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ICPD25
International Conference on
Population and Development

Quarterly Newsletter

THE GAMBIA



April – June 2019

In this issue...

- 
- The Gambia launches its Programme of Action on Youth
 - Midwives – Defenders of Human Rights
 - The Country Office Supports Training of Women in Leadership and Peacebuilding
 - Women in Peacebuilding Network Committees Trained on Early Warning, Conflict Prevention and Mitigation

and more...

Gambian Young People Participate in 2nd Pan-African Youth Forum in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

UNFPA The Gambia supported the participation of two young people from The Gambia, Ms. Isatou Jallow and Mr. Andrew Gibba of AfriYAN The Gambia, in the 2nd Pan African Youth Forum from 24 to 27 April, 2019 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, organised by the African Union Commission. The forum, brought together over 300 young people from across Africa and the diaspora to witness the launch and contribute to the development of the Africa Youth Unite for Action initiative of the Chairperson.



The forum consisted of five main segments (The 5 Cs):

1. Capacity building: An online pre-forum engagement of participants aimed at sharing relevant information and introducing them to key concepts and initiatives that would be relevant for the Forum.
2. Congress: This took place on the first day of the Forum under the leadership of the AU Youth Envoy and was aimed at youth mobilisation towards action.
3. Co-Creation: This was an opportunity for participants to discuss the various aspects of the Chairperson's initiative and suggest high-impact solutions towards reaching at least 1 million youth on education, engagement, employment and entrepreneurship.

4. City of Practice: A marketplace for young people to showcase innovative initiatives from across the continent.

5. Commitment: The AUC Chairperson led a Commitment Summit with Heads of Institutions, Private Sector etc. UNFPA was represented by Deputy Executive Director – Programme, Mr. Dereje Wordofa.



Inspirational! « We need to go beyond the conversations about our problems, and start structuring accountability mechanisms on the solutions that we are implementing to make sure we are moving forward »
#AfricanYouthWillThrive! #1MBy2021 #AfricaUnite4Youth



AfriYAN The Gambia @AfriYANGambia - Apr 27
As we narrow down to the final day of the 2nd Pan African Youth Forum, Stakeholders from different organizations and regions pledge different packages to support the @AUC_MoussaFaki #1mby2021. We were delighted to hear the pledges of @UNFPA from @JulittaOnabanjo.



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It's the 2nd Pan African Youth Forum season happening in #Ethiopia and @AfriYANGambia is ably Represented by the amazing duo @andrewgibba and @elite_sha. With these 2, "the day of token participation of young people is over"
Thanks to @UNFPATheGambia for their endless support.



AfriYAN The Gambia @AfriYANGambia - Apr 25
Greetings from Addis Ababa. Welcome to day 2 of the Pan African Youth Forum, bringing together young people all over #Africa in one platform at the African Union HQ.

Are you set?
Follow and catch up with all the latest engagement on #AfricaUnite4Youth #1MBy2021 @AUYouthProgram



These two dynamic young people who represented The Gambia, were part of the participants invited to participate in a commemorative high-level event on UNFPA@50 led by UNFPA DED-Programme

Midwives— Defenders of Human Rights

Statement by UNFPA Executive Director Dr. Natalia Kanem on International Day of the Midwife 2019



Midwives are public health heroes, ensuring that a woman can have a healthy pregnancy, safe childbirth and essential care for her newborn – among the most basic human rights.

A bridge between communities and traditional health facilities, midwives deliver vital maternal health services that are key to reducing maternal deaths and making childbirth safer in remote and underserved areas, and in humanitarian crises. Midwives not only save lives, they also empower women and couples to make informed, healthy choices.

Educating and enabling midwives is a smart, cost-effective and sustainable way to bring us closer to achieving universal access to sexual and reproductive health care services — a crucial target within the broader 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

As we celebrate the 25th anniversary of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) this year and its landmark Programme of Action, we are reminded of the paradigm shift it marked moving from national, economically driven approaches to family planning towards a focus on sexual and reproductive health and rights.

