

**REPORT ON THE STUDY VISIT TO UGANDA BY EXCOM  
MEMBERS OF THE AFRICAN PARLIAMENTARIANS FORUM  
ON POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT (APFPD/FPA),**



**1- 2 FEBRUARY 2024**



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## **List of acronyms**

APDA	Asian Population and Development Association
APFPD/FPA	African parliamentarians Forum on population and Development
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
FP	Family Planning
GBV	Gender Based Violence
ICPD	International Conference on population Development
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MP	Member of Parliament
NPC	National population Council
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SRHR	Sexual Reproductive Health Rights
SSPNP&D	South Sudan parliamentarians Network for Population and Development
TNLA	Transitional National Legislative Assembly
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UPFFSP&D	Uganda parliamentarians Forum on Food Security, Population and Development

## **1.0 Background**

Uganda is at a critical juncture in its stride to become a middle-income country and population dynamics present are both opportunity and a challenge for achieving sustainable economic and human development. The rapid and unmanageable population growth is a key factor standing in the way of a speedier rate of development in Uganda. For the country to set itself on the path of lasting peace and sustainable progress, there needs to be more harmony between the pace of growth in population and that of development. Getting that balance right is both complex and delicate and if left unmanaged, high population growth can thwart the efforts of supporting nation building.

With support from the agencies like the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), National population Council, Asian Population and Development Association (APDA), Reproductive Health Uganda, The Uganda parliamentarians Forum on Food Security, Population and Development (UPFFSP&D) are all working to drive the agenda on Population and Development at both the national and regional levels. The ICPD agenda are of utmost importance for African development over the coming 15 years.

Therefore, it is the role of parliamentarians in promoting these interlinked agenda and the common African position on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at national level is hence crucial for the attainment of sustainable development especially when the continent is experiencing a youth bulge – an increase in the population of the youth relative to other age groups. Benchmarking on population interventions in countries that have had progress was necessary for the ExCom Members.

### **1.1 Objective of the study visit**

The overall objective of the visit was to exchange ideas, share experiences and 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 the SDGs commitments.

### **1.2 Outcomes of the study visit**

1. Build capacities of parliamentarians on various population programmes that Uganda has adopted to move the ICPD agenda.
2. Strengthen the existing initiatives in population policies and harmonization of African legislation at parliamentary level.

3. Contribute to accelerating the onset of a beneficial demographic transition in Uganda.
4. Provide support to the office to the African Parliamentarians Forum on Population and Development (APFPD/FPA).

### **1.3 Methodology**

Uganda Parliamentarians Forum on Food, Security, Population and Development (UPFFSP&D) hosted a team of ExCom members of APFPD/FPA. The team comprised of Members of Parliament from South Sudan, Tanzania, Kenya, Ghana, Cameroon and the Representative of the Asian Population and Development Association (APDA). A series of activities were undertaken including:

- Making a courtesy call to the office of the Speaker of Parliament which is in charge of guiding parliamentary business that includes deliberations on domestication and harmonization of the aspiration of ICPD25 agenda, FP2030 among others.
- Interaction with Government agencies dealing in population activities. The agencies inform and implement government plans, policies and budget on population and development issues geared towards a population that contributes to development of the country and the ICPD agenda.
- Visit stakeholders that are involved in implementing youth and women intervention programmes on sexual and reproductive health (SRJ). These were expected to share models that Uganda has adopted in handling the needs of the mothers and young people that is targeted to achieve the desired population structure.

## **2.0 Implementation**

The following activities were undertaken by the APFPD/FPA:

### **2.1 A visit to the UNFPA Country Office**

The Chair of UPFFSP&D Hon. Akol Anthony welcomed the ExCom members and also thanked UNFPA for hosting them. As a lead agency that handles population issues in Uganda, the Chair recognized the work and commitment that has been demonstrated by UNFPA in building capacity of members of the Forum but also ensure that the aspiration of the ICPD agenda is domesticated in Uganda.

Hon. Dr. Abdul Rashid Hassan Pulpuo, President of APFPD/FPA and leader of delegation, added his voice noting that the interaction was very instrumental to the legislators who play a leading role in ensuring that Laws, Policies and Programmes align with the support that is provided by the development partners like UNFPA. Where the laws already exist, it was important to build momentum on ICPD commitments by domesticating them to the local context.

