

REPORT ON THE HIGH-LEVEL PARLIAMENTARIANS MEETING ON POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT



29-30 JANUARY 2024

JUBA, SOUTH SUDAN

**HOSTED BY THE SOUTH SUDAN PARLIAMENTARY NETWORK ON
POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT (SSNP&D) IN PARTNERSHIP WITH
AFRICAN PARLIAMENTARIANS FORUM ON POPULATION AND
DEVELOPMENT (APFPD/FPA) AND UNITED NATIONS POPULATION FUND
(UNFPA)**

**THEME: WORKING TOGETHER TO ACHIEVE THE COMMITMENT OF THE
ICPD Programme of Action**



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List of Acronyms

APFPD/FPA	African Parliamentarians Forum on Population and Development
APDA	Asian Population and Development Association
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
GBV	Gender Based Violence
ICPD	International Conference on Population Development
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MPs	Members of Parliament
NPC	National Population Council
SDGs.	Sustainable Development Goals
SRHR	Sexual Reproductive Health Rights
SSNP&D	South Sudan Parliamentary Network on Population and Development
RTNLA	Revitalized and Transitional National Legislative Assembly
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UPFFSPD	Uganda Parliamentarians Forum on Population and Development

1.0 Introduction

This constitutes the report on the High-Level Parliamentarians Meeting on Population and Development that was held on 29th and 30th January 2024 in Juba, South Sudan. It was hosted by the South Sudan Parliamentary Network for Population and Development (SSNP&D) with support from partners that included the Asian Population and Development Association (APDA) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) South Sudan office.

It was a 2-day activity having the first day as a conference meeting followed by a field visit on day 2. The event was presided over by the Rt. Hon. Lurmena Awerial Aluong, Deputy Speaker. The meeting targeted 50 members of the South Sudan National Revitalized and Transitional Legislative Assembly and selection depended on the Parliamentary committees they belong to. The meeting further attracted delegates from the African Parliamentarians Forum on Population and Development (APFPD/FPA) headed by Hon. Dr. Abdul Rashid Hassan Pelpuo, President of APFPD/FPA.

2.0 Background

Worldwide, every economy is struggling to cater for the growing population in the situation where resources have remained constant. On November 27th 2022, the world attained the 8th billionth person, the landmark of which was an opportunity to reflect on challenges that countries go through to adequately provide care to the population. A lot is required by every country to address the issue of feeding and provision of social services.

Many countries have been party to the various international instruments (communiqués, treaties and commitments) in a move to see their economies satisfy the demands of their people. The International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) has been guiding the trend in the way different Parliaments have been conducting business. Consequently, APFPD/FPA was established to provide a platform for Members of Parliament to exchange and coordinate actions and programmes in a move to popularize the support of the ICPD agenda. In addition, it was felt important to follow up and emphasize the role of parliamentarians in updating and aligning National Policies, Plans and Strategic documents to accelerate progress towards the ICPD, FP2030, and SDG commitments.

With support from different partners including APDA, UNFPA, the forum has been actively involved in a series of activities not only to build capacity of members but also to ensure that the aspiration of the ICPD agenda is domesticated by different countries in Africa. The forum has created a clear network for sharing experiences and success stories as a learning opportunity for members.

2.1 African Parliamentarians Forum on Population and Development

APFPD/FPA was established in 2012 as a regional parliamentary forum to strengthen the capacities of African Parliamentarians for the implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action and to help in meeting the commitments of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the African Union Agenda 2063.

2.2 South Sudan Parliamentary Network for Population and Development

SSNP&D is a nonpartisan Network which was formed in 2018 with the aim of advocating for population and development issues that are affecting people in South Sudan.

SSNP&D is working closely with UNFPA, and APDA and APFPD/FPA proposed to organize a high-level dialogue for parliamentarians of South Sudan as an opportunity to learn from other Countries in order to implement the best practices in Population activities.

2.3 Justification for the High-Level Parliamentarians Meeting

APFPD/FPA reaffirmed its purpose as a regional body to drive the agenda on population and development at both the National and Regional levels. Allies and strategic partners of the APFPD/FPA have confirmed their commitment to work with this continental body and lay a foundation of both ICPD Programme of Action and the SDGs in the 2030 Agenda.

The Government of South Sudan also recognizes that population centered development starts with people with Dignity and Human Rights. As legislators and policymakers implementing the ICPD25, SSNP&D therefore had to use the strong political will, national ownership and support to build partnerships to consolidate the gains made. The High-Level Parliamentarians Meeting was a platform to exchange ideas and coordinate action in for Parliamentarians to undertake different population activities and programmes in the areas they represent. It was considered imperative to hold parliamentary dialogues to reflect on the key challenges, share knowledge and experiences of different countries and chart a way forward.

During the General Assembly of APFPD/FPA that was held in Addis Ababa in June 2022, South Sudan was identified to be one of the countries requiring immediate technical support in population interventions. Being a new country, several structures needed to be in place basing on the fact that it gained its independence on 9/06/2011. The Country had also been affected by the post-war effects as people are just settling down the High-Level parliamentarians meeting was considered timely

3.0 Objectives.

1. Re-energize parliamentary action on the implementation of the ICPD PoA.
2. Provide room for sharing of experiences on population interventions in different African Countries.
3. Review activities of the SSNP&D and generate way forward for the forum.

4.0 Methodological Issues.

In partnership with APDA, APFPD/FPA and UNFPA, SSNP&D organized a 2-day event which covered a conference setting and a field tour.