At UNFPA, we actively promote midwifery education, training and support, advocating for stronger workforce policies and the integration of midwives into

formal health systems.

In more than 120 countries, we help align midwife training curriculum to global standards, strengthen midwifery schools and build the capacity of midwifery tutors. At the same time, we work with midwife and medical associations to create an environment where midwives complement formal health services and are seen by both mothers and medical practitioners as a crucial part of maternal health care.



As a result of UNFPA-supported programmes, more than 115,000 trained and integrated midwives have been deployed to the front lines.

UNFPA, the World Health Organization, UNICEF and the International Confederation of Midwives will soon launch a new report on Strengthening Quality Midwifery Education for Universal Health Coverage 2030. The report provides compelling evidence that with investments in training, support and integration, midwifery can ensure the best health outcomes for women and their newborn children.

Today, on the International Day of the Midwife, I ask all governments, partners and citizens to join UNFPA in supporting midwives. Let us show our utmost appreciation for the tireless work they do by helping them ensure reproductive rights and choices and safeguard the health and well-being of women and babies worldwide. Midwives save lives!

Fistula is a human rights violation – end it now!

Statement by UNFPA Executive Director Dr. Natalia Kanem on International Day to End Obstetric Fistula

Shame, isolation and segregation are among the indignities faced by the hundreds of thousands of women and girls worldwide who suffer from obstetric fistula, an injury of the birth canal after prolonged and obstructed labour. The girls and women afflicted by the condition, which is preventable and largely treatable, are often plagued by chronic incontinence. As a result, they face devastating social stigma.

The majority of women and girls who suffer from fistula are poor. Their inability to receive prompt medical treatment not only deprives them of their health and dignity, but is a violation of their human rights.

UNFPA leads the Campaign to End Fistula. Since 2003, UNFPA has supported over 100,000 fistula repair surgeries, and campaign partners have supported thousands more, enabling women and girls in more than 55 countries across Africa, Asia, the Arab region and Latin America to regain hope and rebuild their lives.

One survivor, Nasiwelo Bisolomo, lost her baby at the age of 18 after a prolonged obstructed labour at home. She suffered from fistula for the next 46 years. She nearly had lost all hope when she heard of a UNFPA-supported fistula camp and travelled 300 km to undergo the life-transforming healing surgery. Now, she is helping spread the word that fistula treatment is available.

It is time for the world to heed the call made by United Nations Member States in the 2018 United Nations Resolution on Ending Fistula in which they committed to eradicating the condition within a decade. Yet, achieving this goal requires increased investments, innovations and partnerships. Failure to take action will undermine our chances of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, meeting the commitments of the International Conference on Population and Development, and ensuring no one is left behind.

No woman or girl should be deprived of her dignity, hopes and dreams. Fistula is a human rights violation – end it now!



The Gambia launches its Programme of Action on Youth

In 2017, the Gambian National Youth Council (NYC) under the Ministry of Youth and Sports (MOYS), with support from UNFPA and other partners, organised its biennial National Youth Conference and Festival (NAYCONF), bringing together approximately 2000 delegates from all youth groupings, regions and sectors of the country, to undertake a sober reflection of the challenges and opportunities youth in The Gambia encounter and how to take advantage of the prospects of youth empowerment and development, offered by the ushering in of a new democratic dispensation in the country and further inspired by the landmark regional declaration on “harnessing the demographic dividend by investing in youth” as encapsulated in the AU Road Map (2017).



As an outcome, the 2017 NAYCONF produced a set of resolutions arranged according to eight (8) thematic areas, namely: (i) Youth leadership and political participation; (ii) Youth employment and entrepreneurship; (iii) Youth in Agriculture; (iv) Curbing youth irregular migration; (v) Access to information and anti-corruption; (vi) Information and communication technologies; (vii) Peace and security; and (viii) Gender-based violence and sexual and reproductive health.