In response, Ms. Gift Malunga, UNFPA Representative, appreciated the work done by the Forum in pushing issues of population which are very important in determining the country's development. She pointed out that Uganda has been very committed to making policy yet implementation is very low. She highlighted how the Government signed a commitment with UNFPA to contribute 1% to provision of family planning commodities. However, this had not been fulfilled yet. If such issues are handled effectively, they are avenues that can be used to mitigate key indicators like high fertility rate and early pregnancies.

Mr. Kizito Elvis, Policy and Research Officer of UPFFSP&D, highlighted that through advocacy and lobbying, the forum had made remarkable achievements passing critical bills on Food Security, prohibition of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and prevention of HIV. Through budgetary analysis and reviews of government projects with a food security and population lens, these issues were brought to the attention of the Parliament and actions called for. Difficulty in drawing a line between politics and forum advocacy issues was one of the major challenges faced by the forum.

## **2.2 Discussion**

During the open discussion, it was agreed that a lot has been done between parliamentarians, UNFPA, Local Governments and Youth Forums to fulfil the ICPD agenda and one of the registered successes was the reduction of maternal mortality rate by 40%. The President of APFPD/FPA stressed the importance of showing the outcome and impact of working relations between UNFPA and the Forum by reaching the population and touching the center of the challenges. He related this to the will that Uganda put to the fight against HIV by putting it at the center of discussion hence its reduction.

The issue of food insecurity was also discussed as one of the challenges that communities are facing. Government was called upon to get involved in enforcing Laws and Policies that promote Food Security since this determines the quality of the population of the country.

It was agreed that mindset change was very crucial if issues of population and development were to be achieved. Awareness creation was very important starting from the parliamentarians, religious and cultural leaders, and the local community. This would be targeted to handle the deeply rooted religious and cultural beliefs as well as gender stereotypes in the community.

In her closing remarks, UNFPA Representative emphasized that Uganda has done well in legislation but the implementation is lacking. She noted that the Forum should continue to be vigilant and to deliberate on priority policy interventions, build and sustain the momentum for political will for SRHR within the context of the ICPD agenda.



*At the UNFPA office, ExCom members interact with the UNFPA technical officers*



### **2.3 Handover of office equipment to APFPD/FPA**

The Coordinator of the Forum welcomed delegates to Uganda APFPD/FPA office and informed them that he had established a simple APFPD/FPA Desk in Uganda to be housed for some time until the FPA Secretariat get full establishment in Ghana. He noted that despite the challenges faced, the Office is working well in coordinating the work of the Forum to fulfill its purposes. He was appreciative of the logistical support provided which would go a long way in making work easier. The Chair of UPFFSP&D also appreciated that ExCom Members for supporting the Forum and promised to continue working towards the desired goals.



*The President of APFPD/FPA receiving office equipment from Dr. Farrukh Usmonov of APDA*

While handing over the equipment, Dr. Farrukh Usmonov on behalf of APDA highlighted that the partnership between APDA and APFPD/PFA was appreciated and it was gestured by APDA to equip the desk with necessary supplies for the daily operation.

In his appreciation, the President of APFPD/FPA reaffirmed that it was agreed that the Secretariat be based in Ghana. He reminded the ExCom Members that the next delegates' conference will be held in Ghana to reflect on progress made by the Forum.



He therefore appealed for continued support from APDA. The President informed members that the French version of the APFPD/FPA constitution was completed and ready for use.

He made a symbolic handover of French copies of the Constitution to Hon. Elsie Pokossy Doumbe, MP Cameroun.



*The President of APFPD/FPA handing over the French version of the FPA Constitution to Hon. Elsie Pokossy Doumbe, MP Cameroon*

### **3.0. Courtesy call to the Rt. Hon. Speaker of the Parliament of Uganda**

Before the members met the Speaker, they were taken through Parliament explaining the history, making, procedures, and order of sitting, structure and operations of the Parliament of Uganda.

While meeting the Deputy Speaker, the Chair of UPFFSP&D introduced members of APFPD/FPA and also informed him that the visit was to exchange ideas and share experiences as legislators and generate more support for legislation and budget consideration for population activities to achieve the ICPD agenda. He noted that the Parliament is the central place where strong political will is made, national ownership and support is built and maintained in order to consolidate the gains made in National Development. He highlighted challenges and gaps in the implementation of

Legal and Policy Framework, noting that closing the two will lead to the attainment and achieving ICPD25 agenda. He therefore encouraged the Government to invest more in planning and actual budgeting to enable Africa to attain a population that matches development.



