

SPEECH

BY

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SPEAKER OF PARLIAMENT OF UGANDA**

AT

THE CLOSING OF THE

**MEETING OF THE NETWORK OF AFRICAN
PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEES OF HEALTH
(NEAPACOH**

SPEKE RESORT, MUNYONYO, KAMPALA

JUNE 30, 2016

The Chairman, NEAPACOH, Hon Dr Blessing Chebundo
Hon Members of Parliament both from and outside Uganda
The Executive Director, PPD, Dr Joe Thomas
The Director General of the National Population Council for Uganda
Dr Jotham Musinguzi
Representatives of Development Partners
Distinguished Guests
Ladies and Gentlemen.

First of all, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the organizers of this meeting for inviting me to close this meeting of the Network of African Parliamentary Committees of Health (NEAPACOH).

Secondly, I wish to take this opportunity to welcome to our country our brothers and sisters who have come all the way from the different countries to attend this meeting. I want to welcome our colleague Members of Parliament who came all the way from the countries of Angola, Botswana, Burundi, Chad, Ethiopia, The Gambia, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Namibia, Nigeria, Senegal, South Sudan, Swaziland, Togo, Zambia and Zimbabwe. I also want to welcome other distinguished participants for finding time out of your busy schedules to attend this meeting.

I have been informed that this meeting is the eighth in a series of regional parliamentary meetings that are held annually under the auspices of NEAPACOH. Indeed I have had the opportunity of presiding either at the opening or closing of some of the past

NEAPACOH meetings. The organization of meetings of this magnitude, no doubt, requires determination, commitment, a lot of resources, expertise and experiences. I therefore wish to extend my sincere thanks to PPD ARO and your partners for the support that you extend to the NEAPACOH Secretariat to regularly and consistently organize these meetings.

Ladies and Gentlemen, you have now come to the end of a two days meeting of intensive deliberations, during which, I have no doubt, that knowledge was shared, new information was exchanged, programmes were debated, and lessons were learnt. I am informed that this meeting is organised, first and foremost, as a follow-up to similar meetings that have been held since 2008, but also in order for the parliamentarians to have a reflection about your roles to repositioning reproductive health and family planning in your respective countries in the context of a new global agenda that was ushered in following the end of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the birth of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in September 2015. The main objectives of this meeting, therefore, have been to provide an opportunity to review progress, share experiences and lessons learnt over the past years on the implementation of country reproductive health and family planning commitments made during the past NEAPACOH meetings. In addition, this meeting has been held in order to provide space for parliamentarians to understand the transition from the MDGs to the SDGs and what you need to do to build and sustain the momentum and political will for reproductive health and family planning within the

of context of the SDGs. These are very good objectives. I hope you accorded yourselves time for deeper discussion and that you have been able to come up with workable recommendations around these objectives. I take note of the presence of the intelligentsia, from various disciplines in this meeting, and I have no doubt in my mind that you have done a commendable job.

I have looked at the programme for the meeting and noted that topics around MDGs and SDGs were given space for presentations and discussions. I hope you are now going to leave this room with a clearer understanding of the interface between MDGs and SDGs and what your additional roles will be as we transit from MDGs to SDGs. The experiences from different countries that you have shared should give us a sense of shared and common challenges. Moreover the participation from so many countries and organisations must be interpreted by us as an invitation to join efforts in addressing the undesirable reproductive health indices that continue to plague the region. We have to build on what we have learnt here, to identify, develop and implement joint programmes to address shared problems.

Ladies and Gentlemen, we are now able to talk about the relationship between the MDGs and the successor SDGs. We are able to talk about African countries' achievements on the MDGs and the implications for SDGs. We are able to talk about how we can create stronger leadership and stewardship for implementation of SDGs in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as well as

the role of Parliamentarians in enhancing South – South collaboration. In a nut shell, we are able to talk about people, their communities and the challenges facing them in a manner that puts faces to numbers. The question I will therefore pose to my colleague Members of Parliament is “Have we as Members of Parliament asserted ourselves, and are we satisfied with the representative, legislative, budget appropriation and oversight roles we have played and will continue to play?” All of us should leave here with a better understanding of how better we can play our roles, and of the challenges at hand in our next round of tasks.

I am happy to note that you have been able to come up, with resolutions and country action points which should be binding to all of us who have participated in their framing, discussion and adoption.

Before I conclude I would like to once again welcome all of you to this beautiful resort on the shores of Lake Victoria. I want to personally thank you for finding time off your busy schedule to travel to Uganda.

I also wish to thank all those who worked together to have this meeting successful. I want to recognise the successful partnership by NPC Uganda, PPD ARO, UNFPA, AFIDEP, STEP UP, HPRO, and PACE in organising this meeting. To me, this should be the answer that always abound duplication of efforts and resources. I encourage similar partnerships to be forged in other programmes. I would like to congratulate the staff of PPD ARO and NPC Secretariat who worked hard to ensure a successful meeting.

It is my sincere hope that the organizers of this meeting have made adequate arrangements for you to have time outside Munyonyo so that you can visit and see for yourselves what Uganda can offer outside the conference facilities.

Finally, I wish everybody a safe journey home and hope to see you again, soon.