



USE THE POWER OF YOUNG PEOPLE TO TRANSFORM LIVES AND COUNTRIES



Africa's adolescents counting on their leaders and elders to protect, mentor and empower them. They are more than ready to play their part in harnessing the Demographic Dividend if enabled and provided with the tools to fulfill their potential.

Young people who form **the bulk of Africa's** population today have a profound effect on every aspect of the continent's common future and can create a better world for us all. The effects can be overwhelmingly positive if young people are able to develop their capabilities, have access to education, health including reproductive and sexual health and find opportunities to fulfill the promise of their lives through for example decent employment.

"This can easily happen provided there is heavy investment in young people's education, health and protection of their rights" highlights the UN Under-Secretary General and UNFPA Executive Director Dr. Babatunde Osotimehin in his advocacy engagements at the ongoing ACSHR.

Guided by the theme of the ACSHR, Dr Osotimehin paid a working visit to Mallam Atta Market in Accra on Thursday 11 February 2016 to interact with a group of female adolescent head porters (Kayaye) and the market women. The Ministry of Gender, Children and Social

Protection with support from UNFPA established a Community Response Centre to address Sexual and Gender Based Violence issues and provide Reproductive Health Services to women, men and young people in the market so as to make services available within their immediate environment.

The setting up of the Community Response Centers was based on the fact that in Ghana, one of the areas with high population of women and girls are the market centers. A lot of women are engaged in business activities in addition to many people who travel from near and far to buy and sell. Consequently, market centers are places that attract a lot of human rights abuses, due to the sometimes difficult nature of interactions between different people with different cultural backgrounds. A lot of young boys and girls from rural communities also travel to the cities in search of menial jobs at such market centers working as head potters or 'Kayaye' and Truck Pushers. The aggregation of

cont. on back page

in this ISSUE

- Use the power of young people to transform lives and countries
- Sessions at the Conference....
- OAFIA launches "all in" Adolescent HIV Campaign
- Interview with Melissa
- Exhibitions in pictures

Editorial Team

Editor-in-Chief:
Nelson Muffuh

Editorial Adviser:
Doris Aglobitse

Editorial Coordinator:
Norman Cooper

Contributors:
Edina Blagooee, Kingsley Obeng-Kyereh, Joseph Amoo and Richard Dziku

Editorial

Realizing Demographic Dividend in Africa - fulfilling young people's potential

It is important to ensure the protection, training and empowerment of young people in order to safeguard their futures and transform Africa. Such investments will help harness the Demographic Dividend and contribute to the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals and the African Union's Agenda 2063.

The key to harnessing the Demographic Dividend is enabling young people – and adolescent girls in particular – to survive and thrive.

The **Demographic Dividend** - where a youthful population becomes an economically advantageous workforce with fewer dependents - by allowing people to make informed choices about when to have children and to plan how many children they have. Also ensuring that these children are educated and provided with skills and opportunities for productive employment and access to decent jobs. Doing so will free up resources for sustainable development and well-being.



Investing in adolescent girls will lead to:

The realisation of a girl's full potential

- Improved mother and child health
- More girls finishing their education
- Increased economic productivity

Taking action

Governments across Africa must also recognize that **human rights and demographics are the cornerstone of development**; know the size, sex and age structure of their population, both now and in the future and invest in empowering and protecting young people.

African countries need to use the **Demographic Dividend as a framework and strategic focus of government interventions**. In doing so they must draw a clear **link between the empowerment of young women and the provision of sexual and reproductive health and rights and sustainable economic development**.

We are standing at the gates of a new journey in global development which gives us an unprecedented opportunity to **focus on young people as key drivers for progress**. Let us all commit to the **bold pledge of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda and the Agenda 2063 to leave no one behind** and prioritize investments in the health, education, employment, and empowerment of young people.

With the right investments, all young people can stay in school, have access to health services including sexual and reproductive health services, be protected from early marriage and adolescent childbearing and join the workforce and earn a decent, living wage, **the whole continent will harness benefits of the Demographic Dividend**.

Sessions at the Conference....



The Honorable Minister of Gender, Children and Social Protection hosted the UNFPA Executive Director and Keynote Speaker of the ACSHR at Mallam Atta Market to see the gender-based violence and sexual and reproductive health Service Centre. In attendance were also representatives from the UK, Norway and Denmark as well as the UNFPA Goodwill Ambassador Catarina Furtado, Queen Mothers, Spiritual Leaders, Market Women (Kayayei), and Female Adolescent Head Porters. Women need to be shielded from violence and men perpetuating violence should be prosecuted. We will not stop ensuring all can lead a life of dignity.