*ExCom members of APFPD/FPA after making a courtesy call to the Office of the Rt. Hon. Speaker of the Parliament of Uganda*

In his response, the Deputy Speaker welcomed the delegation to the Uganda Parliament and noted that the issue of population is very critical and its related challenges require urgent attention if development is to be achieved. He suggested that urbanization would be one of the ways to handle the increasing numbers making the people more productive in a money economy. Uganda is running programmes that empower the youth with skills that will enable them to live productive lives and as a result become a contributing population to the economy. While concluding, he acknowledged that working together as a group particularly in forums is the best way to approach such critical issues. He promised to continue working and supporting the UPFFS&D in regard to legislation on population and development.

During the parliamentary session, the ExCom members were introduced and welcomed in the VIP gallery. While presenting matters of national importance, reports were made about deaths and injuries that occurred in Buvuma and Kilak from attacks by wild animals from game parks. The parliamentarians reported that the victims needed compensation for the deaths and damages. It was evident that there

is an issue of competition for resources because of increasing population. Hon. Illukol Phillip, MP from Napak, also brought the Speaker's attention the increasing maternal mortality rate in his constituency confirming that a demonstration was yet to happen. If the morbidity and mortality levels, especially among children and women remain unacceptably high, this remains unfinished business in the ICPD agenda. Galvanized political and financial support and commitment to SRH is a requirement to handle this challenge.

#### **4.0 Interaction with Government Agencies dealing in population activities**

Uganda has several Government agencies working under different Ministries that work on programs and policies in line with population and development. The following agencies were considered for the visit:

##### **4.1 National Population Council (NPC)**

The Acting Director General of the National Population Council (NPC) welcomed members of the forum and identified the contributions and relevance of the forum to pushing issues of population and development. In his briefing, he informed the ExCom members that the Council is an agency established by an Act of Parliament and is in charge of coordinating the implementation of the National Population Policy and Programme, advocate for the integration of population matters in development plans and advise the President on population matters. He also noted that it is under way for merging with National Planning Authority (NPA). In regard to Uganda's population and development and that there are serious concerns about the terrain of growth and expansion which is influenced by socio-economic and cultural factors. He was therefore ready to share with experiences and ideas with the other members.

The Chair of UPFFSP&D noted that the forum appreciates and is committed to working with the Council. He acknowledged that the Council has been instrumental in building capacity of parliamentarians to have a common understanding of the concept of demographic dividend and their role in moving related agenda forward.



*The Acting Director General of NPC sharing the work of government population agencies*

In his highlight, President APFPD/FPA noted that the Council is the central point on population matters. It was critical to note that if population in Africa is not managed well, the continent is heading for disaster. He referred to Denmark whose population was 2.1million in 1960 and currently stands at 5.2 million yet Uganda population has increased by 40 million since 1960. This implies that Uganda's development does not match its population and hence there will be a burden on the Government in the future. A call for action was made through policy and programmes targeting population management.

Following the presentations made by the Council, it was noted that the population of Uganda has increased to 34.6 million by 2014 with a total fertility rate registered at 5.4 by 2016 one of the 3<sup>rd</sup> highest in the world. The structure of the population indicates that Uganda has one of the youngest populations, which stands at 70%. This has resulted to high dependency burden which is a threat to the realization of the demographic dividend and associated socio-economic development.

However, in an effort to attain a high quality of life for the population and social transformation, the Government has come up with several interventions through the various government population and development agencies. These include:

- 1) National Population Policy was developed in 2020 which is a population influencing Policy, an Implementation Framework and a Communication and Advocacy Strategy;
- 2) Demographic Dividend Roadmap (2018) to guide prioritization and integration of demographic dividend interventions into development plans;

- 3) Demographic Dividend Assessment in the Local Governments, Municipalities and Cities;
- 4) Constant Advocacy based events like World Population Day, Teenage Pregnancy Prevention Campaign and Family Planning Costed Implementation Plan among others.

This has all been done by the National Population Council.

### **The Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS)**

The agency was established by an Act of Parliament in 1998 and carries the mandate to Develop and Maintain an Integrated and Coherent and reliable National Statistical System (NSS). The Acting Director of the Uganda Bureau of Statistics stressed that data is very important in informing and influencing policy and hence enable legislators in decision making. She added that the issues of big data are high on the agenda working with various stakeholders including UNFPA, Academia, and Local Governments among others to formulate sound quality data that is used in planning and budgeting processes. She therefore appealed to the legislators to continue to support the agencies because the absence of reliable data creates a gap in making a follow up of trends of key indicators like infant and maternal mortality, teenage pregnancies, adoption and use of family planning services which are all geared towards achieving the ICPD agenda.