APFPD/FPA Members and SSNP&D Executive members

- On 29 January 2024 a High-Level Parliamentary Meeting was held in Juba which was attended by ExCom members of APFPD/FPA, Close to 60 parliamentarians and 10 technical officers from the Revitalized Parliament of South Sudan attended. Several presentations were made in relation to the ICPD and the case stories of other countries like Kenya, Uganda and Ghana.
- Courtesy call was made to the office of the SSNP&D to appreciate their work
- On 30 January 2024 a courtesy call to the office the speaker of the Transitional National Legislative Assembly (TNLA).
- A visit was made at the John Garang Mabior Mausoleum.
- The visiting delegation interacted with the Women Parliamentary Caucus offices South Sudan.

5.0 Implementation and Findings

Familiarization meeting

A courtesy and familiarization meeting were held in Juba which was attended by the Chair SSNP&D Hon. Majur Babur Ajal, Dr. Abdul Rashid Hassan Pelpou, President of APFPD/FPA, Hon Simon Philip Lumori, Coordinator SSPFPD, Hon. Komol Miidi, MP Uganda, and Mr. Wamala Musa Buyungo, Coordinator of APFPD/FPA.

Hon. Majur Babur Ajal gave welcoming remarks and expressed his gratitude on behalf of SSPNP&D for hosting delegates in his country. He acknowledged Mr. Wamala Musa for the great work he did for the network when he in Juba was for UNFPA consultancy for parliamentarians orientation and strategic planning exercise. He pledged his total support in strengthening the relationship with the African Forum.

Hon. Dr. Abdul Rashid Pelpou was impressed by the warm reception given to him right from the airport by the South Sudan Parliamentary team. He implored the people of South Sudan to work with the Minister responsible for infrastructures in relation to issues of development of Juba town right from the airport.

Hon. Komol Joseph Midi noted the good relationship his people from Uganda have with the people of South Sudan. He informed members that he represents the community that borders South Sudan and since they are neighboring each other they share some cultural values like their languages and so this made him feel at home. He called upon parliamentarians to do what is best and can help to build their people.

6.0 High-Level Parliamentarians Meeting on Population and Development

6.1 Opening Session

The opening session was moderated by Hon. Simon Lumori Philip, who welcomed and introduced the Rt. Hon. Awaria Deputy Speaker, APFPD/FPA President from Ghana Hon. Dr. Abdul Rashid, APFPD/FPA Vice President Hon Fredric Outa, Hon. Elvis Donkoh, Hon. Komol Joseph and Mr. Wamala Musa Buyungo, Coordinator of APFPD/FPA.

6.2 Welcome Remarks by Hon. Majur Babur Ajal, Chair of SSNP&D



Hon. Majur Babur

He thanked the Guest of Honour for allowing to open the meeting and thanked all the partners and agencies in the field of population and development for the great work. He noted the contribution of APDA, UNFPA and Reproductive Health Agency of South Sudan.

He urged the visitors to feel free as South Sudan is peaceful and people should avoid the worries while visiting the country. He reported that the only challenge the Country is facing are the post-independence challenges. He noted that South Sudan has a lot of hard-to-reach areas deserving to be made priority while programming.

He reported that SSNP&D was inaugurated in 2018 to advance the ICDP agenda. The Network has been at the forefront in mobilization of members to effectively deliberate on matters of population and development. He thanked APFPD/FPA under the leadership of Hon. Dr. Abdul Rashid Pelpuo. He expressed gratitude to the African Forum who elected him to serve as Committee member on the body of commissions and he promised to continue serving diligently.

He noted that The High-Level Parliamentarians Meetings earmarked by the African Forum to check on the progress of the ICPD PoA, South Sudan was chosen to host the first one for this year. That was the reason as to why the target participants from South Sudan were Chair and Vice Chairs of Parliamentary Committees. He noted that the essence of the meeting was basically to share experiences and success stories to ensure that we can learn from one another. He encouraged members to

carefully take the key statistics. The theme for the day was **“Working Together to Achieve the Commitments of the ICPD PoA”**.

He ended by thanking APFPD/FPA secretariat headed by Mr. Wamala Musa for coordinating the exercise and APDA for their support. He encouraged members to take the real picture of South Sudan not like it is displayed in the press to create fear.

6.3 Message from Regional Coordinator Mr. Wamala Musa Buyungo

He thanked the Rt. Hon. Speaker, President of the APFPD/FPA, and parliamentarians from Africa for accepting to grace the meeting. He thanked the people of Juba for always welcoming him with pleasure. He noted that the last time he was in South Sudan, he had come as a consultant to support in the orientation of parliamentarians on population issues and also formulation of the strategic plan for the network and the activities were very successful.

He called upon the parliamentarians to embrace the messages from the meeting and deliver them to the people they represent. He encouraged MPs from South Sudan to put in practice all that preached to ensure the betterment of their people. He urged them to get involved in the UNFPA campaign with a slogan of leaving no one behind while implementing programmes.

6.4 Remarks from Dr. Abdul Rahid Hassan Pelpuo, President, APFPD/FPA



Hon. Dr. Pelpuo giving remarks

Hon. Dr. Abdul Rashid recognized the presence of the representative of Rt. Hon. Awaria, Deputy Speaker, National Revitalized and Transitional Legislative Assembly, Ministers present, Honorable Members of Parliament from various African countries, Hon. Majur Babur Ajar, Chair of SSNP&D, Members of Parliament of the National Revitalized and Transitional Legislative Assembly, and Director Reproductive Health Agency of South Sudan,

He expressed pleasure to be part of the High-Level meeting, which was aimed at addressing population and development issues. He thanked everyone for the warm welcome accorded to them

and also for the effort and support rendered in the organization of the meeting as it was a good opportunity to learn and emulate what can be implemented in various countries.



