic development, social progress, and gender equality.

Yet the evidence remains unequivocal.

Investments in sexual and reproductive health are among the highest-return investments that governments can make. Every investment in maternal health, family planning, adolescent health, and reproductive rights contributes directly to improved educational outcomes, increased labour productivity, poverty reduction, healthier families, stronger economies, and

greater national resilience. Population and development are therefore not competing priorities, they are mutually reinforcing investments.

Innovative Financing for Sustainable Development

Traditional development assistance alone will no longer be sufficient to bridge the financing gap. We must embrace a new generation of innovative financing mechanisms capable of mobilizing significantly greater resources for sustainable development.

PPD therefore calls upon governments, international financial institutions, multilateral development banks, sovereign wealth funds, philanthropic organizations, pension funds, private investors, and development partners to strengthen investments through:

- Blended finance;
- Impact investing;
- Social and Development Impact Bonds;
- Results-Based Financing;
- Climate and Health Financing;
- Public-Private Partnerships;
- Domestic Resource Mobilization;
- Innovative Health Taxes;
- Diaspora Investment Instruments; and
- Digital Financing Platforms.

Such innovative financing mechanisms should complement not replace traditional development assistance and should prioritize country ownership, equity, accountability, and measurable development impact. For our Member States, investing in population and reproductive health is not merely a social obligation; it is one of the most strategic investments that can be made in human capital, economic transformation, and sustainable prosperity.

Population, Climate Change and Human Security

Climate change has emerged as one of the defining challenges of our generation. Extreme weather events, droughts, floods, food insecurity, biodiversity loss, environmental degradation, and climate-induced displacement disproportionately affect women, children, and vulnerable populations.

Population policies must therefore be integrated into broader national strategies on climate resilience, disaster risk reduction, environmental sustainability, and human security. Likewise, advances in artificial intelligence, digital health, biotechnology, telemedicine, and data science present unprecedented opportunities to strengthen health systems and improve access to quality reproductive health services. Innovation must, however, remain ethical, inclusive, equitable, and people-centred. Technology should narrow inequalities not widen them.

A Call for Renewed Global Solidarity

Today's challenges transcend national borders. No country can address population dynamics, climate change, pandemics, migration, or sustainable development in isolation.

The future demands stronger multilateralism, deeper South-South and Triangular Cooperation, renewed international solidarity, and genuine partnerships built on mutual respect and shared responsibility.

As an intergovernmental organization whose **twenty-eight Member States collectively represent more than sixty percent of the world's population**, PPD is uniquely positioned to serve as a global catalyst for knowledge exchange, policy innovation, technical cooperation, and collective action. Together, we possess the demographic strength, political leadership, technical expertise, and institutional experience to influence the future trajectory of global development.

Conclusion

On this World Population Day, I call upon our Member States, the United Nations system, development partners, international financial institutions, civil society, academia, youth organizations, women's groups, and the private sector to renew our collective commitment to the ICPD Programme of Action and the Sustainable Development Goals.

Let us invest in women.

Let us invest in young people.

Let us invest in universal access to sexual and reproductive health.

Let us invest in education.

Let us invest in climate resilience.

Let us invest in innovation.

Above all, **let us invest in people**, for people are the true wealth of nations.

As an Organization representing **more than sixty percent of the world's population**, PPD stands ready to work with all partners to transform demographic change into a demographic dividend, strengthen South-South and Triangular Cooperation, mobilize innovative financing, and accelerate progress towards a healthier, more equitable, more prosperous, and more sustainable world.

On behalf of the Board, the Executive Committee, and the Secretariat of Partners in Population and Development, I wish all our Member States and partners a meaningful and inspiring **World Population Day 2026**.

Together, let us reaffirm our shared commitment to ensuring that **every woman survives pregnancy and childbirth, every young person realizes their full potential, every family can make informed reproductive choices, and every individual enjoys the opportunity to live a healthy, productive, and dignified life.**

Happy World Population Day 2026.

Thank you.