In his presentation, the Acting Principal Planner Education and Skilling, National Planning Authority noted that Uganda desires to turn its young population into a dividend for accelerated socio-economic as it draws its motivation from Asian countries which were at the same level of development in the 1960's but have since transformed into world economies. The agency is therefore working towards coordinated and harmonized planning, adopting various strategies like Vision 2040 and NDP III geared towards achieving Demographic Dividend, Fertility Reduction, Human Capital Development, Employment Creation, Governance and Accountability are the major key policy interventions to harness the Demographic Dividend.

### **4.3 Partners in Population and Development, Africa Regional Office (PPD ARO)**

This is an Inter-Governmental Office that was established at the ICPD to promote South-South Cooperation in the fields of Reproductive Health, Population and Development. Besides funding and policy advocacy, networking and strategic partnerships, accountability for implementation of commitments, sharing transfer of good practices, health, population, development commitments and protocols were



the four mission elements mentioned by the Programme officer that drive PPD ARO advocacy agenda. She also informed members that through the Network of African Parliamentary Committees of Health (NEAPACOH) meetings, PPD ARO has been able to share progress made and lessons learned on implementation of commitments, enhance accountability, political leadership and stewardship for the implementation of health-related commitments. The 2023 NEAPACOH meeting held in Kampala had delivered outputs and one of them included developing country commitments for achieving SDGs and UHC.

#### **4.4 Discussion**

From the presentations made, the following observations were made. Challenges and gaps in policy implementation were identified; with reference from statistics since 1960. The President of APFPD/FPA analyzed that Ghana had its population at 7 million now 32 million, South Sudan 2 million currently at 13.5 million and Uganda had 7 million now stands at 45 million. He noted that the population in Uganda has increased tremendously and yet the GDP is still low. He called for increased funding by the Government in implementation of population policies and programmes budget process. He strongly urged the Government to change the narrative and become output oriented that is from what needs to be done to reporting on results.

The Vice President of APFPD/FPA Hon. Fredrick Outa called upon legislators/politicians to be objective and listen to the technocrats. They need to change their mindset and align with the technocrats so that they can deliver the right message to the community. He noted the despite the presence of good laws and policies, Uganda's population is increasing at a fast rate.

Hon. Majur, Chair of the South Sudan Parliamentary Network for Population and Development (SSPNP&D) also added that population issues in Africa have been politicized. He called for increased political will where parliamentarians should make their presence felt when issues addressing the ICPD commitments are being compromised. They need to be vigilant and persuasive during the budgeting process to ensure adequate funds for addressing issues affecting people are set aside. The ICPD commitments are no exception. He also showed concern for the high population being exported.

Hon. Sebastian Kapufi, MP Tanzania, added that the rest of the world is concerned about population challenges in Africa. He reported that Tanzania's population is approaching 60 million from 10 million in 1960.



The Chair of UPFFS&D was also concerned about the gaps in producing reliable data. This clearly creates challenges in planning and budgeting processes for legislators. In response, the Acting Director General (NPC) noted that as technocrats are giving the actual information of the problem and relevant solutions hence called for the Government commitment and political will on issues of population and development like teenage pregnancies which the Government spends heavily on, lack of skills among the youth hence not making any contribution to the country's development.

He closed the meeting by thanking the delegates for the fruitful discussions and considering the agencies for such deliberations. He promised to continue working as team with the forum to overcome the challenges that were brought forward.

## **5.0 Interaction with Agencies for Youth Interventions**

Since Uganda has one of the largest young populations in the world, the Government is working with various stakeholders in population and development issues in line with youth interventions. The ExCom members visited two organizations which have been active in providing SRH services to the youth in Uganda. The visit was intended to share ideas, experiences, success stories and challenges in the field of reproductive health, population and development in the context of implementation of ICPD Programme of Action.