Mr. Wamala making remarks

He noted that he could not resist the opportunity of coming to South Sudan in addition to being part of this meeting, he wanted learn what South Sudan was doing with coping with newest independence in Africa. He noted that he was particularly interested in seeing how the Government structures would look like, how the Parliament was functioning and how the private sector was functioning. He reported that according to what he saw, South Sudan was on the right path to make Africa proud.

He informed members that APFPD/FPA, which he chairs was established with a key move to support members of Parliament appreciate the various population and development challenges and deliberate on ways of having improved the quality of the life.

He called upon participants to ensure that all aspirations and commitments of the ICPD Programme of Action are fully domesticated in the action plans of different legislative settings of South Sudan. He emphasized on immigration, infant mortality, birth control, family planning, the protection of women from unsafe abortion services.

He acknowledged the cordial relationship between the African forum and SSNP&D and promised continue honoring the collaboration. He showed his gratitude to Hon. Majur and team for spearheading the population agenda in the Parliament of South Sudan. He reported that in the General Assembly held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in June 2023, Hon. Majur was elected on the commission for Finance and Administration which portfolio he has served with commitment and diligence.

Members were informed that parliamentarians are still challenged with diverse public challenges manifested in poor health services, low education attainment, unemployment, poor infrastructures, poverty and hunger. The task of empowering communities for better livelihood is ahead of us all. He implored members to use

their representative and legislative role to empower our communities to access better and improved services and also to understand and appreciate their rights.

He concluded by thanking the Rt. Hon. Lurmena Awerial Aluong for honoring the event and the support he has always extended to SSNP&D. He further extended his appreciation to the development partners including APDA, UNFPA and Reproductive Health of South Sudan.

6.5 Official opening by the Rt. Lurmena Awerial Aluong, Deputy Speaker, Finance and Administration NTRLA, South Sudan



Rt. Hon. Lurmena on Official opening

Thanked Hon. Majur Babur for his abled leadership of the Network and for organizing such a big event. He noted that such fora give a big hand in the execution of parliamentary duties. He urged members to embark on the mobilization exercise to be sure that all members of the South Sudan Parliament are fully registered with the Network.

He gave apologies on behalf of the Speaker for not attending the event that she had gone to meet the Head of State. She delegated the Deputy Speaker and she was ready to back the South Sudan Parliamentary network in all activities.

He reported that before the network was established, parliamentarians did not understand population issues very well, so the forum has helped to inform and advise members on key population matters. It was to hold this event and South Sudan was blessed to host. He thanked Hon. Majur for organizing and being there for the forum always. He challenged the parliamentarians to work on the issues of high prices and food shortage as key population challenges. He noted that a healthy population is one which can feed and look after its people. He encouraged the parliamentarians to work for the health and wealthy population. He concluded by encouraging leaders to take the messages to our communities

7.0 Presentations

7.1 Experiences of APFPD/FPA on ICPD PoA by Hon. Fredrick Outa Otieno



Senator Fredrick Outa

He reported to the African forum that he was to spear head lobbying and advocacy activities on population and development. That it was a duty for all to work for strengthening capacities of African parliamentarians to engage in activities that advance population issues in Africa as well as popularizing them in their respective countries in form of domesticating the agreed upon position.

Members were informed that the main objective was to identify, promote and facilitate the formulation implementation of Population Policies and Programmes

designed to achieve sustainable development in African states as well as initiate parliamentary activities aimed at implementing the provisions of international and regional instruments. He took members through the strategic interventions of the African Forum as below:

Strategic objective 1

Enhance advocacy of legislation and enforcement of laws on population and development by creating awareness of Members of Parliament on critical population issues including Poverty, Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR), participating in the drafting of new laws and strengthening of existing ones in line with the international and regional instruments.

Strategic objective 2

Create and strengthen linkages that promote and popularize the population and development agenda by:

- Participating in international and regional events and engaging with parliamentarians.
- Collaborating with the Civil Society, Religious organizations and the Private sector in the implementation of the agenda.

Role of Parliaments

Advocacy to the Executive on the harmonization of National legislation with ratified instruments on population and development (ICPD Programme of Action, the Addis Ababa Declaration on Population and Development, MDGs and SDGs):

- Translate the Commitments from International Protocols and Government Policies into action for benefit of the Population.
- Establish mechanisms to develop, implement, monitor and evaluate laws, policies and programmes on population and development.
- Support policies and programs at all levels that enhance awareness and responses to challenges of population and development in respective countries and in the continent of Africa.
- Ensure that existing laws and policies are strengthened to be in line with international instruments.
- Abolish laws that are no longer in line with the said international instruments.
- Continue to advocate for the inclusion of all groups of people (women, girls, persons with disabilities and the aged) in the implementation of the agenda on population and development in respective countries.
- Develop laws and appropriate financial resources for the implementation of population and development activities in respective countries.
- Ensure accountability of expenditures on the activities of population and development.
- Raise Public awareness on Population issue.
- Re-enforce the issues pertaining to rights of women, girls, poverty eradication, male participation in empowerment of women, as all these affects the implementation of population and development issues in countries.

7.2 Ugandan Experience on ICPD PoA by Hon. Komol Miidi Joseph

He gave outstanding statistics of Uganda's population which is estimated to be around 45.5 million people at an annual population growth rate of 3.4% with close to 60% population being women. The main activity is farming and women account to close to 80% of agricultural produce and other sectors that generate income for the Government include tourism, health, education, banking and private investments. The country's population is dominated by the youths and teenagers.