As a result, UNFPA in 2018 supported the NYC to develop and validate the Gambia Programme of Action on Youth (GPAY). Emanating from the aspirations



of Gambian youth during the 2017 (NAYCONF), the GPAY is aligned to the priorities of the Sustainable Development Goals, the African Union Roadmap on Harnessing the Demographic Dividend through Investments in Youth and the Gambia National Development Plan (2017 - 2021), among others.

Launched on 30 May 2019 with support from UNFPA, through its UN Peacebuilding Fund project on Increasing Women & Youth Participation in Decision Making & as Agents of Community Conflict Prevention Women and Youth, the GPAY will guide holistic interventions towards the realisation of the maximum potential of Gambian youth.

Speaking at the launch ceremony, the Executive Director of the National Youth Council, Mr. Lamin Darboe, highlighted that, the GPAY will guide investments into our greatest resource as a country - the youth - & ensure they are prioritised in national development efforts.

According to the UNFPA The Gambia Representative, Mr. Kunle Adeniyi, the GPAY critically draws attention to the issues affecting Gambian youth. He went on to encourage that we must all work towards creating an environment that allows youth to participate in all development sectors and contribute to national development. This he emphasised, is possible through the sustenance of a peaceful and progressive society, where youth are adequately represented and their voices and views are considered.

The Country Office Supports Training of Women in Leadership and Peacebuilding



In order to ensure that the unmet need for family planning, preventable maternal deaths and harmful practices such as Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and Child Marriages end in The Gambia, a peaceful society where every individual's voice matters, where men and women enjoy equal opportunities and where leadership and decision-making processes are open to all people, is created.

As such, as part of our UN Secretary General's Peacebuilding Fund project aimed at Increasing Women & Youth Participation in Decision Making & as Agents of Community Conflict Prevention, the West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP) The Gambia, with support from UNFPA, organised a 2-day Training of Women in Leadership & Peacebuilding, targeting about 50 women politicians and potential female political candidates identified through their parties as well as through independent calls from the Upper River Region (URR), West Coast Region (WCR) and Greater Banjul (GBA) of The Gambia, from the 29 to 30 May 2019. The training, sought to enhance their leadership capacities and engage their political potential, thus paving the way for more women to vie for political/leadership positions at community, regional and national levels.

During the official opening ceremony, the Honourable Minister for Women's Affairs, Children and Social Welfare, Mrs. Fatou Kinteh, highlighted that, "this project is a good one and with assistance will catch the attention of women to impact

change in our communities & ensure their voices are heard because they have the ability to bring peace where it is absent." According to her, "the enjoyment of all rights, including the right to sexual and reproductive health, can only be protected and fulfilled, where an atmosphere of peaceful co-existence and inclusive decision-making is present."

On his part the UNFPA The Gambia Representative, Mr. Kunle Adeniyi, stressed that, "every woman has a voice and that voice is critical. This UN Peacebuilding funded project, seeks to promote increased participation of Gambian women in peacebuilding because Gender Equality is a pathway to peace."

The National Network Coordinator of WANEP The Gambia, Salama Njie, used the opportunity to highlight that, "women are under-represented in all spheres of development and WANEP is pleased to receive the support of UNFPA through the Peacebuilding Fund project on Women and Youth, to work towards addressing this issue."

On day two of the training, the UN Peacebuilding Donor Mission currently in visiting the country, joined the training to observe proceedings, hear from the women and understand the potential impact of the training on the beneficiaries, moving forward.

Among the testimonies and words of encouragement to the other participants of the training, were the those of Honourable Ndey Secka, nominated National Assembly Member. Hon. Secka emphasised that, "It is not going to be easy. There will be obstacles. However, women's voices can build & sustain peaceful societies where all individuals are adequately represented." She thus reiterated that, women must be present in leadership at all levels to make this happen.