AU Goodwill Ambassador for Campaign to End Child Marriage Ms. Nyaradzayi Gumbonzvanda to ministers and other policy makers at the Ministerial Roundtable: Africa is not poor and its resources including its people and the diaspora need to be well harnessed. Protecting, training and empowering especially girls is going to be catalytic.



Board Chair of the National Planning Commission of Ghana and UNFPA Executive Director meet with ministers and other policy stakeholders. They agree that harnessing the Demographic Dividend is important for Ghana and will help achieve the SDGs across Africa. This requires a well resourced and monitored plan of action.

Sessions at the Conference....



Her Excellency Dr. Lordina Mahama and other members of the Organization of African First Ladies (OAFLA) launched the United Continental All-In Adolescent HIV Campaign with support from the Government of Ghana, UNFPA, UNICEF and UNAIDS.

OAFLA members in attendance included Chad, Ethiopia, Kenya, Mali, Sierra Leone, Guinea Bissau and Côte d'Ivoire. Also present were official representatives from Burkina Faso, The Gambia, Madagascar, Rwanda, Swaziland and South Sudan.

ALL IN 
#EndAdolescentAIDS



OAFLA launches "ALL IN" Adolescent HIV Campaign

First Ladies from across Africa participated at the Ghanaian launch of the United Continental "ALL IN" Adolescent HIV Campaign, with the objective to ensure that Africa's young people stop dying from HIV / AIDS related deaths just because of their inability to make informed decisions about their sexual health.

Hosted by Her Excellency Dr. Lordina Mahama, the participating members of the Organisation of African First Ladies Against HIV/AIDS (OAFLA) appended their signatures to the document signifying their commitment towards ensuring an HIV free generation of African young people.

The First ladies from the following countries were present: Chad, Sierra-Leone, Cote d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Mali, Guinea Bissau and Kenya. The following First Ladies also sent their representatives: Burkina Faso, The Gambia, Madagascar, Rwanda, Swaziland and South Sudan.

H.E. Dr. Mahama lauded her colleagues for their commitment and appealed to them to resolutely pursue their advocacy for empowering young people and harnessing the Demographic Dividend. Stating that OAFLA cannot and must not fail in its mission, the Ghanaian First Lady also commended traditional and religious leaders for their support to ensuring that the sexual and reproductive health rights of young people were upheld in the anticipation of a demographic Dividend. The "ALL IN" campaign is supported by UNAIDS, UNICEF, UNFPA and other UN agencies. It has the objective to end the epidemic by 2030 through collective action.



Commissioner Alapina-Gansou (ACHPR), Criselda Kanada (TV Personality from South Africa), Dr Nestor Azadegbe (UNFPA WCARO) and Mr. Venkatraman Chandra-Mouli (WHO) emphasize the importance of ensuring human rights and sexual and reproductive health rights of adolescents and youth. The French Muskoka Fund supports a number of initiatives in this regard.



Ensuring no one is left behind including persons with disabilities. The **National Youth Authority** provided sign language experts to facilitate the engagement of hearing impaired young people.



Participants at the plenary sessions. Leveraging art for social change.



Interview



MELISSA CLAIMS HER ROLE

The 7th ACSHR is stressing on the issue of rights and the launch of the Ghanaian ALL-IN Adolescents HIV Campaign at the OAFLA event offered another opportunity that brought to the fore the need to provide young people with the information to make safe and responsible decisions about their sexual and reproductive health. Melissa actively watched her sister make a presentation on the role and expectations of young people. She believes in the importance of preventative campaigning as she experienced this first hand during the Ebola outbreak. She feels strongly about the objectives of the ALL IN initiative: **"I am also IN because we need everybody. We are ALL IN against HIV. But we need support."**

USE THE POWER OF YOUNG PEOPLE TO TRANSFORM LIVES AND COUNTRIES

cont, from front page

Young people who form the **bulk of Africa's** population today have a profound effect on every aspect of the continent's common future and can create a better world for us all. The effects can be overwhelmingly positive if young people are able to develop their capabilities, have access to education, health including reproductive and sexual health and find opportunities to fulfill the promise of their lives through for example decent employment.

"This can easily happen provided there is heavy investment in young people's education, health and protection of their rights" highlights the UN Under-Secretary General and UNFPA Executive Director Dr. Babatunde Osotimehin in his advocacy engagements at the ongoing ACSHR.

AT THE EXHIBITIONS....

Various sexual health and rights service providers, networks and advocacy entities had the opportunity of showcasing their commodities and messages at the ACSHR.

