



REMARKS

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MINISTER OF STATE FOR PLANNING

**MINISTRY OF FINANCE, PLANNING AND ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT**

REPUBLIC OF UGANDA

**THE 20TH INTERNATIONAL INTER-MINISTERIAL
CONFERENCE ON POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT**

ELEPHANTS HOTEL, VICTORIA FALLS, ZIMBABWE

OCTOBER 9, 2023

Your Excellency, Dr. Emmerson Dambudzo Mnangagwa, President of the Republic of Zimbabwe.

Your Excellency, Mr. Richard Moyo, Minister of State for Provincial Affairs and Devolution, Matabeleland North, Republic of Zimbabwe.

Your Excellency, Ms. Lindiwe Zulu, Minister of Social Development, South Africa, and Board Chair, Partners in Population and Development (PPD).

Ms. Lydia Zigoma, Regional Director for UNFPA, East and Southern Africa

His Excellency Edward Kallon, UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Zimbabwe

Distinguished dignitaries present, Ladies and Gentlemen

All protocol observed

I am pleased to present Uganda's progress and updates on the International Conference on Population and Development Programme of Action at the 20th International Inter-Ministerial Conference on South-South and Triangular Cooperation in Population and Development.

At the historic *Nairobi Summit on ICPD25*, the Government of Uganda made commitments to galvanize change and drive the Country's Vision for socio-transformative change geared towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Uganda's national ICPD commitments were presented by His Excellency the President of the Republic of Uganda, Yoweri Kaguta Museveni. They included:

1. Investing in Human Capital Development to drive the 3rd National Development Plan (NDP III), which focuses on **Sustainable Industrialization for Inclusive Growth, Employment, and Wealth Creation** to leave no one behind regarding reproductive, maternal, neonatal, and adolescent health issues.
2. Uganda being a young country, the Government would annually allocate 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, child marriage, and all forms of Gender-Based Violence.

4. Increase universal access to all methods of family planning and reduce unmet need for FP from 28% to 10% by 2022.
5. Operationalize the **National Sexuality Education Policy Framework** to provide a formal direction for sexuality education within Uganda's schools while upholding the country's positive cultural and religious values.

Your Excellency, the Government of Uganda underscores the importance of the Nairobi Summit on ICPD25 and that without fulfilling the ICPD25 commitments, neither Uganda's Vision 2040 nor the SDGs would be achieved. The Nairobi Summit coincided with the development of the third National Development Plan. As such, on returning from Nairobi, under the leadership of the National Planning Authority, ministries, departments and agencies ensured that the commitments were integrated in the national planning and budgeting frameworks.

The national budget now includes maternal health, adolescent, and youth health, nutrition, and education, as well as sexual and reproductive health, anchored in the Human Capital Development Programme of the third National Development Plan and also supported in partnership with various stakeholders. The Country also established a midwifery college for health workers handling maternal obstetric and gynecological interventions, enhanced the construction of health facilities, and trained village health teams to enhance access to health services at grassroots levels.

As a result, the 2022 Uganda Demographic and Health Survey results, released a month ago, has shown significant improvement in the health indicators. The maternal mortality ratio declined from 336 to 189/100,000 live births; infant mortality declined from 43 to 36 per 1,000 live births, and neonatal mortality from 27 to 22 per 1,000 live births. The declines are also attributed to improved antenatal care and delivery at health facilities, which increased from 60% to 72% and 73% to 91%, respectively.

Your Excellency, It is worth noting that the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic affected men and women differently, with women and girls being more vulnerable to the disproportionate economic, health, and social risks resulting from the pandemic, thus exacerbating existing gender inequalities, especially for the poorest girls and adolescents who face a greater risk of early and forced marriages. The uneven school re-openings created more significant disparities, leading to the permanent removal of some students from school, creating long-term negative impacts on girls' access to opportunities and resources to improve their lives and, ultimately, their educational, economic, and health outcomes. The country

continues to grapple with the high teenage pregnancy rate which has stagnated at 24% over the last two decades. From the South to South cooperation, Uganda would benefit from learning on impactful interventions that have enabled other countries to reverse the situation and ensure no young girl is left behind due to early pregnancy.

