



July 29, 2019



# KENYAN PARLIAMENTARY RETREAT

## RAISING A VOICE FOR POPULATION ISSUES IN KENYA



Consequently, the National Council for Population and Development (NCPD) with volunteers from the Kenya Women Parliamentary Association (KEWOPA), took the opportunity through the Kenya Parliamentary Network on Population and Development (PNPD) to convene both Senate and National Assembly parliamentarians with the goal of a synchronized advocacy effort. The Parliamentary retreat, attended by 10 National Assembly (Members of Parliament (MPs) and 7 Senators was a follow up of the meeting held in December 2018. It took place on 28th June 2019 in Mombasa.

Key areas of synergy and realization were drawn from the following objectives:

- Create a political platform towards the fast tracking of the NCPD Bill and its ratification in Parliament for implementation
- Obtain strong political commitment to discuss population and development matters in the country by fast tracking the implementation of the demographic dividend.
- Create political and financial momentum to advance the achievement of the Big Four Agenda and family planning as a development tool
- Offer a platform that will begin a discussion with the parliamentarians on the ICPD25 agenda for the country

### ICPD25

The upcoming International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) Nairobi Summit will mark the 25th anniversary since 179 countries adopted the Programme of Action (PoA) in Cairo, which set out to emphasize women's and girls' empowerment in matters of population and development. A significant aspect of fulfilling the PoA requires the involvement of legislators to strengthen mobilization and political commitments on implementing the goals laid out in the PoA.

The last eight years have seen a number of increasing emerging population issues. The Big 4 Agenda, a milestone nationwide agenda which presents a transformative development blueprint, necessitates policy reviews geared towards matters on population and development. As this year's host of the 25th International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), Kenya will lead the conversation beginning with its legislators, on the need to have a clear agenda on population and development.

On behalf of Dr. Ademola Olajide, UNFPA Kenya Country Representative, Ms. Charity Koronya commenced the conference by celebrating the support and recognition given to Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) issues and government legislation such as the Female Genital Mutilation Act which prohibits reproductive health and rights violations. He cited how critical these achievements were in gaining traction towards the implementation of the Big Four Agenda, Vision 2030, as well as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the ICPD PoA. Reiterating theme “*Accelerating the Promise*”, He highlighted the role of youth as “*critical thinkers, change makers and innovators*” capable of injecting new perspectives and insights. He recommended young people as crucial partners in communicating with their peers and communities; a form of agency that Kenya could tap into to reap a demographic dividend.



An overview of the role of statistics in development was provided in the course of the meeting:

- Statistics play an important role in understanding how population affects development and the interactions thereof.
- Statistics are also key to planning, creation of development plans and monitoring and evaluation of development programmes.
- They provide the evidence for decision making.
- Accurate and timely statistics facilitate the development of well-informed programmes and budgets for implementation

During the conference, passionate appeals were made to legislators to support public education so as to promote credibility of the exercise.

Legislators and the media were also called upon to actively support public campaigns around the census which is to take place on the nights of 24th and 25th August 2019 and run for seven days.





## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Lobby PNPD members to allocate additional funding for family planning (FP)
- Strengthen PNPD by having a meeting with relevant larger groups including: Health, Finance & Budgetary as well as Trade parliamentary committees
- NCPD should come up with a framework of strategic areas for PNPD/NCPD which can be shared with the relevant committee network in advance
- NCPD should share with members the required support, that is short term, medium and long term support. Parliament will support NCPD Bill to ensure it is autonomous and has powers to exercise its mandates.
- Identify more 'champions' in the senate using the few identified to support advocacy efforts
- ICPD should include themes on women and disability or RH and ensure disability is well covered
- Ensure that the census captures recreation facilities (especially in slum areas), employment status and jobs distribution as well as health status of households
- Programmes on FP should also promote male engagement. In that regard, the health department should set up male wellness centers to help men access health services at convenient times
- Develop a policy on family planning subsidy and enhance its implementation to facilitate domestic sustainability
- Create awareness among the general public and members of the parliamentary committee on the 'Assisted Reproduction' bill to enable them contribute substantially when the bill is presented in Parliament
- NCPD and UNFPA should follow up and ensure FP is included in the Universal Health Coverage (UHC) benefit package and also in the National Health Insurance Fund (NHIF) to make sure that the difficult-to-reach segments of the population also have access to services
- Employ a total market approach to ensure that FP is availed to all and especially the poor

For more information on this and other UNFPA organized side events in the lead up to the [#ICPD25](https://twitter.com/ICPD25) visit our website at [www.unfpa.org](http://www.unfpa.org) or join the conversation on our [Twitter](https://twitter.com/ICPD25) page.

Let's personalize development and [#LeaveNoOneBehind](https://twitter.com/LeaveNoOneBehind)