He noted a few key concerns which were:

- As much as women are more engaged in production, the biggest share of proceeds tends to favor men.
- The challenges of the big youth population are still evident to include unemployment, low skill attainment, inadequate human, financial and investment capital, teenage pregnancies, school dropouts and child marriages.
- The biggest economic venture is agriculture but always affected by weather changes and poor agricultural practices.
- The contraceptive prevalence is still at 51% indicating that many women would want to space their children but have limited access to health care.

He cited some of the Parliamentary interventions on population and Development in Uganda.

- Enacting laws towards promoting the population agenda e.g. the National Population Council Act 2008, the Gender and Family law, the marriage Act 2016, the prohibition of Female Genital Mutilation and other harmful practices 2010.
- Other laws are in the offing that will include the health insurance, the marriage and divorce bill.
- Population issues have guided parliamentarians while examining ministerial policy statement and budget proposals.
- Uganda Parliamentarians Forum on Food Security, Population and Development (UPFFSP&D) was established in 1996.
- In a move to bridge a gap with communities, parliamentary outreaches have been conducted on the campaign against teenage pregnancies, school dropouts and child marriages. They act as ears to the ground to pick community challenges.

A Case of UPFFSP&D

The speaker of Parliament is mandated by the forum constituted to be the patron and The General Assembly is comprised of all registered members of the forum.

The forum executive is meant to oversee the performance of the secretariat. It has 9 members including the Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, Secretary General, Treasurer, Publicity secretary and 4 regional representatives (North, East, West and Central). The constitutional review is considering a slot for former MP Representatives.

The secretariat is comprised of a coordinator, policy and research officer, office administrator, volunteers and university interns are enrolled from time to time.

The forum has a constitution.

Success stories registered in Uganda

1. Majority of the members are enlightened on population issues and can freely debate on the floor of Parliament.
2. As a result of many engagements, the ministry of health budget has had an increasing trend currently at 4.5% although it's still below the 10% that was agreed in the Maputo Declaration.
3. All the budgets now submitted by the ministries are mindful of the various minority groups.
4. The Parliament of Uganda has agreed on the policy of reintegrating girls affected with teenage pregnancies back to school. This would help them achieve their dreams.
5. Many communities are enlightened and perceiving better health services as their right.
6. Participations as champions in the national and international celebrations e.g. World Population Day, World Food Day, National Safe Motherhood Day, World Aids Day among others.
7. With support from UNFPA, the forum has used the opportunity of the World Culture Days to advocate for better cultural practices e.g. Sebei, Tepeth, Kadam cultural days.
8. Holding press conferences and media talk shows on the pertinent issues.

Key Landmarks

1. In 2010, after a hard struggle and constant community engagements, a law banning FGM in Uganda was enacted.
2. In 2008, the Parliament had refused to approve the national budget until there was funding specified to cover maternal health issues.
3. In 2016, the Speaker launched the zero-hunger constituency's campaign which has been popularized by members in communities.
4. Since 2000, UNFPA through National Population Council (NPC) has been supporting most of the forum's activities.
5. In 2015, Conservation Farming Africa sponsored 10 parliamentarians and 2 staffers for a 10-day study mission on conservation farming in Zambia.

6. The forum has hosted 2 international meetings (Feb 2014 and August 2021) for Asia and African Parliamentarians on Population and Development organized by APDA.

CHALLENGES OF POPULATION INTERVENTIONS IN UGANDA

1. Attitudinal changes take a lot of time. The forum members meet a lot of resistance mainly when it comes to addressing Family Planning issues.
2. Busy schedules for parliamentarians, sessions, committees, constituency work, trips and petitions, etc. and the high turnover at the end of a parliamentary term.
3. Bad roads made it difficult to access some areas and others were impassable during the rainy season.

7.3 Experience of Ghana on ICPD PoA by Hon Donkol Elvis



Hon Donkoh making the Ghana Case

He reported that, based on the 2021 census data, Ghana's population is 31 million 35% of which are children (0-14 years), 38% young people (15-35 years) and about 4% are in the older population (65+). A higher concentration (about 60%) of young people are in urban areas.

He noted the Growth Rate: 2.33%, Birth rate: 28.55 birth/1000 population, Death rate: 6.14 deaths/1000 population, Life Expectancy: 69.37, fertility rate: 3.66 children born/women, Infant mortality rate: 32.59 deaths/1000 live births, Net Migration Rate: 0.16 migrants/1000

population, Contraceptive Prevalence rate: 27.2, Unemployment among aged 15-24: 9.1.

7.3.1 Challenges in Addressing Population Issues

- Urbanization: everyone wants to come to the city in search of jobs and that result in international migration
- Lack of use of data for planning by Government agencies (politically motivated)
- High fertility rate which is stagnant for the past 20 years

- Low use of contraceptives and family planning among citizens
- Women and youth empowerment programs not adequately funded
- Citizens thinking development is about infrastructure vs. Politicians focusing programmes.

7.3.2 Key Parliamentary Interventions

- The establishment of Population and Development Caucus with membership of 87 (largest Caucus in Ghana Parliament).
- Engage stakeholders such as National Population Council, Ghana Statistical Service, UN Agencies and other NGO's to address population issues.
- Training programs for members of Population and Development Caucus on ICPD and other population issues.
- Yearly field programs with UNFPA to engage young people to address problems that's affect them and how they think it can be solved.
- Embark on campaigns to harness our demographic dividend.