### **5.1 Naguru Teenage and Health Information Centre (NTHIC)**



*The working team of Naguru Teenage and Health Information Centre after holding an interactive meeting with ExCom members of APFPD/FPA*

The Executive Director of the center welcomed the members of the forum and appreciated that the center was selected to provide learning moments. A brief history of the organization was made highlighting that the motivation for the starting the center was to provide the young people with a place of their own. With 30 years in service, young people take center stage in acquiring health education, services and life skills. The center has worked with close to 30 million young people who are reached through youth-friendly corners which are not static. As a stakeholder, the center has been instrumental in contributing to policy by sharing knowledge and experiences, data as well as promotion of sexual and reproductive rights.

Life training skills model, social accountability model are some of the models that the center uses to equip the young people with knowledge and life changing skills transferred through National Student Associations and National Youth Council. Under these models, various skilling programs have been rolled out in West Nile and Arua to empower young people with tailoring, welding, and bakery among other skills for self-empowerment. In groups of 30, youth have been able to access loans as well as save money for the young mothers to care of their children and the maintaining good menstrual hygiene.

However, he informed the members that there has been a paradigm shift putting SRH at the center because of the rise in teenage pregnancies in Uganda. Working as allies and strategic partners with the UPFFSP&D, the center has been able to implement actions and initiatives in population policies and the Maputo Plan of Action on SRH. Empowering young people with information and managing the day-to-day challenges they face in life has been vital to keep them in school and reduce the dependency hence contributing to national development goals and the SDGs.

Like other African countries, Uganda is still grappling challenges of high teenage pregnancies (25%) caused by child marriages, practicing of harmful practices like FGM, high infant and maternal mortality rates which hinders the country from progressing to a middle-income country. He reported that the center had challenges of limited funding with the major donor (e.g. SIDA) pulling out may force the Centre into closure.

#### **5.1.1 Issues raised from the presentation**

From the Executive Directors' remarks, the following issues were raised:

The President of APFPD/FPA commended the Centre for the work they are doing reaching out to the youth and handling issues that are critical to the population. Whereas the Government of Uganda and Africa in general commit themselves to SRHR in National and International agreements like the ICPD and Maputo Plan of Action, implementation of these commitments at country level remains is lacking. Increased funding is crucial for the attainment of sustainable development, especially when the continent is experiencing a youth bulge – an increase in the population of the youth relative to other age groups.

The Vice President of APFPD/FPA also added his voice to the good work done by the Centre in supporting the young people. The activities and models employed by the Centre were so relevant to the cause of population and development. He recommended to incorporate issues of psycho-social support because many young people have lost hope because of socio-economic challenges like unemployment. Many have resorted to alcoholism, drug abuse and prostitution which all result to child marriages and teenage and child pregnancies as evidenced by the members when they met a 13-year-old Agnes who came to the Centre with a baby. He also raised concern about bad cultural attitudes and practices like FGM in Uganda and Kenya affecting many young girls. With the law in place, youth centered services would be very instrumental in protecting victims of such practices as well as sensitize and create awareness to communities.

Hon. Elvis Morris Donkoh, MP Ghana, was concerned about sustainability of youth centers because the same challenge was happening in his country.



*The Executive Director responding to issues that were raised from the discussion*

### **5.1.2 Responses to the issues raised**

The Executive Director responded by highlighting the need to establish shelters to provide a safe Haven for the young people who face various challenges like FGM and forced marriages.

Through social media, radio activities, community mobilization, peer interactions, the young people are able to easily access information about youth friendly services. He noted that access to information on SRH has greatly improved by using modern ICT strategies.

Increased school enrolment and retainment of both boys and girls is key in preventing teenage pregnancies. He confirmed that the Centre receives many young people who are sexually active during school holidays.

In regard to sustainability, sensitization and awareness creation is ongoing about attitude change among health care providers and the community. Youth-friendly services have been integrated into Primary Health Care (PHC).

He concluded by thanking the ExCom members and the forum for visiting the center and considering it for sharing ideas.

### **Reproductive Health Uganda (RHU)**

The Executive Director welcomed the members and they had a tour of the organization which also has a full-fledged clinic (Katego Clinic) providing SRH services. The organization had set up new communication channels like the Digital Hub, a chart board/podcast 'ASK RHU' to widen the scope of communication with the community. It consisted of a call center and studio where people call in and consult on different information and services in regard to SRH share experiences which are later put on social media.

