

2016 Mission to the  
Republic of Congo



#MwasiYaCongo

#YoungVoices

#PutYoungPeopleFirst

UNFPA WCARO REGIONAL DIRECTOR  
**MABINGUE NGOM** listens to the young  
Girls of Congo

# UNFPA CONGO

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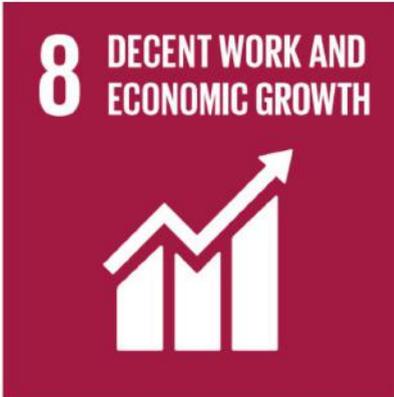
Writers: UNFPA Congo/Emanuel Foukou

Photography : UNFPA Congo/Emanuel Foukou

[www.unfpa-congo.org](http://www.unfpa-congo.org)  
[unfpa.cg@unfpa.org](mailto:unfpa.cg@unfpa.org)  
Telephone: +242 055 521 700

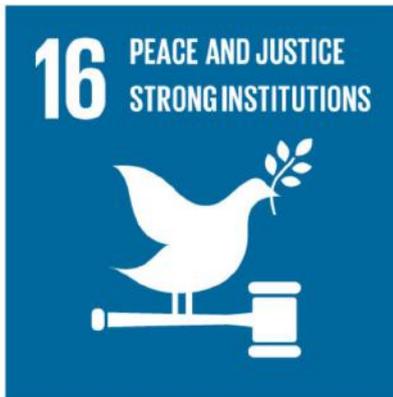
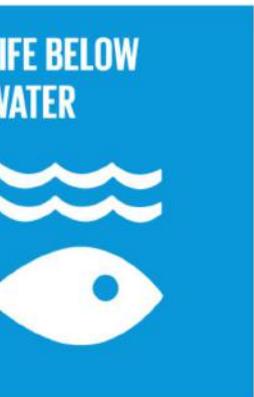
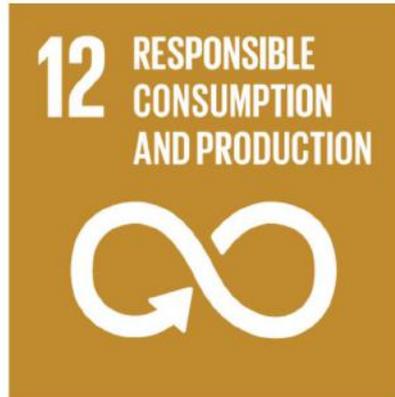
Republic of Congo - Brazzaville





# THE GLOBAL GOALS

For Sustainable Development





“

*I have experienced the many challenges you are facing, that justify our presence in an MIC country, that unfortunately faces the same or more challenges than some of the LDCs. I was also able to appreciate the partnerships, especially within the private sector. We shall continue to accelerate them and bring about change in the lives of the young people of Congo.*

**Mabingue Ngom, Regional Director WCARO**

# The Spirit of an Orange Mind

## The Energizing Support of the Regional Director

The Republic of Congo, RoC, is a country located in Western Central Africa, hosting a population of around four million. Based on its GDP per capita, the RoC is classified a **Low Middle Income Country**. However, **social indicators** such as the maternal mortality ratio, the adolescent pregnancy rate or the limited access to modern contraceptives remain challenging. As a result, Congo is classified in the **Orange quadrant** of the 2014-2017 Strategic Plan.

At present, the West and Central African Region, WCARO, is home to four UNFPA “orange” countries, Cape Verde, Ghana, Sao tomé and Principe along with the Republic of Congo. What are the impacts on an orange country? **Change of business model**, focus on policy dialogue, advocacy, capacity building instead of service delivery, and the need to change and adapt to be “**Fit for purpose**”!



Working in an orange country demands a **creative mind** and an ability to deliver in a challenging resource constrained setting. Resource mobilization, communication and new strategic partnerships where national domestic resources and the private sector is targeted, are a number of approaches making up the toolkit of an orange worker.