7.3.3 Key Parliamentary Interventions

- Free compulsory basic and secondary education.
- Establishment of the National Health Insurance Scheme (pay between \$2-10 a year).
- Some negative socio-cultural practices have been outlawed including the trokosi system where parents give their female child to defray their debt to a fetish priest. The Criminal Code has been amended to make the practice a criminal offense.
- The Female Mutilation Act 2007 (Act 741)
- Domestic Violence Act (732) which aims to curtail acts of domestic violence against not only women but also men and children who are disadvantaged in the society.

7.3.4 Key Parliamentary Interventions

- The establishment of National Youth Employment Agency
- Provision of free Technical and Vocational Training at the Secondary level of Education.

7.3.5 Production of Contraceptive Methods

Currently in Ghana, donors support more than 70% of our contraceptive needs. However, local production of contraceptive methods as is done globally. This should

attract national attention because it is central to promoting healthy mother, child and population.

African Governments advocating for COVID-19 and other vaccines production without a focus on contraceptives warrants that many more people survive but few might thrive as exposed to climate vulnerabilities. Therefore, all stakeholders, multilateral agencies have to support this.

7.3.6 Family Planning Integration with Immunization services

Immunization services prevent diseases of public health importance to enable citizens especially children to survive and thrive. Contraceptive methods especially in the post-partum periods prevent women from unintended and mis-timed pregnancies to enable mothers and babies survive. Immunization and family planning programmes are thus considered mutually supportive of mother and child health and service delivery and must be integrated.

7.3.7 Effective Communication strategy

Find ways to counter the threat of misinformation and disinformation on cases like covid 19 pandemic. We should strategize to address the myths, misinformation and disinformation about the role of reproductive health information and services to our individual and collective well-being in meeting the SDGs and in creating the Africa we want.

7.3.8 Call to Action

- Address the challenges of child marriage and dangers to the lives of children and their off springs.
- Improve the quality of health and education services.
- Government should focus on demand creation and innovations targeting young people and women.
- Get more young parliamentarians involved for sustainability of the programme. We all have a role to play for a better and quality population.

7.4 Plenary Discussion (Issues raised)

Hon. Zachariah Mutor raise an issue of migration of youths to go and work as laborers in other Countries and Hon. Donkoh Elvis reacted by saying that it would be very hard to stop them because they earn highly compared to what they earn home. We should only encourage them to be patriotic.

Hon. Odwal Mark emphasized that when we are dealing with population and development, we need data. What has the forum done to see that South Sudan holds a population census? The issues were promised to be raised on the floor of Parliament.



Participants in a plenary discussion

Hon. Kwolte raised on what the parliamentarians can do to protect their people from the culture of homosexuality and Hon. Donkoh advised them to enact laws against homosexuality and also make it a point to teach children that the fear of God is the beginning of Wisdom.

Hon. Majur proposed that we can move forward with the ICPD agenda as South Sudan and should come up with commitments which should be followed strictly. The focus should be on educating children because the rate of literacy is at 70% and the women are left behind and these issues should be brought in an African context.

Hon. Dr. Abdul Rashid advised the South Sudan Parliament to lobby more for infrastructural development and the first step should be on beautifying the airport and the roads from airport to town to give a good impression to the visitors who come to this country.

He further advised that South Sudan should take experiences registered in the meeting to emulate and do the same. Laws against FGM, GBV, and Teenage. PThey should use family planning in order to have to a population they can plan for (quality population). He noted the practice Uganda has come up with of re-integrating girls who gave birth while still teenagers to go back to school to give them a chance to achieve their goals in life.

Hon. Outa Fredrick noted that the issue of climate change is affecting all African countries mainly caused by emission of fumes from factories owned by investors and deforestation. Tree planting can be a way out on this problem. He gave an example of Kenya where the more trees someone plants, the more money Government gives them and this has encouraged people to plant trees.

Hon. Komol Miidi reacted on the issue of youths going to foreign Countries that Ugandan had invested a lot in youth programs (e.g. Emyoga) which give youths money at a low interest rate to improve their livelihood and Universal Free Education at Primary and Secondary levels.

7.5 Presentation of the ICPD PoA South Sudan commitments by Dr. Abraham Thubo

7.5.1 Highlights of the National commitments

In order to intensify efforts for the full effective and accelerated implementation and funding of the ICPD Programme of Action as an integral part of the Sustainable Development Agenda.

1. The Government of the Republic of South Sudan commits to fully implement the revitalized agreement on the resolution of the conflicts in the Republic of South Sudan, silence guns and bring sustainable peace as a foundation of any meaningful development.
2. It further commits to overall goal of zero preventable maternal deaths by 2030.
3. In partnership with development partners, faith-based organizations and civil society organizations train (in compliance with international standards) and deploy more 3,906 midwives to fill the gap to ensure every woman is attended to by skilled personnel by 2030.
4. Establish by 2021 an effective mechanism for maternal and pre-natal death surveillance and respond at all National State and County hospitals.

7.5.2 South Sudan commits to the overall goals of zero unmet need for Family Planning Information, Education and Services and the availability to Modern Technology

1. Achievement of 10% contraceptive prevalence rate for modern methods (MCPR) by 2020 and 30-40% by 2030.

2. By 2021, all the health facilities including hospitals (country, state and national), PHCCs, PHCUs provide family planning services and adolescent/youth friendly SRH information and services.
3. Provision of age-appropriate life skills and sexuality education in all Primary and Secondary Schools as part of the curriculum by 2025.

