

COMMUNIQUÉ

WEST AFRICA REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH NETWORK (WARHN): STRATEGIC PLAN MEETING

24TH -27TH AUGUST 2009, VOLTA HOTEL, AKOSOMBO, GHANA

AKOSOMBO COMMUNIQUÉ ON WARHN

We, the participants from Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, The Gambia, Ghana, Nigeria and Togo, at the meeting for the development of a strategic plan for the West Africa Reproductive Health Network (WARHN), in Akosombo, Ghana, from 24th -27th August 2009

1. Reaffirm Our Commitment To:

- The provisions of the African Charter on Human and People's Rights;
- The Abuja Declaration from 17 September 2005 at which the West African Network on Reproductive Health, Population and Development was initiated/established;
- Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) 4 and 5 on Reducing Child Mortality and Improving Maternal Health and other provisions of the MDGs;
- The provisions of the Dakar/Ngor Declaration and the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and their five, ten and fifteen year reviews;
- The provisions of other reproductive health, population and development related Agreements and conventions; and
- South-South co-operation for the promotion of reproductive health, population and development

2. Appreciate

- The efforts of Partners in Population and Development (PPD) and its Africa Regional Office (PPD ARO) to vigorously promote South-South co-operation in Reproduction Health, Population and Development issues in West Africa;
- The efforts of the various countries in the West Africa Sub-Region to form an effective network to deal with reproductive health, population and development issues;
- The efforts of Development Partners to support reproductive health and population and development generally and maternal and child health programmes in particular in West Africa;
- The efforts of the Private Sector, Non-Governmental and Faith-based Organizations and Civil Society in providing services and information on reproductive health and population and development; and

- The initiative and commitment of the government of Ghana to convene the WARHN strategic plan meeting

3. Note with Concern

- That while maternal and child deaths have declined significantly in the developed countries and in some developing countries, West Africa, in particular, continues to experience high rates of maternal and child morbidity and mortality;
- The impact of some negative beliefs and practices on maternal and child health in West African countries;
- The devastating effect of conflicts on Reproductive Health generally, and on women and children, in particular; and
- That socio-economic factors, including persistent poverty and high illiteracy rates, in most West African countries, adversely affect access to quality reproductive health services

4. Do Hereby Resolve:

- To reinvigorate the Reproductive Health Network formed in September 2005 and to work towards expanding membership in the network;
- To strengthen cooperation and collaboration among WARHN Countries to ensure sharing of experience, best practices and information;
- To build the capacities of WARHN countries in advocacy;
- To promote and strengthen partnerships among various bodies, groups and institutions at national and local levels including parliamentarians, sector ministries, faith-based organizations, traditional leaders, community-based organizations and road transport associations;
- To mobilize resources from all sectors including communities to support Reproductive Health Programmes in the Sub-Region;
- To closely monitor the implementation of the WARHN Strategic Plan to facilitate the documentation and sharing of successful interventions and lessons learnt; and
- That Ghana should be the current host and coordinator of WARHN

5. We Call on:

Governments in the West Africa Sub-Region to:

- Recognize the limiting effect of poor reproductive health on development and the peculiar needs across the reproductive health lifecycle;
- Increase financial and political commitment for reproductive health programmes, especially for:
 - repositioning family planning as a priority to prevent unintended and unwanted pregnancies to reduce child and maternal mortality and morbidity;
 - strengthening reproductive health commodity security; and
 - adolescent health
- Support WARHN as a vehicle for improving reproductive health programs and networking in the sub-region;
- Facilitate the integration of reproductive health and HIV/AIDS programming, particularly for the prevention of sexually transmitted infections (STIs);
- Strengthen and use existing structures/institutions or establish new ones if necessary to closely monitor the implementation of WARHN Strategic Plan; and
- Appoint country focal points for the network

Development Partners To:

- Align assistance in harmony with beneficiary country plans and priorities;
- Support the WARHN Strategic Plan;
- Provide technical support to WARHN programmes; and
- Support Governments to monitor and evaluate WARHN Strategic Plan reproductive health programmes

Issued by the Participants of the WARHN Strategic Plan Meeting, 28 August 2009