

The Dakar Declaration, on African Parliamentarians' Commitment to the Implementation of the African Union's 2017 Roadmap on the Demographic Dividend

The International Conference of Parliamentary Networks on Population and Development was held in Dakar, Senegal in November 2016, with one of the outcomes being the commitment by African Parliamentarians to support the implementation of the four pillars of the African Union road map; *"Harnessing the Demographic Dividend through Investments in Youth"*.

The road map factors in the need to transform the potential of Africa's large youth population into a demographic dividend, and focuses on four pillars that are critical to increasing investments in youth, driving change and positioning African countries on the path towards harnessing the demographic dividend. African parliamentarians pledged support to harnessing the demographic dividend through the ***Dakar Declaration***, which commits to:

- ✓ Develop, strengthen and implement appropriate legislation, support national policies and programs which prioritize voluntary family planning and address all barriers of access and use of contraception such as the availability of reproductive health commodities and supplies to eliminate unplanned pregnancies and reduce fertility;
- ✓ Repeal laws and policies that inhibit women's and girls' rights and empowerment; hence enact enforceable laws that protects women and support survivors against all forms of discrimination and inhumane treatment such as sexual and gender-based violence and harmful practices such as child marriage and female genital mutilation;
- ✓ Propose and advocate laws to increase budgetary allocations to adequately finance universal access to comprehensive, quality and integrated sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) services that respond to the needs of adolescents, youth, and the wellbeing of vulnerable groups including persons with disability;
- ✓ Encourage our countries to ensure the effective and full implementation of continental and global level instruments such as the Addis Ababa Declaration

on Population and Development, AU Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development by ensuring robust monitoring and accountability frameworks that are adhered to by each of our countries;

- ✓ Propose and advocate legislation to ensure provision of age-appropriate and gender-sensitive, rights-based comprehensive sexuality education for all young people, particularly adolescent girls, as a way of reducing their vulnerability to adolescent pregnancy, sexually transmitted infections and ensuring their empowerment;
- ✓ Propose and advocate laws to reform the education system and focus on innovation, skills development, science, technology and entrepreneurship;
- ✓ Propose and advocate laws that allow and encourage women to participate in the political sphere, particularly at policy and decision-making levels;
- ✓ Propose and advocate legislation related to economic reforms that would create more quality jobs and enhance innovation and productivity of the informal sector, which is the biggest employer of youth and women;
- ✓ Monitor program implementation and accountability in the use of public resources;
- ✓ Ratify and domesticate International/legal instruments and policy frameworks such as the African Youth Charter and the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa and;
- ✓ Promote and initiate partnerships among population and development networks of parliamentarians worldwide, and particularly south-south cooperation to address population and development challenges.

IPPF Africa Region works closely with African Parliamentarians through the Forum of African Parliamentarians on Population and Development (FPA), by actively engaging them in issues of population and development (including sexual reproductive health and rights) in the promotion of the development agenda in the continent. The FPA membership is drawn from all countries in the sub-Saharan Africa region.

Launched in December 2012, the aim of the FPA is to ensure parliaments assist in implementing the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD)

Agenda 2014 and Beyond, by adopting initiatives in population policies and harmonization of African legislation on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights.

In support of FPA's activities, IPPF collaborates with among other partners; UNFPA and the Japan Trust Fund (JTF).