NETWORK OF AFRICAN PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEES OF HEALTH (NEAPACOH) MEETING
October 28 - 29, 2020

Country : The Gambia
Presented By: Hon Amadou Camara
2019 Commitments

1. The National Assembly Select Committee on Health, Women, and Children, renewed its commitment to collaborate with the health sector and partners on the campaign to enlighten and educate our community on family planning and reproductive health in The Gambia.

2. Engage the National Population Commission Secretariat and UNFPA The Gambia Office, to build the capacity of National Assembly Members on population, gender and reproductive health.

3. Advocate for increase budget allocation to the Ministry of Health by the National Assembly to meet the Abuja Declaration requirement.

4. Table the NEAPACOH 2019 report for consideration and adoption by the National Assembly.
2019 commitments: capacity training of MPs

- A training programme organized for National Assembly Members of the Select Committee on Health on the topic: family planning, gender and reproductive health issues is at advance level for implementation.

- The key objective is to increase the awareness and understanding of National Assembly Members on sexual and reproductive health and rights of women and the demographic dividend. This will aid them in their advocacy role and engagement in their constituents.
Other commitments by the National Assembly

- Through budget bilateral with sectors in the budget session of December 2019, the Select Committee on Health, Women and Children advocated for budget increase for the Ministry of Health which was approved by the Assembly, as an effort to meet the Abuja Declaration.

- Other efforts of the National Assembly for the year under review includes:
  - enactment for the establishment of a new Ministry on Women, Children and Social Welfare to manage issues affecting women and children welfare;
  - conduct awareness campaign at constituency level across the country on COVID-19 pandemic with support from the Ministry of Health and partners
  - constituency outreaching programmes on family planning and reproductive health
  - consideration for the enactment and amendments of Acts and Bills on women development, reproductive health and gender issues etc.
CHALLENGES

- High attrition rate of parliamentarians, where most of them are voted out at the end of their parliamentary term (5 years) and replaced with new ones which require fresh training and orientation.

- None or limited parliamentary outreaching occurs among members in the same region to share best practices apart from the annual event of NEAPACOH.

- Insufficient funding for the re-establishment and training of the Network of Parliamentarians on Population and Development at Assembly level including sexual and reproductive health and rights of women.

- Outbreak of Covid-19 pandemic has inhibited our abilities to implement some planned commitments for 2019.
SUCCESS STORIES

• The National Assembly recognises the undermentioned initiatives and programmes of the Government of The Gambia:-

  ➢ through UNFPA support Government provided more than 90% of contraceptive commodities and maternal lifesaving drugs to public health facilities across the country;

  ➢ establishment of a national toll free Gender Based Violence (GBV) Hotline (1313) to intensify government’s fight against GBV. The helpline serves as an emergency line for reporting cases of GBV and providing psychosocial support and access to safety and justice for victims;
SUCCESS STORIES (continued)

- Kaabilo Baama initiative has been selected as one of the best practices by Partners in Population and Development. The Initiative promotes male and female participation in the area of sexual and reproductive health (e.g. members are able to identify danger signs of pregnancy, increase early booking in antenatal clinics, facility based delivery etc.)

- A recent Female Genital Mutilation or Cutting (FGM/C) strategy has also been developed by the Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare to provide the needed coordination mechanism to fight FGM/C in The Gambia.
NEW COMMITMENTS FOR 2020

1. Arrange for refresher capacity building of National Assembly Members on Population, Gender and Reproductive Health in collaboration with NPCS and UNFPA.

2. That National Assembly as the sole body to appropriate resources for government machinery and other sectors, support to fulfill government’s commitments on the budgetary allocation to health including family planning services to commensurate with the Abuja declaration.

3. Table the NEAPACOH 2019 and 2020 reports respectively at the next meeting of the National Assembly in December 2020 for consideration and adoption.

4. Approve policies and programs of the Reproductive, Maternal, Neonatal, Child and Adolescent Health (RMNCAH) Unit of The Ministry of Health for the provision of Basic Emergency Maternal Obstetric and Neonatal Care (BEMONC) services in secondary public health facilities across the country.

5. The Assembly to guide and support the policies and programmes of the new Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare for the wellbeing of women and children.