

**Speech**

**by**

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**At**

**The opening the 2013 NEAPACOH meeting**

**Speke Resort Munyonyo, Kampala, Uganda**

**September 17, 2013**

**Our Guest of Honor, Hon. Matia Kasaija Minister of State for Finance, Planning and Economic Development, and PPD Board Member**

**Hon. Blessing Chebundo, the Chair of NEAPACOH**

**Hon. Members of Parliament from NEAPACOH member countries**

**UNFPA Representative, Uganda**

**USAID Mission Director, Uganda**

**Representatives of Development Partners**

**Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen**

On behalf of PPD ARO, I am very delighted to welcome you all to this meeting of the Network of African Parliamentary Committees of Health (NEAPACOH). I wish to thank all of you for being able to spare your precious time and come to participate in this important meeting.

I would like also to take this opportunity to express my gratitude and thanks to the Government of the Republic of Uganda for the invaluable support and assistance extended to Partners in Population and Development Africa Regional Office (PPD ARO).

### **Ladies and gentlemen**

PPD is an intergovernmental alliance of 25 developing countries, 14 of them are from Africa, established within the framework of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in Cairo in Egypt in 1994. This alliance provides the mechanism to promote partnership and cooperation between developing countries, towards achieving the ICPD goals and the Millennium Development Goals. The Secretariat is based in

Bangladesh; we have a Regional Office for Africa in Kampala, Uganda, a Program Office in China and another office in New York, USA, for our Permanent Observer to the United Nations.

The PPD member countries cover more than 57% of the global population. Through South-South Cooperation, we want to galvanize our efforts to address with greater vigor and efficiency the agreed on continental and International FP/RH frameworks including Maputo Plan of Action, Abuja Declaration, ICPD PoA, MDGs and FP2020 commitments.

The South-South cooperation entails that we have among us the skills, capabilities, successful experiences and expertise, and if we can galvanize our efforts together, we can improve the destiny of our people.

The PPD Africa Regional Office was established in Kampala, Uganda in 2007 to invigorate south-south collaboration within the continent with the recognition of the particularly strong needs for both human and financial resources to help the people of Africa get out of the current poverty trap. The Africa Regional Office links 14 African member countries and several collaborating countries which have a strong commitment to the partnership's vision **“a continent that meets its reproductive health needs, promotes the population and development agenda and thereby addresses poverty, through South-South cooperation”**. The organization works through four (4) strategic focus areas: policy and funding advocacy, accountability for SRHR commitments, networking and strategic partnerships, and transfer of good practices and innovations through South-South cooperation.

PPD ARO believes that by working together with parliamentarians as champions across countries and regions, the benefits of networking, sharing of information, experiences, innovations and best practices can be realized. That is why PPD ARO, in line with its strategic pillar of policy and funding advocacy supports interventions geared at working with and engaging policy makers including parliamentarians.

Since its establishment, PPD ARO was able to organize five regional meetings with members of parliament (2008, 2009, 2010, 2011 and 2012) under the auspice of SEAPACOH, which covered only Southern and Eastern Africa sub-regions. We are very glad that the network is now strengthened and expanded to cover the whole of Africa and has been “baptized” the Network of African Parliamentary Committees of Health (NEAPACOH) and it is gratifying to note that new countries from the continent are attending this meeting for the first time. Thanks again for responding to our invitation and honoring us by your presence today.

PPD ARO is keenly devoted to continue working with parliamentarians as parliamentarians are essential and critical actors in shaping and advancing development strategies that reflect the concerns of the people they represent. All this work we do and continue to do with parliamentarians is because of the recognition of the important role you play in shaping human destiny.

Parliament is the highest legislative and policy making body in any country and best placed to champion population issues, more especially in

legislation and creation of awareness on population and development issues including Reproductive Health and family planning as a catalyst to the attainment of the national and international commitments. Using their position they can influence government business agenda, resources and provide oversight to successful implementation of all government programmes through enhancement of transparency and accountability in the utilization of public funds and monitoring of the implementation of Government programmes and projects. By using their representational, legislative, budget appropriations and oversight roles they can ensure that countries are compliant to the commitments they make.

Let me conclude by thanking all partners for their financial and technical support in making this meeting possible. To HL, AFP, UNFPA, USAID, AWDF, AFIDEP, MSU; and most of all to the government of Uganda, our host.

I have the firm conviction, that together we will build a better future for Africa.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I thank you for your attention.