7.5.3 South Sudan commits to the overall goals of practices including child marriages

1. By the end of 2020, all states have declared and put in place mechanisms to end child marriages.
2. In partnership with civil society organization and women activists amplify women and girls' voices about GBV in all communication avenues.
3. Free sanitary pads are provided to all eligible girls in Primary and Secondary Schools in both rural and urban areas by 2025 in a bid to improve menstrual hygiene and ensure school retention for girls as well as tax exemption is granted to sanitary pads manufactured and/or imported into the country to make them more affordable to girls in low-income households.
4. The Women Development Fund is established by FY 2021/22 to provide resources and skills to accelerate women empowerment.

7.5.4 The Government of South Sudan commits to mobilize the required financing to finish the ICPD PoA and sustain the gain already made

- Increasing budget allocation for the health sector from the current 1.1% to at least 5% of the national budget in FY 2020/21 and 15% by 2030 in line with the Abuja Declaration. With corresponding increase in budget allocation for SRH services.
- Ensuring Local Councils allocation at least 5% of local budget for health in the FY 2020/21 budget.
- Establishing the maternal mortality reduction fund in FY 2021/22, managed under the President's office, implemented by MOH and others.
- Putting in place mechanism for efficient and transparent budget execution to ensure commensurate services are provided to the beneficiaries.

7.5.5 The Government of South Sudan commits to draw on demographic diversity to drive economic growth and achieve sustainable development

- Putting in place by end of 2020, functional youth-led mechanisms for meaningful engagement and participation of youth on issues pertaining to their lives considering that they are the majority of population in South Sudan.
- Establishing in the FY2021/2022 a Youth Enterprise Fund to build youth entrepreneurship and skills in line with Pillar 1 of the AU Roadmap on Demographic Dividend: Youth Employment and Entrepreneurship.
- Establishing incubation spaces and platforms for youth innovation and skills testing/building in the cities of Juba, Malakal and Wau by end of 2021.
- Ensuring that the new National Development Strategy (2021/22 – 2023/24) is anchored among other things on harnessing the Demographic Dividend.
- Putting in place by 2021 mechanisms for availing up-to-date data to inform decision making including conducting the National Population and Housing Census.
- Establishing a functional mechanism in the President's Office for periodic review of implementation of the regional ICPD-related frameworks particularly the commitments in the Addis Ababa Declaration on Population and Development and the AU Roadmap on Demographic Dividend as part of the SDGs implementation and monitoring.
- Achieving universal Primary and Secondary Education by 2030. The Government of South Sudan commits to uphold the right to SRH care for people affected by humanitarian crisis.
- Unimpeded access to humanitarian actors for provision of basic social services including SRH and GBV prevention and response to affected populations.
- By end of 2025, all health infrastructures in areas affected by humanitarian crisis are rehabilitated and made available for provision of health services.

7.5.6 The Government of South Sudan commits to putting in place a progressive legal and policy framework for addressing the barriers to provision of SRHR and GBV prevention and response

- Enacting, by mid-2020 the Nursing and midwifery regulation laws that will ensure improved quality of maternal health care.
- Enacting/reviewing particularly the GBV law by mid-2020 and Family Law and the Children Act by 2022.
- Passing the South Sudan Youth Development Policy and ratifying the Africa Youth Charter by mid-2020, specialized court (by 2021) to try GBV cases.

- Finalizing (by end of 2019) and implementing Sexual Reproductive Health policies (Reproductive Health Policy and Strategic Plan, Task Shifting Policy and Standard Operating Procedures) that promote increased accessibility of SRH services including to people with disabilities and males.

8.0 Closing session

8.1 Remarks from Hon. Fredrick Outa, Vice President of APFPD/FPA

He thanked members for the big turn up and the deliberations in the meeting. He reminded participants to strictly look at the unfinished business, while addressing population issues and called upon members to give priority to the issue of gender equality and women emancipation should be given a closer look mainly helping our children mostly girls to realize their dream. He noted that the world is moving ahead in improving the plight of ladies and girls. He called upon members to give them a mind while planning for their country.

He thanked South Sudan for the good environment for the workshop without any disturbances and called for more support of the Network activities and programmes.

8.2 Remarks from Hon. Dr. Abdul Rashid Hassan Pelpuo, President of APFPD/FPA

He acknowledged and appreciated the reception by the people of South Sudan right from his of time of arrival. He thanked Hon. Majur for the good leadership and always working in harmony with the different institutions. He implored members to keep supporting the activities of SSNP&D.

He reported that he learned from South Sudan mainly on how countries pick up themselves and start to move. He was impressed by the speed at which South Sudan was moving and encouraged them to keep advising the executive for good programmes. In the end we shall have a quality population. He noted that a family is a greatest opportunity for harmony and child upbringing. And we need to come up with programmes that enhance families.

He informed members that APFPD/FPA offices are based in Ghana promised to conduct a meeting in Ghana and would wish that parliamentarians from South Sudan be invited. He called upon members to lobby for more support for population programmes

8.3 Official Closing by Hon. Majur Babur Ajal

He gave remarks on behalf of the Rt. Hon Speaker of South Sudan and noted that he was happy that the aims of the meeting were met and the attendance for participants was impressive, an implication that the population issue touches us all. He noted that South Sudan is a new nation having gained independence a few years back. The issue of new information is important and as a young nation, there is need to copy experiences from different countries to develop.

He observed that interventions in population and development involves resources and knowledge. What the High-Level Meeting had achieved was to empower legislators and talk with knowledge in the deliberations. He called upon members to look for resources wherever possible to support the network programmes. He gave an example of whereby the high-level meeting was meant to attract a big population of parliamentarians but it was not possible due to resource constraints.

He promised to work tirelessly to ensure that the goals of the network are met with success. He looked forward for more collaboration with other networks under the supervision of APFPD/FPA.