The organization has been in service since 1997 working towards influencing policy, advocacy, information, research and capacity building. It also works closely with the UPFFS&D with information during policy formulation and budgeting processes and orient legislators on population and development issues hence appropriate lobbying during budget allocations. Over time, the organization has built strong management systems with highly qualified and competent staff. Service delivery modes include static clinics, outreaches, medical camps, franchise network and community resource persons (peer educators and Voluntary Health Teams). Besides inadequate



information and services, stigma and discrimination, high poverty rates, inadequate male involvement as well as inadequate funding were some of the barriers to achieving SRHR.



*The APFPD/FPA members meeting at Reproductive Health Uganda, one of the stakeholders offering SRH services to young people*

RHU recognizes the interlinkages between SRH and climate change hence has been at the national climate change adoption processes engaging cultural leadership of the Rwenzururu to integrate SRH/gender equality in existing climate plan for the kingdom.



*One of the peer educators working at Reproductive Health Uganda explaining to the ExCom members the various SRH services offered to young people*

### **5.2.1 Sharing testimonies**

One of the youths who has been working with the organization gave a testimony appreciating the time she has spent as an intern at the organization as a learning experience. With collective dedication to advocacy, she was able to engage in community outreaches hence acquiring the confidence and self-esteem in amplifying the voices of young people on matters regarding SRHR.

Peer educators testified that they received training on SRHR and been working to improve the lives of fellow refugees. They reported how their social status in the community improved as they acquired respect, which also came with new names. A gap in SRH services was reported in refugee communities particularly for most vulnerable like persons with disabilities. This calls for more support from the government and other stakeholders.

### **5.2.2 Discussion**

The President of APFPD/FPA sent a token of appreciation to the organization for the work done in handling population and development issues and offering services to the community. He was excited about the new initiative (digital hub) that will be useful in reaching a larger population on matters population and development.

The Vice President of APFPD/FPA also added his voice to the relevance of harnessing ICT in reaching the community particularly the youth. He noted that new communication channels like the job hub have been used in Kenya to help unemployed youth find jobs and connect with the world. He suggested that the same could be integrated in the organization.

Hon. Pemmy Majodina, MP South Africa, was impressed by the working relations and space that the organization offered to young people. She requested that the basing on the testimonies, the government and stakeholder should provide more funding to SRH in vulnerable communities like the refugees.

The Chair of UPFFS&D showed concern about challenges of sustainability of programmes. He also wanted to know if passing homosexuality bill had affected the operation of the organization.

In response to the submissions made from the discussion, the Executive Director highlighted that key indicators have improved referring to the Uganda Demographic Health Survey 2022 indicated a reduction in maternal mortality, GBV and improved



school enrolment. However, teenage pregnancy rate is still high, which was attributed to the effects of COVID-19. He added that the absence of law that directly focuses on issues of SRH has been a challenge.

The homosexuality bill affected the operations of the organization immensely where some donors withdrew funding because of lack of information about sexuality, communities were no longer receptive of issues of SRH and seeking of SRH services among people of particular sexual orientation also reduced.

The ExCom members were informed that the scale of operation for the programme that targeted sexual workers reduced when the donor (DANIDA) withdrew funding. However, the programme registered many achievements where by the lives of sex workers were uplifted and many are now engaged in sustainable and better economic activities. The issue of male involvement in SRH was found to be important in reducing teenage pregnancies and a lot of effort was directed to the same.

In his closing remarks, the President of APFPD/FPA commended the organization for pushing forward the ICPD agenda. While making a comparison of population growth and trends of Uganda, Ghana and Denmark, he noted that Uganda and Africa in general had a bull work assignment to do in regard to population. He encouraged the young people to be peer educators and representatives of forum on pushing the objectives and purpose of the forum on population and development issues. They should be leaders in fighting bad cultural practices like child marriages which lead to teenage pregnancies.

## **6.0 Press Conference**



*Members of APFPD/FPA after the press on population and development issues*

At the end of the two-day visit, the Chair of UPFFS&D was grateful for the opportunity given to Uganda to host the ExCom members to exchange ideas and discuss population and development issues pertaining Uganda, which has 75% of young population. This has caused unemployment, food insecurity and several other socio-economic challenges. During the 2-day visit, members visited agencies that handle issues of population particularly data relating to population trends and its impact on development. The organizations that focus on SHR were visited to establish what interventions have been undertaken in regard to promotion of SRHR since this largely determines population growth.