Following the completion of the training, the women trained will be paired with mentors who will support them throughout the duration of the project. It is expected that this will lead to:

- Increased women participation in peacebuilding for social cohesion as they are key figures in society
- Improvement on women participation in decision-making, ranging from national to regional and community levels that will promote peace, inclusiveness and national ownership
- Increased number of female aspirants for the 2021 – 2023 electoral cycle.

Women in Peacebuilding Network Committees Trained on Early Warning, Conflict Prevention and Mitigation

The role of women in peacebuilding, cannot be underestimated. In times of conflict, they are part of the most vulnerable and highly affected. During such times, their enjoyment of fundamental human rights, especially their rights to sexual and reproductive health, human dignity and security of person, are not protected and fulfilled.

As such, they must be actively engaged in the sustenance of peace, prevention of and mitigation of conflict and used as an engine to promote and preach peace within their communities, because it is only through peace that societies can progress and sustainable development is possible.

On 13 June 2019, with support from UNFPA The Gambia through our UN Peacebuilding project on Increased Women and Youth Participation in Decision Making and as Agents of Community Conflict Prevention, the Women's Bureau commenced a training of 15 representatives of the Women in Peacebuilding Network (WIPNET) Committees within the Greater Banjul Area. The training is aimed at equipping women with the requisite knowledge and skills to detect early warning signs and participate in devising conflict mitigation/prevention strategies, while safeguarding the rights of women and girls during and after conflict.

Speaking at the opening ceremony, Neneh Bojang, Assistant Director of Information, Education and Communication at the Women's Bureau, highlighted that, from the traditional conflict resolution procedures, women play a key role as mediators to promote reconciliation. These roles must be strengthened and women must be provided the platforms to actively engage in decision making, including on matters of conflict prevention and mitigation, as well as in other spheres.

A recent UN Gambia supported Conflict and Development Analysis reflected that, Gambian women's roles and participation, are key to moving the country forward and navigating difficulties, as women's social clubs, have been strong engines of peace, evidenced through their social interactions and application of localised mediation and conflict management systems.

Speaking on behalf of the UNFPA The Gambia Representative, Mr Alieu Jammeh,



Programme Analyst, Reproductive Health Commodity Security and Focal Person for the Peacebuilding Project at UNFPA, reiterated the agency's commit to support women engage in decision making and peacebuilding processes and to contribute towards conflict prevention, because, the enjoyment of their fundamental human rights, depend on the existence of a peaceful environment and the adequate representation of their views in all leadership and decision making processes.



Peer-to-Peer Dialogues and More: Pathways to Promoting Youth Participation

When young people take a definitive action to be peace builders, indeed there is hope for the attainment of world peace. On June 14 2019 Peace Ambassadors-The Gambia conducted a day-long seminar for young people of West Coast Region at the Governor's office in Brikama, targeting 50 young people. The purpose of the seminar was to educate youth and youth groups on their role in peace-building and decision-making (i.e. democratic responsibilities including leadership skills and opportunities for participation).



Similarly, on June 15 2019, Peace Ambassadors-The Gambia with support from UNFPA, conducted a day-long activity on peer-to-peer dialogue, engaging students in peace-building and decision making processes in three (3) schools - Abuko Upper Basic School, Saint Joseph's Senior Secondary School and Bakau Upper Basic School, reaching a total of 90 participants. The purpose of the engagement was to equip them with the knowledge and skills to fully participate in peace-building and decision making processes.



Some of the topics discussed during the engagement include Book Making and Consent Game, the rationale for which was to highlight the gaps that exist, leading to youth and children often left behind when it comes to consultations that will lead to decision making.

This was a participatory activity which emphasised and strengthened the understanding of the young people about the important role they can play as stakeholders in the development of the country. Making books about peace with their own ideas and thoughts is a very empowering tool to instill new values and learn new cultures, as an individual rarely forget how to read a book that they wrote themselves, thus the importance of this exercise during the engagement.





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