9.0 Field visit of Day 2

9.1 Activity 1: Courtesy visit to the Office of the SSPNPD Secretariat

The delegation of APFPD/FPA on 30 January 2024 visited the office of SSNP&D; the delegation was warmly received by Hon. Majur Babur Ajal the Chair of SSNP&D and his Deputy Dr. Margret Joel Barnaba.

The Chair briefed the visiting delegation about the activities of the network and indicated that eight (8) states out of ten in the country are covered by the Network activities. The network is engaging members of National and State's Assemblies to pass critical bills like youth development policy, Anti-GBV bill and family law to protect women and children against harmful practices and promote gender equality.

He reported that the Network is faced with challenges that included inadequate funding since there is no budget from the Parliament and lack of capacity building for the members of network.

The President of the APFPD/FPA, Hon Dr. Abdul Rashid Hassan encouraged the Network to work hard to overcome these challenges to achieve the intended goals.

He promised for more collaboration and support to the Network to ensure that the goals are met.

9.2 Activity 2: Meeting with the Rt. Speaker of Parliament

The delegation of the APFPD/FPA headed by Hon. Dr. Abdul Rashid Hassan met with the Rt. Hon. Jemma Nunu Kumba in the meeting hall in Parliament building.



Rt. Hon Nunu Kumba in a photo moment with the APFPD/FPA Delegation

9.2.1 Remarks by Hon Major Babur, Chairperson SSPNPD

Hon. Major Babur Ajal, Chair of SSNP&D introduced members of delegation to the Rt. Hon. Speaker and members of South Sudan Parliament who attended the meeting. He reported to the delegation that South Sudan was under great leadership and they were honored to host such a great team.

9.2.2 Remarks by Senator Outa Fredrick

Vice President of APFPD/FPA Hon. Fredrick thanked the Speaker for her facilitation of the formation of the network in South Sudan. He said they should champion the programmes and should not wait for donors who will put their interest that is against our culture.

9.2.3 Remarks by the President APFPD/FPA

Hon. Dr. Abdul Rashid appreciated the leadership of Network for the great reception and was impressed with the level of development the country is undergoing. He informed the Speaker that APFPD/FPA was formed as a result of the 1994 Conference and the aim of the Forum is to address issues of population and development in Africa. The Forum is committed to have universal health care because for every country to develop, the population must be healthy.

The President urged the Speaker of TNLA to consider some support towards the Network because the Chair and Members have shown commitment and dedication. He gave an example of Ghana where there is a budget for the activities of the Population Forum to help in building capacity of the members and facilitate their representation in international conferences.

9.2.4 Remarks by the Rt. Hon. Nunu Kumba, Speaker RTNLA



Rt. Hon Nunu Kumba

The Rt. Hon. Speaker welcomed the visiting delegation to Transitional National Legislative Assembly and thanked them for considering the Parliament of South Sudan and wished them a good stay in South Sudan

The Rt. Hon. Speaker on behalf of Parliament reported that the mandate of the TNLA is implementation of the Peace agreement of 2018, and she indicated the composition of the Parliament to have parties like the SPLM, SPLM-IO, SSOA, OPP and FDs. She reiterated the main

functions of the Assembly to include oversight, legislation and Representation. The Rt. Hon. Speaker stated that the Honorable Delegates were aware of the South Sudan predicament of civil war that engulfed the country in the year 2013. Consequently, the Country has made efforts to ensure peace by coming up with the 2018 Peace

Agreement. The implementation of the Agreement has been progressive as there has been relative Peace in the country.

The Rt. Hon. Speaker brought to fore the structure of TNLA. First, TNLA of South Sudan operates bicameral legislature. Thus, there is a TNLA which has 550 Members of the Assembly. Besides, there is also the Council of State which comprises 100 members. It is important to note that the two Assemblies sometimes sit together to deliberate on issues.

The Rt. Hon. Speaker noted that TNLA is adequately represented. Thus, all the five Political Parties have representation in the Assembly. Other groups include the following: South Sudan Opposition Alliance, Formal Detainees, and among others are also represented. There are also 35 specialized committees which include Population and Development, Water and Sanitation, Young Parliamentarian Forum among others.

She noted that there are three Deputy Speakers who are in charge of Parliamentary Affairs, Finance and Members Affairs. According to her, Law on Peace has also been signed. Besides, adequate preparations have been put in place to ensure peaceful transition. Thus, the Electoral Commission, Political Parties, Council are in place. The Speaker further informed the delegates about the extended period of the roadmap of two years. In TNLA they have three Chief Whips and Whips and all the laws that related to agreement were passed by the Parliament.

With respect to the Caucus on Population and Development, the Rt. Hon. Speaker was emphatic about the important role it plays as population issues are linked to development. According to her, the Population and Development Committee should not relent on their effort to collaborative effectively with their partners in all aspect to achieve their objectives. While collaborating, the caucus should not undertake certain aspects due to their interest or culture. She noted that the bargaining power in the area of collaboration will also depend on financial power or independence.

She assured the APFPD/FPA on her unflinching support of the group and instructed the Chair of the Committee on Population and Development to start making Annual Budgets of their own so that they will be adequately resourced by the Parliament as the Speaker promise to fund the Network.

In conclusion the Rt. Hon. Speaker thanked the visiting delegation and wished them safe journey back home as she encouraged them visit to South Sudan more and more.