During his visit to the Congo, the Regional Director of WCARO, Mabingue Ngom, had the opportunity, through field visits and meetings with partners, to see for himself the reality on the ground. Congo might be an orange country, but looking back at his visit, the Regional Director confessed that UNFPA Congo’s challenges are the same, if not worse, than those faced by red LIC’s.

Despite the challenges, UNFPA Congo is seeking new ways to improve its orange mind-set, it might be a tough neighborhood with a lack of resources, but by thinking and acting orange, the office is constantly seeking new ways to make the impossible possible.

**THINK AND ACT  
ORANGE**

# LITTLE GIRLS, BIG VOICES

**Brazzaville, Republic of Congo** - In the morning of Monday, 17th of October, the Regional Director of WCARO, Mabingue Ngom, attended the celebration of the International Day of the Girl Child. This year, UNFPA Congo celebrated the day at *Institut de Jeunes Sourds*, IJSB, in Brazzaville, a learning institution for young students with hearing disabilities. This was an opportunity to highlight that UNFPA is "putting young people first, young adolescent girls in particular," leaving no one behind.

In June, the IJSB was nominated as one of six laureates in #MwasiYaCongo, a campaign instigated by the *Ministry for the Promotion of Women and Women's Integration into Development* and UNFPA Congo, to promote gender equality and to advance women's rights in the Republic of Congo.

The event was part of the #MwasiYaCongo campaign, and apart from the over 50 students, teachers and staff from the institute, the the Minister of Social Affairs, Madame Antoinette Ndinga, heads of UN agencies, religious authorities along with both civil society and private sector actors attended.



Mesmin Lekoubi, the Director of IJSB addressed a number of immediate challenges, and urged the attendants to do their best to support efforts to release the potential of all young people, including the ones with disabilities. The fact that there are no possibilities for deaf students acquiring diplomas enabling them to go to university, is another pressing issue.

In a vivid and captivating speech, the Regional Director highlighted the importance of the Demographic Dividend and how significant it is to invest in young people and the girl child in particular. He further launched a call to help young deaf and mute girls in the Congo, and urged the various UN agencies along with the international community and governments to do their part so that all needs expressed by the institute will be seen to in an efficient manner.

Africa's future depends on how the leaders deal with the upcoming generation, especially the young girls. In the Republic of Congo there are around 600,000 girls in the ages 10-24 years old, 33% of these (15-19), have already gone through a pregnancy.

The highlight of the ceremony was the performance of the national anthem, "[la Congolaise](#)," in sign language.

