

# World Population Day 2018

Family Planning is a Human Right

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*Message from Lucien Kouakou,  
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Today, the International Planned Parenthood Federation Africa Region (IPPFAR) joins the world in marking the World Population Day themed Family Planning is a Human Right. This is perfectly aligned with the golden jubilee celebration of when family planning was affirmed as a human right at the International Conference on Human Rights that was held 50 years ago in Tehran, Iran.

IPPFAR takes cognizance of the right for people to choose when and if to become parents. This reverberates through our programs that are implemented by our member associations in 42 Sub-Saharan countries. And as the leading sexual and reproductive and health (SRH) service provider and a prominent voice of sexual and reproductive and health and rights (SRHR) advocacy in the region, we reach out and ensure that people especially the youth access information and services to exercise their rights.

As we inch towards our goals, we are in touch with the current trends that show Africa's population grew at a rate of 2.5 between 2010 -2015 (United Nations). This means that our continent has one of the highest rates of population growth. We also anticipate a rapid population increase over the coming years. At present, Africa has population of almost 1.5 billion and this makes up about 16% of the world's population. The projection is that more than half of global population growth between now and 2050 is expected to occur in Africa.

Africa's population is composed mainly of young people who will soon reach maturity and some will chose to have children. This goes to further enforce that our continent will be at the center stage in determining the world's

population in the near future. This is the reason why IPPFAR believes that our people and specifically the youth need to make informed decisions regarding their sexual and reproductive health.

Africa has to harness the demographic dividend to address the arising issues from population. I believe that we can do this through the existing frameworks like the Addis Ababa Declaration on Population & Development (AADPD).

Our Youth Action Movement (YAM) plays a critical role in guaranteeing that the voice of the youth is heard and their needs are captured in delivery of services across Africa. YAM works closely with our member associations in 42 countries in Sub-Saharan Africa to implement their ideas on delivering youth-friendly services. This in line with Africa's efforts in harnessing the demographic dividend.

Last year, IPPF Africa Region (IPPFAR) delivered over 100 million sexual and reproductive health (SRH) services within the African Region, which was more than 50% of the total provided by IPPF globally. Of the services provided in 2017, over 40% were delivered to the youth. This displays our commitment to upholding the rights of the youth to accessing information and services.

I acknowledge the gains we have made over the years and I appreciate the work put in by the governments in Africa. This makes me believe we can do even better. I therefore call upon the governments of ensure that the people in Africa receive the quality health care they deserve. Furthermore I urge our leaders to empower our people through the right legislation to exercise their rights.

I envision a time when all governments will ratify and implement laws and policies that are pro-choice. This is possible regardless of the tough times we are facing with the Global Gag Rule. I reiterate our commitment to backing up the governments we work with, our member associations and all our partners and encourage them to continue inspiring the African people to reach the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) we have set.

**I wish you all a happy World Population Day!**