The President of APFPD/FPA highlighted that the forum and Africa in general is focused on the growing and unchecked population which is slowing the development of the continent. As members of the African Forum, it was important for them to converge, share experiences on successes made as well as contextualize the challenges as they seek solutions for the countries they represent. This is all intended to fulfilling the ICPD agenda. He acknowledged that Uganda has made strides in reducing HIV prevalence and fertility rates which is a positive indicator to the ICPD agenda. He called for immediate and specific policies and actions that focus on Uganda's changing population structure.

As one the stakeholders in pushing forward population issues, the media was called upon to bring the country to the attention of the effect of harmful cultural practices in relation to population growth and their effect on development. These practices were major contributors to teenage pregnancies which lead to high maternal and infant mortality rates in the country. The media was therefore called upon to disseminate messages that will change the mindset of the community to have smaller families they can take care of. This will help produce a quality population as well as reduce the burden on government resources.

## **7.0 The ExCom meeting**

The entire Exercise was crowned with the ExCom Meeting of the forum. Proceedings and minutes were recorded filed by the Forum Coordinator.

### **7.1 Observations**

From the 2-day visit, the observations below were made:

- Statistics provided by population agencies indicated that Uganda's rapid population growth which was estimated at 47.2 million in 2022 and growing

at 3% per annum has serious implications on gender, health, environment and development. This in turn leads to changes in social values and cultural behavior of the affected communities.

- Uganda has been vigilant in formulating population policies and framework on population and development however there is need for more actions and strategies directed towards achievement of the ICPD agenda starting from the grassroots. Support the integration of population factors in development planning at national and lower Local Government levels in accordance with the agreed framework under the National Development Plan.
- Uganda's population dynamics, however, present both opportunities and challenges for achieving sustainable economic growth and human capital development. For the country to set itself on the path of sustainable economic progress, there needs to be a match between the pace of growth in population and development otherwise if left unchecked, high population growth can frustrate development efforts. A burgeoning population of young people with no clear employment opportunities can increase the country's vulnerability to civil unrest.
- The Government of Uganda, however, recognizes the intricate and fundamental inter-relationships between population and development and therefore harnessing of the Demographic Dividend has been identified as one of the strategies for attaining the ICPD agenda. Sustainable economic growth cannot be achieved unless population issues are integrated in all development programmes.

## **7.0 Recommendations**

The following recommendations were put forward:

- Mobilize community leaders and policy makers to provide support to address population challenges using evidence-based research arguments, public dialogue to understand population dynamics, dissemination of relevant policies and laws.
- Increased availability and utilization of disaggregated data including demographic and socio-economic variables at national and sub-national levels.

- Establish face to face youth and adolescent friendly consultative processes and capacities and also provide support for mass media and technological development (T4D)-ICT networks that function at national level. As stated, this will help to inform planning interventions for the youth.
- Investment in the productive engagement of young people and their participation at all levels of development is a prerequisite and a core component of the achieving the ICPD agenda and SDGs.
- Promote skills and knowledge enhancement as well as access to employment opportunities for youth including refugees and returnees to address the barriers to the socio-economic development of young people particularly focusing on their participation in creation of skills, employment and livelihood improvement opportunities, including in urban geographical locations.
- Continued sensitization and awareness creation about the challenges of big populations to development. For the case of Uganda that has a growing young population, increased Government support for creation of Youth-Friendly Centres needs to be undertaken through existing public health facilities in order to reduce parallel youth Centre structures that have cost implications and are difficult to sustain. Youth Centre approach has also been quite successful for urban and peri-urban youth in Kampala in the Naguru Teenage Centre model.
- Increase sensitization and awareness creation about the effects of bad cultural practices at all levels. Mindset change about tradition practices like early marriages, FGM will be facilitate high maternal and infant mortality.
- Partnerships and networking; population issues have cultural, religious, ethnic and political dimensions and are cross-cutting in nature. Addressing population issues therefore, requires a multi-sectoral approach that brings together the efforts of various stakeholders to achieve common goals.

## **ANNEX I: Related Links**

1. [https://www.newvision.co.ug/category/news/mps-worried-about-the-rate-of-population-grow-NV\\_180542](https://www.newvision.co.ug/category/news/mps-worried-about-the-rate-of-population-grow-NV_180542)
2. <https://photos.app.goo.gl/sv57pM9n9UuyeEb3A>
3. <https://photos.app.goo.gl/FA4WHgbFEHXDTfM16>
4. <https://photos.app.goo.gl/waEdMkxJ18kVdxko9>



## 8.0 Pictorials