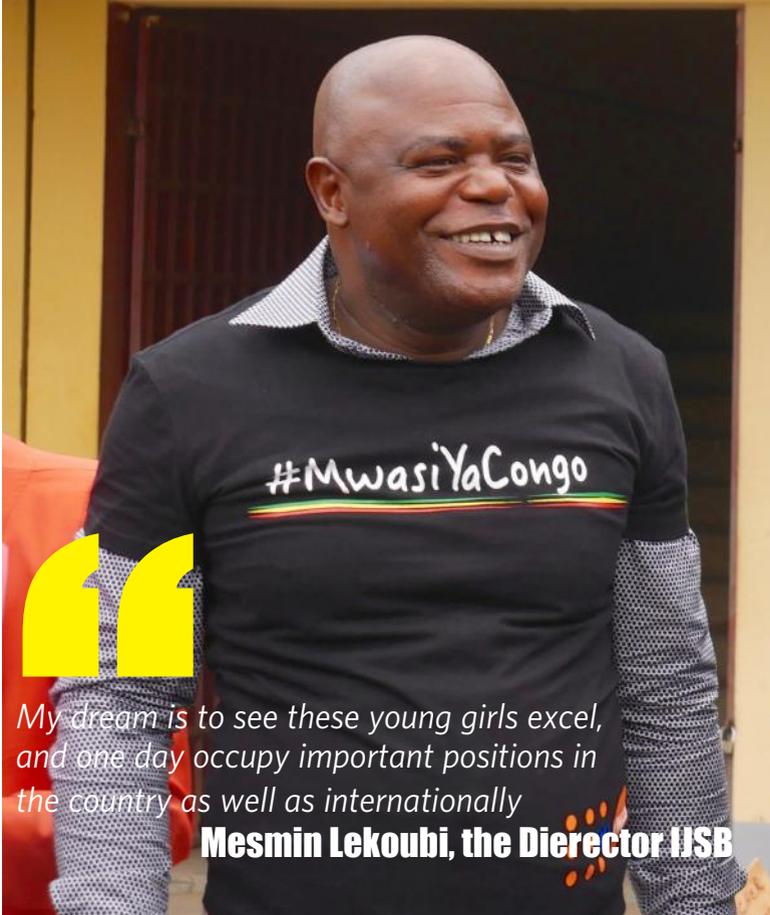




**It's not about counting the population, it's about making the population count**



The Regional Director of UNFPA WCARO, Mabingue Ngom, accompanied by the Minister of Social Affairs, Madame Antoinette Ndinga



My dream is to see these young girls excel, and one day occupy important positions in the country as well as internationally

**Mesmin Lekoubi, the Director IJSB**



Two of the teachers from IJSB dressed in #MwasiYaCongo is a campaign instigated by the Ministry for Women's Integration into Development and UNFPA for gender equality and to advance women's rights in the RDC.





Mwasi Ya Congo tshirts. #MwasiYaCongo for the Promotion of Women and the Republic of Congo.

Regional Director Mabingue Ngom in an interview with TV5 Monde.



UNFPA Congo Representative Barbara Laurenceau, together with the Representative of WHO Congo



BantuHub in the house, Phonsia Odingui with her colleague, Lauriane Mpouki, aka Lait Na Lait.

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Il y a environ **600 000 FILLES** de 10-24 ans vivant au Congo (RGPH 2007)

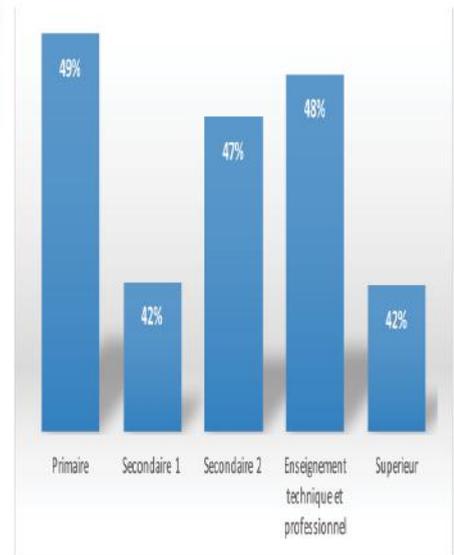


**1/3** des filles de **15 à 29** ans a **quitté le système scolaire** sans achever son cycle. Pour **21%** d'entre elles, la **maternité** en est la source

(ETVA, 2015)



Proportion des jeunes **FILLES** scolarisées par cycle en 2015 (MEPSA)

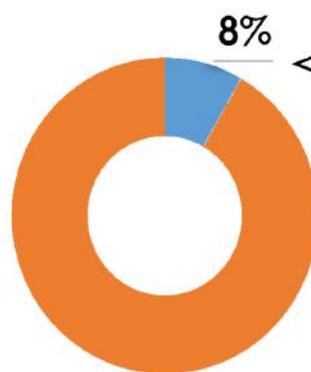


## Prévenir les grossesses précoces chez les adolescentes

**1** fille sur **5** de **15 à 24** ans a eu son **premier rapport sexuel** avant l'âge de **15 ans** (ESISC 2009)



**33%** des adolescentes (15-19 ans) sont **enceintes ou déjà mères** (EDS 2011/12)



Seulement **8%** des jeunes de **15 à 19** ans ont une connaissance complète du **VIH/SIDA** (ESISC 2009)

**2** filles sur **100** de **15 à 24** ans sont atteintes de **VIH/SIDA**

(ESISC 2009)

**Brazzaville, Republic of Congo** – During his recent visit to the Congo, the Regional Director of UNFPA WCARO, Mabingue Ngom was received by the recently appointed Minister of Health, Jacqueline Mikolo. During their exchange they touched on several important issues related to the core of UNFPA’s mandate, questions related to maternal mortality as well as adolescent pregnancies.