Therefore, to curb the escalating teenage pregnancies, the Government has established a policy environment with the **National Sexuality Education Framework and Adolescent Health Policy** to scale up age-appropriate sexual reproductive health information and services and support through the District Committees on adolescent health. The Government of Uganda appreciates support from Partners in Population and Development and UNFPA to replicate the Ghana Adolescent Health Services Project in Uganda. The Government is also supporting the establishment of **Parish Pregnancy Prevention Committees** at the lowest administrative structures. All aimed at keeping the teenagers in school to delay child birth.

Realizing that girls drop out of school due to menstrual hygiene challenges, the Ministry of Education and Sports instituted menstrual hygiene management in schools. To further support teenage mothers, the MoES introduced the policy for re-entry of pregnant girls into school after giving birth. The Government also strengthened and established youth-friendly corners (human resources and infrastructure), and promoted talent identification and nurturing (through the National Sports Council).

The Government has also instituted a multi-sectoral approach to youth issues and skilling opportunities for in and out of school. These initiatives have increased access to affordable credit facilities for business and agriculture, several youth initiatives through development programmes, like the Parish Development Model, strong parliamentary participation coupled with technical and financial guidance from UNFPA and linked to the Demographic Dividend Road map and development frameworks such as the ICPD PoA and the 2030 agenda.

Your Excellency, Uganda's population growth rate of 3% per annum, results from the high fertility currently at 5.2, which dropped from 5.4 in 2016. This impacts on development and presents additional pressure on the environment and natural resources. It has thus created additional demands on service delivery. Thus, the huge population, especially of young dependents who, by large, are not empowered for

productivity, is becoming a burden to the Government. With occasional adverse weather conditions, loss of wetlands and forest cover, measures towards climate change mitigation are crucial for economic advancement and harnessing the dividend in Uganda.

Your Excellency, the Country launched the Family Planning 2020 (FP2020) commitments as a framework for rights-based family planning. Building on the achievements and momentum resulting from Uganda's obligations to the FP2020 partnership, the Government of Uganda has created the FP2030 commitments. Among these are increasing the modern contraceptive prevalence rate for all women from 30.4% in 2020 to 39.6% by 2025 and reducing unmet needs from 17% in 2020 to 15% by 2025. The 2022 UDHS revealed the Modern Method Contraceptive Prevalence Rate increased from 35% in 2016 to 37% in 2022, and the unmet need decreased to 22%.

As a Government, we continue to improve the family planning policy environment by first positioning family planning as a social and economic issue through **Uganda's Vision 2020**, the **Human Capital Development pillar of the National Development Plan III**, the **Family Planning Costed Implementation Plan II**, and the **10-year Health Supply Chain Road Map** among others. We also encourage local governments to develop district family planning costed implementation plans and implement "*The I dare*" as a sustainable financing modality. We have created a conducive environment for piloting and research for family planning innovations, including introducing self-care approaches like **Sayana Press Self-injection** within the communities.

The Government of Uganda continues to allocate resources towards family planning, including procurement of contraceptives. Due to the increasing competing priorities for resources, the Uganda Government is increasingly exploring innovative financing options. The Ministry of Health has developed a **Health Insurance Bill** currently tabled in Parliament, **the Health Financing Strategy**, **the Total Market Approach** that leverages the private sector, and through the World Bank project, we are implementing the results-based financing that includes family planning.

We appreciate the contribution of development partners, especially UNFPA, USAID, and World Bank, to Uganda's family planning program. The uncertainties in donor financing for FP and the prevailing global challenges have propelled the country to adopt innovative financing strategies to sustain FP financing.

Some success stories and best practices regarding investment into family planning include increased domestic allocation and expenditure on family planning, annual needs quantification, and Uganda's commitment to participate in UNFPA's innovative sustainable financing options, including the matching fund moving away from a model of product donation to one of product subsidization.

We believe these approaches present short, medium, and long-term investment opportunities for Uganda to sustain the FP programming and make the Country more self-reliant as it progresses to a middle-income status.

As I conclude, Your Excellency, It is now time to sustain the gains and look beyond 'business as usual' to tap into opportunities to realize the commitments. Uganda recognizes that attainment of these commitments requires **South-to-South and Triangular Cooperation (SSTC)** and therefore appreciates support from Partners in Population and Development and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) for the unwavering support in the application of SSTC partnerships that have helped the country leverage from more impactful and sustainable actions at global, regional, and country levels, and have helped our Country to get on the trajectory towards harnessing the demographic dividend.

Thank you for the attention