

**WORLD POPULATION DAY 2018. DECLARATION BY DISTRICT LEADERS FROM ACHOLI AND LANGO SUB REGIONS (OMORO, GULU, LAMWO, PADER, KITGUM, AMURU, AGAGO, NWOYA, APAC, ALEBTONG, AMOLATAR, DOKOLO, KOLE, LIRA, OTUKE, AND OYAM DISTRICTS)**

The Districts constituting **Acholi and Lang Sub-regions** note that according to available evidence, the region is faced with many problems that increase inequality within the population but also disparities among regions.

The district representatives also recognise that such disparities lead to poor service delivery and many are left behind in terms of development.

We recognise that all the issues that keep our districts behind, and many people in our populations left behind are multi-sectoral and require interventions by multiple stakeholders including political, cultural, religious, CSOs, development partners, technical staff, academia and private sector using available structures such as community health education workers, peer educators etc;

Specifically:

Leaders recognise that the sub-regions have a very young population with a median age of the population of 15.5 years old, total fertility rates higher than the national average i.e. above 6 children per woman creating a high dependency burden. All the young dependants are consumers and require services such as education, health, food, clean water etc;

The leaders recognise that portions of young people are left behind due to pregnancy over 40,000 children below 17 years; and early child birth 59,073;

Recognise that over 130,000 children between 6-12 years are left behind because they are not attending school yet more others that enrol do not progress beyond primary school and those transiting to secondary school are less than 30 percent.

Leaders note that access to health services especially sexual reproductive health services i.e. antinatal service, skilled attendance are still low, maternal mortality is high and high unmet need for family planning;

We commit to supporting investments to **improve service delivery and accountability in an effective and efficient manner to ensure that no one is left behind.**

**We commit to increase** Investment in human capital development for socio-economic transformation by **investing in the young population, tapping into their potentials, innovations, talent identification and development;**

Now therefore, we the undersigned undertake to lead in executing this declaration and ensure all stakeholders abide by it.

1. Implementation of the demographic dividend roadmap by ensuring mainstreaming of DD drivers in district development plans and budgets, allocation of resources for: prevention of teenage pregnancy and implement the LIVE YOUR DREAM Campaign – Let Girls be Girls, Books Before Babies, With You(th) and Generation for Generation; reducing child dependency; and ensure girls enrol and stay in school and those who would like to access education and skills after child birth; provide psycho-social support to adolescent mothers who have experienced sexual violence and all other forms of gender based violence;
2. Invest in improving the quality of education in the sub-regions through development of ordinances (where they don't exist) and by-laws and to enforce young people to enroll, stay and complete school especially joining secondary and tertiary levels;
3. Invest in skills development for in and out of school and create job opportunities to absorb the young people, increase access to credit and market for products produced; promote small scale and medium and value addition enterprises, identify employable skills and linking young people to available job markets; support young people to seize opportunities through advanced technology and innovations.
4. Address specific barriers and constraints to enable rural couples, women, youth especially girls to have equal opportunity to make informed choices about their reproduction through access to affordable, accessible and acceptable method mix of contraception, demand creation for family planning and reduce the unmet need for family planning and reach the last mile;
5. Strengthen accountability and service delivery health – sexual reproductive health, education, agriculture, reaching the hard to reach and those left behind

and bridge the gap between those who can afford and those who cannot afford especially those below the poverty line.

6. Allocate funds in the district budgets for projects related physical infrastructure development especially health facilities, roads and energy; human resources development in the areas of education, skills development, water and sanitation and physical planning;
7. Effective supervision and political monitoring of government programmes such as Universal Primary and secondary education, youth livelihood programmes, NAADS and ensure these programmes benefit youth and women;
8. Increase youth participation in decision making right from the grassroots and create platforms for youth-led monitoring, advocacy and accountability;
9. Strengthen citizen's demand for anti-corruption and hold leaders - at all levels, accountable which will contribute to the detection of corruption, reduced leakages of funds, and improved the quantity and quality of public services;
10. Support evidence generation by the district planning unit specifically on population issues. Generate, analyse, disseminate and use data for policy, planning and decision making. Up to-date information should be available in all our districts and used to identify pockets of deprivation including those left behind.

**Therefore;**

**We, the undersigned adopt this declaration, including the messages herein and shall ensure that it is passed and domesticated by all the District and Lower Local Councils on this day of 9<sup>th</sup> July 2018.**

This declaration shall be practical. This will be monitored by an Inter-district Task Force (IDTF) comprised of District Chairpersons of the sixteen (16) districts in **Acholi and Lango Sub-regions**, representatives of the cultural, traditional and religious institutions. The IDTF shall meet on bi-annual basis to review progress and ensure that the issues in the declaration are practically being followed and acted upon.

Undersigned districts:

1. Omoro
2. Gulu
3. Lamwo
4. Pader
5. Kitgum
6. Amuru
7. Agago
8. Nwoya
9. Apac
10. Alebtong
11. Amolatar
12. Dokolo
13. Kole
14. Lira
15. Otuke
16. Oyam