“We discussed questions related to health and development,” the Regional Director revealed shortly after the meeting, and further explained that he took the opportunity to commend Congo for their efforts to reduce the maternal mortality.

“No woman should die while giving life, we still have a long way to go, but I think that there has been a progress in the fight against maternal mortality in the country,” he stated, clarifying that methods to further reduce the maternal mortality were reviewed.”

Other topics dealt with family planning as well as the demographic dividend, and how to best invest in the youth.

## **Regional Director of with the Congolese M Jacqueline Lydia Mik**



The Regional Director said that he believed that more could be done, and launched an appeal to the international partners to assist and further reinforce the country to combat the issues discussed. He specifically underlined the importance of establishing strategic partnerships with the private sector as an efficient and important tool to further development.

“No woman should die while giving life.”

**UNFPA WCARO Mabingue Ngom**  
**Minister of Health,**  
**Kongo**





Minister of Health, Madame Jacqueline Lydia Mikolo, inspecting emergency kits donated by UNFPA in response to the humanitarian situation in the department of Pool



In the Republic of Congo, it is estimated that some 74% of the population is less than 35 years old. Congolese youth, as the rest of young people across Africa, are facing a similar set of challenges, with one of them being unemployment. Of the close to 420 million young individuals (15-35) on the continent, it is estimated that one third today is unemployed.

As youth and adolescents are central to the vision of the United Nations Population Fund, UNFPA, and efforts seeking to harness the potential of Africa's youth are made on a daily basis, a close relationship between the UNFPA and Congo's Ministry of Youth and Civic Action is of utmost importance.

During his recent visit to the Congo, UNFPA's Regional Director, Mabingue Ngom was received at the Ministry of Youth located in the Nabemba Tower in downtown Brazzaville, where he met with the Minister of Youth in person, Madame Destinée Doukaga.

"The Minister and I discussed about the most important question in regards to the future of the continent, the African youth, an important question for a country like the Congo," the Regional Director said shortly after the meeting. Adding that they also discussed strategies in place to further promote and assist the youth in Congo and other parts of Africa.

The Regional Director explained that the UNFPA have got an efficient program in place in order to help the African youth. "It is by working in partnership with the governments and other partners from the civil society and the private sector that we will be able to create opportunities for the upcoming generation," he stated.



## UNFPA's Mabingue Ngom meets the Minister of Youth and Civic Action Madame Destinée Doukaga

"The door to the United Nations Population Fund and the UN system at large, is always open to help the Congolese government with their programs in place to assist the youth."

In 2017, the Demographic Dividend and African youth will be the theme for the African Union.



# Agom meets with Youth and Civic Action Coalition



The most important issue in regards  
to the future of the continent, is the  
question of the African youth



One of several fruitful encounters during the Regional Director's 48 hours visit to the capital of Brazzaville, took place in the Prime Minister's office, where he was received by His Excellency, the Prime Minister of the Republic of Congo, Mr Clément Mouamba.

In this meeting, the Regional Director was accompanied by UNFPA's Representative in Congo, Miss Barbara Laurenceau, as well as the second man in charge of UNFPA Congo, Mr Benoit Libali.

During their meeting, the two dealt with a number of important questions related to the vision of UNFPA and its partnership with the Congolese government. Questions spanning all the way from adolescent pregnancies, opportunities for the youth as well as unemployment and the demographic dividend. In regards to the latter, Ngom once again touched on the African Union's agenda for 2017, and highlighted that the Republic of Congo is expected to play a leading role in regards to the demographic dividend.

"When talking about issues related to development, we are often concerned about money, but we have to remember that money is not always the driving force behind development, but rather the politics or the policies of a nation. I think that the UNFPA, a globally respected institution is equipped with the right policies, able to push countries like the Congo towards development," the Regional Director said.

"With the help of our resources and strategic partnerships, not only financial and governmental ones, but also partnerships with the civil society and religious organizations, a lot can be done. I personally think that by forming strategic partnerships with such organizations, we are able to do things that money cannot always do, we need to learn to tap in to, and to mobilize these important partners," he continued.