9.3 Activity 3: Visit to Dr. John Garang De Mabior Mausoleum

The Delegation also visited the Freedom Square in Juba, South Sudan, where the group was informed by the Chair of SSNP&D about one of the most influential founding fathers of South Sudan, Dr. John Garang de Mabior. According to him, Dr. Garang was the leader of Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) from 1983 to 2005 during the Second Sudanese Civil War. The war ended up with Comprehensive Peace Agreement which restored the Peace in Southern Sudan with an Autonomous State after six years.

Accordingly, Dr. Garang became a Vice President to Omar al Bashir's Government for only three weeks. It was unfortunate that Dr. Garang died in the Helicopter crash in 2005. Following a referendum in January 2011 with 98.8% support for independence, South Sudan state came into being.



APFPD/FPA delegates tour Dr. John Garangs Burial Site

The delegation paid tribute and respect to the Late Dr. John Garang and the delegates eventually signed the book of condolence in the Mausoleum which concluded the excursion tour.

9.4 Activity 4: visit to Women Parliamentary Caucus

The Delegation of APFPA/FPA also undertook a fact-finding mission to the Women Parliamentary Caucus of TNLA.



South Sudan Women parliamentary Coucus welcoming delegates

9.4.1 Welcome remarks by Hon. Josephin Moses Lado Chair of Women Caucus

The delegation was warmly welcomed by Hon. Josephine Moses Lado, Chair of the Caucus. She introduced the members of the caucus to the visiting delegation and explained the activities of the caucus. The Chair appreciated the delegation for their coming to South Sudan and noted that the caucus was happy to meet and interact with the APFPD/FPA members.

She stated the Women Parliamentary Caucus was established in 2006 and the main purpose was to protect women particularly the vulnerable as well as the uneducated women. She reported that the Caucus is running a daycare center to care for children under 3 years of age. This was done to support parliamentarians and staff to move along with their children while proceeding to work. The Chair of the caucus said the caucus was also tasked with educating women about issues of early child marriage and other harmful practices against women. She assured the APFPD/FPA of collaborating with them.

9.4.2 Remarks by Hon. Outa Fredrick, Vice President of APFPD/FPA

The Vice President of APFPD/FPA, thanked the Women Parliamentary Caucus for welcoming them and noted that in Kenya women are empowered and are working side by side with their counterparts.

Hon. Outa was also impressed about the daycare center and stated that in Kenya, a woman brought a baby to the Chamber that resulted in change of the leadership putting up such facility in their legislature. He reported that Kenya has achieved gender equality of 50/50. He wished the women caucus good progress in their work

9.4.3 Remarks by Hon. Dr. Pelpuo, President of APFPD/FPA

He observed that there is a whole building block dedicated as an office accommodation to the caucus and a daycare center for new mothers who had babies and little kids as a key milestone. He commended the women caucus in the South Sudan Parliament for being gender sensitive to the new mothers and this allow them to pursue their work effectively without obstruction. He called upon rest of the delegation including Ghana and Uganda to replicate so in their respective parliaments.

Hon. Dr. Abdul Rashid Pelpuo also brought to fore how women are valued in the place of government and in politics. According to him, women play a multifaceted role in all aspects of live including agricultural, health, industries among others. He reminded society to give them equal opportunity to enter into strategic decision-making bodies including politics and the governance process of the country.

He further reported that they give a lot of respect to women in Ghana as they had a female Speaker before and knew that the leadership of women is an asset to all of us. The President further mentioned that APFPD/FPA is committed to support women by advocating for change of bad cultures that affect women. He gave an example of Ghana where women in Parliament are given equal opportunity as men to compete for the seat in Parliament and they are progressing steadily. According to him allocating seats for women without going through competitive elections stifle their initiatives and confidence. There is also equal employment and educational opportunities for women in Ghana

The President of APFPD/FPA also commended the South Sudan Assembly for having the female Speaker and retaliated that Ghana had its first female Speaker in 2009.

Closing remarks by Hon. Josephine Moses Lado

She reported that the Women Parliamentary Caucus has championed the cause of women since its establishment. It has coordinated with various organizations both National and International to bring this to fruition. She noted that the Caucus is non-political, neutral and embraces all who share in its vision.

She thanked the delegation for the gesture and wished them all the best.

10.0 Key observations

1. Most of the parliamentary networks on Population and Development including that of South Sudan are lacking funds and adequate Parliamentary support for their activities. There is great need to fully integrate the network activities to those of the ongoing parliamentary business.
2. South Sudan was still faced by some infrastructural challenges making some interventions like community outreaches difficult.
3. Like in many developing countries, South Sudan still struggles with the challenges of a big youth population. This has moved along with other problems like unemployment, school dropout, teenage pregnancies and low skilling. They have instead resorted to drug abuse and gambling. This is responsible for the high crime rates in the country.
4. Many cultural beliefs are not only responsible for men having bigger families but also child marriages ruining the future of young girls.

11.0 Recommendations

The High-Level Parliamentarians meeting on population and development recommended the following:

1. Conducting benchmarking tours and exchange visits for parliamentarians as a move to appreciate what other countries are doing in order to improve on their Parliamentary role. Special focus should be on countries that have registered success stories in the ICPD agenda.
2. Special training session and sensitization meetings on population and development should be arranged from time to time for members of SSNP&D.
3. Strengthening the activities of SSNP&D by generating budget support from donors and the National Parliament.
4. Constant engagement with line Ministries and Government Agencies to generate harmony and networking in attaining the ICPD agenda.
5. Through community outreaches, engaging the Members of Parliament and community leaders to end harmful culture against mostly those affecting women and the girl child.
6. Ensuring that the Adolescent and Reproductive Health programmes attract more budget support.

GEOGRAPHICAL APPEARANCE OF SOUTH SUDAN