"The partnership between UNFPA and the Republic of Congo is a healthy one, and we will continue to support the government on questions related to our mandate, and find ways to further reinforce our partnership," the Regional Director concluded.

# In the Office

**Regional Director of UNFPA  
received by His Excellency  
the Prime Minister of Congo**



# e of the Prime Minister

NFPA WCARO Mabingue Ngom  
Agency the Prime Minister of  
, Mr Clément Mouamba



# Strategizing Empowering and Re-Igniting

## Lessons of Leadership and New Strategic Partnerships

In between the busy schedule, meeting with government representatives, partners from the civil society and the private sector, going on field visits or addressing both national and international media, the Regional Director took time out to meet with the staff at the UNFPA country office in Congo. During this encounter he explained that he was happy to be in the Congo and that it's always interesting to see how UNFPA works in various countries across the continent depending on the different realities they face.

Barbara Laurenceau, UNFPA Congo's Representative, gave a brief introduction together with other staff members on the various strategies applied by the country office. Being a Middle Income country, MIC, or an orange nation, the office is implementing a business model where communication, partnership with the private sector and mobilization of resources are in the forefront.

After the introduction, the Regional Director shared **words of encouragement** with the staff, and reiterated the importance of forming new kinds of strategic partnerships by thinking outside the box. He gave several **helpful ideas** on how to further develop the work in the office, and offered specific examples on how to both communicate in an effective way as well as approach new partners.

At the end of the session the staff were **re-ignited and empowered**, and the entire staff commended the Regional Director for visiting. "It has been uplifting to have you at the office, I have worked here for over 10 years, but this is the first time that a Regional Director visits," one of the staff said. "I hope that you will be able to come back soon again," she continued.

In a concluding remark, the Regional Director thanked the staff for their excellent work, where after he took off for yet another meeting.



**You cannot enjoy the product without going through the process**



Selfless  
Servant  
Excellence  
Discipline  
Communication  
Population  
e



duct  
e



# Connecting with Partners

## Unveiling challenges



During his stay in Brazzaville, the Regional Director of UNFPA WCARO, Mabingue Ngom participated in two field visits. The first one took place at a medical center led by the Evangelical Church of the Congo, *Centre Medico-Social Evangelique de Mayangui*, CMSEM, a partnership which serves as a good example highlighting the importance of the cooperation UNFPA Congo are leading with religious groups in the country.

After a tour of the different services offered by the centre, the Regional Director sat down with the leadership for a brief discussion, to hear not only about difficulties and challenges, but also to draw from positive experiences. A donation consisting of well needed material were also handed over. "I would like to thank the Director for paying a visit to the Mayangi center, and for taking his time to talk to us, it was much appreciated," a young mother with her newborn baby, said shortly after his visit.

The second visit was carried out at the Pierre Mobengo, Military Hospital in Brazzaville, where a tour of the hospital and discussions with the directors was on the agenda. The Regional Director listened carefully to the staff, and took note of the various challenges experienced on a daily basis, he was further briefed on the state of the three women who in the days ahead of his visit had gone through fistula surgeries at the hospital, operations carried out thanks to UNFPA Congo's partnership with the private sector, Radisson Blu in particular.

He was further briefed on how UNFPA Congo in the recent months have been busy organizing seminars on Channel, for both military and civilian medical personnel. [For more information on Channel, follow the link.](#)



He applauded the leadership along with the personnel at the hospital, and encouraged them to continue their work despite the challenges faced.

In a concluding remark he commented on the current financial difficulties the country is experiencing as a result of low oil prices, and said that despite the hardships there are always innovative ways that can help the individuals in need of care, with new strategic partnerships as one of the solutions. "I think it's important that we find ways to multiply these kind of partnerships that we have seen in the example of Radisson Blu, and I call upon national private companies to follow the example of Radisson so that more lives can be saved."



# Strategic Partnerships on the S

The last event on the Regional Directors schedule was a cocktail party at Radisson Blu Hotel, on the shores of the Congo river. Here the Regional Director had the opportunity to meet with UNFPA Congo's partners and Representatives from other UN agencies in the country. Among the guests could be seen the Ambassador to the United States, Stephanie Sullivan who had come out to greet the Regional Director dressed in a #MwasiYaCongo tshirt. Another of the guests was the Ambassador to the European Union, Saskia de Lang.

Many were the partners who had met up to socialize and meet with the individuals making the work of the UNFPA Congo possible. Among the partners that could be seen were representatives from FAWE, ACBEF, TicTac Ados, ADEFAC, ANASAFCO, and CNJC to mention but a few. Apart from these, a number of companies representing the private sector, and who have assisted UNFPA's work to fight obstetric fistula, were present among the guests.

The event was held in a warm and relaxed atmosphere, that could be summed up as one filled with **hope, motivation and change**. One of the participants described the visit of the Regional Director as a fresh wind, and several of the partners expressed a sense of having been encouraged by his visit.

Before the guest started to mingle, the Regional Director addressed the crowd and thanked the partners for their efforts. He concluded his visit by thanking the UN Resident Coordinator in the Congo, Anthony Kwaku Ohemeng-Boamah, as well as the UNFPA Congo office for having organized the event.

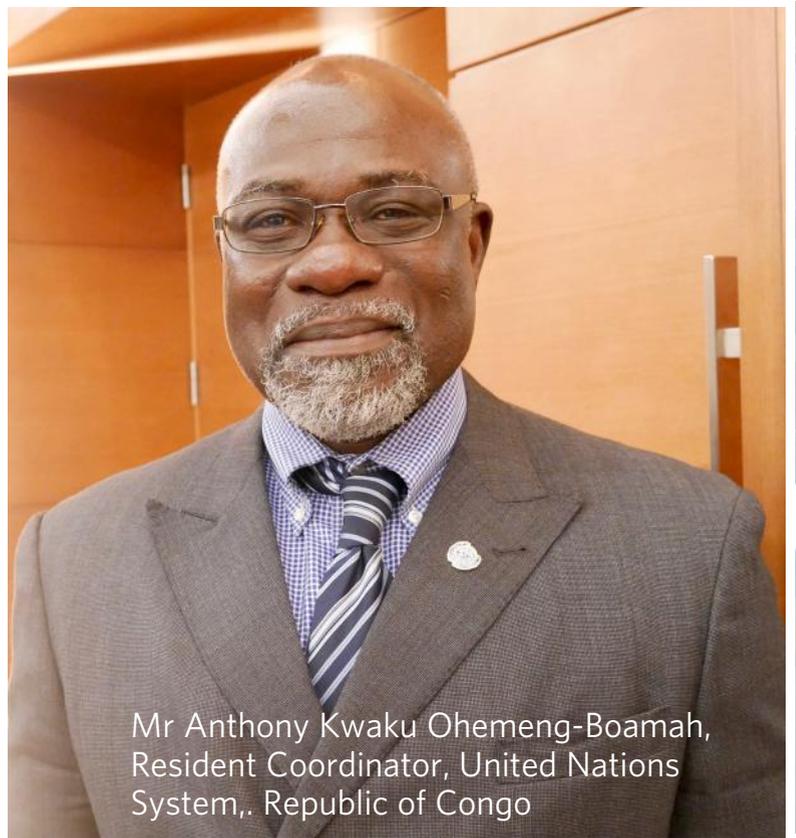


# Shores of the Congo River





Exaucé Ngambili, President of the National Council of Youth in the Congo.



Mr Anthony Kwaku Ohemeng-Boamah, Resident Coordinator, United Nations System, Republic of Congo



Madam Fouty Soungo, Senator and goodwill ambassador of the Campaign for accelerated reduction of maternal mortality, CARMMA



Madame Kaya Honorine, National Coordinator for the Forum for African Women Educationalists, FAWE



Interim Director of ACBEF, Mr Abel Moukolo in discussions with the Regional Director Mabingue Ngom and Barbara Laurenceau. In the middle, Jyer Magnondo, TicTacAdos.org



Madam Corneille Adou Ngapi, General Director of the Department for the Promotion of Women (left) together with Madam Josphine Nsika, Director of CRIDEF



Stephanie Sullivan, the United States Ambassador to the Republic of the Congo



# Meet the Staff

**UNFPA CONGO**

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# With the UNCT team... In the Spirit of Delivering as One

